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“RISE LIKE LIONS”

# “RISE LIKE LIONS”

by

WILLIAM GALLACHER

*Rise like Lions after slumber  
In unvanquishable number  
Shake your chains to earth, like dew,  
Which in sleep had fallen on you,  
Ye are many—they are few.*

—Shelley

1951

LAWRENCE & WISHART  
LONDON



## DEDICATION

To my dear wife, Jean Roy, my loyal comrade  
through all my years of working-class activity.

WILLIAM GALLACHER.

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## FOREWORD

*By W. Gallacher's Secretary*

ON THE way home to Paisley from West Fife on the day of the 1950 General Election, I said to Bill Gallacher, "You'll have to write another book".

"Yes", he replied, "I've been thinking of that myself".

And with Bill it is no sooner the word than the deed, and the chapters came rolling in. Each one a vivid picture of the rich experience of one whose whole life has been spent in the vanguard of the working-class struggle. Rich in experience and rich in understanding.

Reading his books one marvels at the amount of energy and time that Bill Gallacher finds for the movement. His energy is untiring. But one marvels still more, when reading this book, at the odd bits of verse which creep into it; for Bill, like Mao Tse-tung, finds relaxation and pleasure in penning a variety of verses on a variety of subjects. And not only verse: for many months Bill could be seen walking along the corridors of the House of Commons with an algebra book tucked underneath his arm. "I'm qualifying to be a mathematician", he would say, with a merry twinkle in his eyes. He is certainly a man of many parts and a variety of interests, and one who expresses the real culture of the working class.

In the House of Commons even those who hated his politics the most could not resist the attraction of his personality—a character whose integrity, moral, political and intellectual, shone like a bright light through the dark and murky corruption of the House of Commons. A personality which they could not help themselves admiring, but which they had not got it in them to emulate.

It was a bitter blow to the working-class movement both in this country and throughout the world, when Bill Gallacher lost his seat in the General Election of 1950. He gives in this book a very clear and objective analysis of the causes which led to his defeat, and the lessons which must be drawn from it for the working-class struggle.

The colonial peoples, too, have suffered a great loss, for there was no Member of Parliament more outspoken than Gallacher in defence of the colonial peoples, and his many personal friends in the colonies were quick to write to him expressing their deep regret and feeling of personal loss when they heard the result of the election in West Fife.

Little Ernest Boateng in the Gold Coast, who is mentioned in this book and who has adopted Bill Gallacher as his father, is expressing in his childlike way the feeling which millions of colonial people have for Gallacher. Many Africans on arriving in this country to study at the universities here made it one of their first jobs to pay a visit to William Gallacher at the House of Commons, and express to him personally their deep appreciation of his activities on their behalf.

This book deals mainly with the period from 1945 onwards, from the great victory of the Labour Government in the first post-war General Election—when the hopes of the workers were running so high at the great possibilities opening out before them—to the present day, autumn 1950. It is a sad and sorry picture of continual and cowardly retreat on the part of the leadership of the great Movement before every sign of opposition from the capitalist class. A picture of one great betrayal after another, and of the selling out of the independence of this country for American dollars. The only attacks which the Labour leadership are consistent in making are attacks on the Communist Party and the working class. But the Communist Party remains in the vanguard of the offensive against the real enemies of the working class—capitalism—both British and American—and will continue to fight until the victory of Socialism is assured.

As Gallacher said, when the result of the 1950 election in West Fife was announced:

“ . . . As for me, before I went to the House of Commons I was a working-class agitator. While I was in the House of Commons I was a working-class agitator. I will continue to be a working-class agitator.”

MARGOT PARISH

## CHAPTER I

### CAPITULATION

WHEN THE war against Germany ended on May 8, 1945, Churchill sent a letter to Deputy Prime Minister Attlee inviting him to continue with the Coalition Government till the war against Japan was brought to a close, or else face the responsibility of an early election. This letter was considered at a meeting of the Labour Party Executive at Blackpool on Sunday, May 20, the day before the opening of the Labour Party Conference. The decision was taken to recommend to the Conference that the Labour Party withdraw from the Coalition. This recommendation the Conference unanimously endorsed. But the Executive had not been unanimous. Two of the leading members, who later were to have a decisive voice in shaping Labour Government policy, were for carrying on the Coalition. But so rigid is the secrecy of such meetings, their names were never publicly divulged, although whispered under a vow of strictest confidence.

Now, in 1950, the power of the machine is supreme and ruthless; those who in private conversation gave the names of these leaders, if challenged now would vigorously deny ever having given such information.

However, with the Coalition finished, Churchill and the Tories decided on an early election, with the intention of cashing in on the legend that Churchill was the man who won the war. But despite all the ballyhoo and glamourisation by the Press, the radio and the cinema, they failed to put it across.

Now it is known that Churchill was the man who nearly lost the war. In his savage hatred of Socialism and fear of the working class, he opposed the opening of a Second Front in Europe, despite the insistence of Roosevelt that this was essential in order to shorten the war. He was prepared to expend time, material and men's lives creeping up what he called "the soft underbelly of Europe" while hoping, as the months went by, that the Soviet Union would be so weakened in its titanic struggle with the main forces of the German Army that Britain and America would be

able to straddle across Europe and everywhere keep the old régime on its feet. That was the keynote of all his policy—keep the “old gang” in power, always with the word “democracy” in his mouth—keep the workers down and keep them exploited.

What is democracy of the Churchill variety? All that is desirable for the privileged few—depression and scarcity for the many.

It was in pursuance of this policy that our troops were landed in Greece after the Germans had been driven out by the Resistance forces. It is notorious that in that fascist-ridden land our forces never at any time came into contact with the Germans. Their fighting was directed against the Resistance forces and the revolutionary workers. One day it will be recognised as a shameful piece of history.

So intent was Churchill on this reactionary policy that he succeeded in holding back the Second Front from 1942, when it was first promised, till 1944. Even when it did open, so weak were certain of the strategic measures taken that our forces and the Americans were soon in grave danger. Towards the end of 1944 the Germans opened an offensive and made a breakthrough in the American front. The situation was critical—desperate. Eisenhower turned to Churchill for assistance. That gentleman, having worked with might and main in pursuit of a rotten reactionary policy which he hoped would “bleed the Russians white” and leave them helpless at the end of the war—to whom did he turn when disaster threatened our forces? Not to Roosevelt and the Americans. No, to Stalin and the Russians!

Here are the cables that were exchanged. They speak for themselves. Always the Communist Party has maintained that the prosperity, security and well-being of our people depends on close friendship and alliance with the Soviet Union. The whole course of the war, and more particularly the events in the Ardennes, gave a complete and thorough vindication of this policy. But read the cables: then think with shame of all the foul slanders that have been published since about this gallant, never-failing ally.

On January 6, 1945, Churchill cabled Stalin:

“The battle in the West is very heavy and, at any time, large decisions may be called for from the Supreme Command. You know yourself from your own experience how very anxious the position is when a very broad front has to

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be defended after temporary loss of the initiative. It is General Eisenhower's great desire and need to know in outline what you plan to do, as this obviously affects all his and our major decisions. Our envoy, Air Chief Marshal Tedder, was last night reported weather-bound in Cairo. His journey has been much delayed through no fault of yours. In case he has not reached you yet, I shall be grateful if you can tell me whether we can count on a major Russian offensive on the Vistula front, or elsewhere, during January, with any other points you may care to mention. I shall not pass this most secret information to anyone except Field Marshal Brooke and General Eisenhower, and only under conditions of the utmost secrecy. I regard the matter as urgent."

On January 7, 1945, J. V. Stalin sent Winston Churchill the following answer :

"I received your message of January 6, 1945, on the evening of January 7. Unfortunately, Air Chief Marshal Tedder has not yet reached Moscow. It is very important to make use of our superiority over the Germans in artillery and air force. For this we need clear weather for the air force and an absence of low mists which prevent aimed fire by the artillery. We are preparing an offensive, but at present the weather does not favour our offensive. However, in view of the position of our Allies on the Western Front, Headquarters of the Supreme Command has decided to complete the preparations at a forced pace and, regardless of the weather, to launch wide-scale offensive operations against the Germans all along the Central Front not later than the second half of January. You need not doubt but that we shall do everything that can possibly be done to render help to the glorious troops of our Allies."

In his reply message to J. V. Stalin on January 9, Winston Churchill wrote :

"I am most grateful to you for your thrilling message. I have sent it over to General Eisenhower for his eye only. May all good fortune rest upon your noble venture."

In its desire to expedite aid to the Allied forces in the West, the Supreme Command of the Soviet forces decided to advance the date of the offensive against the Germans on the Soviet-German front from January 20 to January 12. On January 12 a big Soviet offensive was launched on a wide front stretching from the Baltic

to the Carpathians. One hundred and fifty Soviet divisions were sent into action, supported by large quantities of artillery and aircraft: they broke through the German front and threw the Germans back hundreds of miles. On January 12 the German troops on the Western Front, amongst them the 5th and 6th Panzer Armies, which were poised for another drive, ceased their offensive and in the following five or six days were withdrawn from the front and transferred to the East, against the attacking Soviet troops. The German offensive in the West was thwarted.

On January 17, Winston Churchill wrote to J. V. Stalin:

"I am most grateful to you for your message and am extremely glad that Air Marshal Tedder made so favourable an impression upon you. On behalf of His Majesty's Government, and from the bottom of my heart, I offer you our thanks and congratulations on the immense assault you have launched upon the Eastern Front. You will now, no doubt, know the plans of General Eisenhower and to what extent they have been delayed by Rundstedt's spoiling attack. I am sure that fighting along our whole front will be continuous. The British 21st Army Group, under Field Marshal Montgomery, have today begun an attack in the area south of Roermond."

This great offensive of the Red Army raised the pressure on the British and American forces, and opened the way for a comparatively easy and triumphant march into Berlin.

In so far as the war was won for the capitalists and landowners of Europe, Churchill and the Americans won it; but so far as it was against fascism, for the liberation of the common people, the Red Army and the Resistance movements won it.

However, the Tories thought they could capitalise on Churchill, so they plunged for an early election. It was fixed for July 5, 1945. In West Fife the Labour Party made approaches to several people in or around the area to stand against me, but with no success. So they brought a lad from the Durham area and set about building him up. They made during that election what, I think, must have been the dirtiest campaign ever conducted. Nothing was too low, nothing too vile for their propaganda.

As I have already remarked, our policy has always been for friendship and trade with the Soviet Union. Not only so, but as a working-class Party we naturally associate ourselves, through common ideas, with working-class parties of other countries. This



applies in a special way to the Soviet Union, where the working class changed the whole course of history by overthrowing tsarism and capitalism and by establishing working-class power. The First Workers' Government—the First Socialist Republic.

Even the present Labour leaders, in 1920 when Churchill was bent on a war of intervention against the young socialist state, called for the setting up of Councils of Action and threatened a general strike if the war was not stopped. Attlee was so impressed that he put the following on record :

“Out of chaos the Russians are building a new society based on social justice. And world peace cannot endure unless it is based on social justice. The enemies of the Soviet Union dislike it, not because they are afraid it will attack them, not because it is ‘Godless’, but just because they are afraid lest a State should go forward based on the principle of social justice.”

But that was before he and the others got into the hands of the big dollar boys. They sing a different tune today. Always in contrast we have remained consistent. Fraternal relations with the great Workers' Fatherland. This has time and again been misrepresented by the enemies of the working class in order to keep them separate from the Communists. For the reactionaries know, it is written clear in history, wherever the workers accept Communist leadership the landlords and capitalists go down never to rise again. Where the workers are kept away from the Communists, there the capitalists and the landlords still remain on top. That is a simple presentation of fact that can be tested by any worker who cares to make the least bit of a study of post-war Europe.

So, as part of the campaign against the Communists, we get in one form or another the lying assertion that the Communists take, and act upon, “Orders from Moscow”. This is really a stupid lie, one so easily disproved. Orders can only be given if there is power to enforce orders. Even the least intelligent of the Labour leaders should understand that.

The Government of this country makes laws and regulations. We have to obey them or—take the consequences. A lad working in the factory gets orders from the manager or the foreman. He has to do the job he is ordered to or—take the consequences. But suppose somebody in Moscow took the notion into his head

to send orders to me or to the Party in Britain. How would it work? The Communist Party of Great Britain must do this, that or the other or—what? What power has anyone in Moscow got, or anywhere else, outside of this country, to impose orders on the Party in Britain or any member of the Party in Britain?

Maybe tricky Mr. Morrison could answer that one. He exposed the shallow nature of his own miserable soul when he went around trumpeting about the Party and the *Daily Worker* being financed from Moscow. He couldn't imagine people giving the labour and service, against terrific odds and terrific opposition, that our comrades were giving, unless on the basis of cash payments.

But when he was at the Home Office during the war, and became responsible for the suppression of the *Daily Worker*, why didn't we hear his favourite theme song "Money from Moscow"? The late Lees Smith, anxious to get in a dirty word against the *Daily Worker*, went over to the Home Office and saw Sir Alexander Maxwell, to whom he presented a number of prepared questions. These were duly answered and presented in the form of a typed document, at which I got a surreptitious look. Alas for Lees Smith, Sir Alexander had to admit that, while there was no evidence of any kind of money coming from abroad, the examination of our mail made it clear that we were getting sufficient money from the people of this country to maintain our Party and our paper.

When I referred to this document in the House of Commons, and dealt with its contents, Shinwell took up the running and insisted that Morrison, as Home Secretary, should inform the House if there was any evidence of any sort whatever that the *Daily Worker* or the Communist Party received money from abroad. What a chance for the voluble Mr. Morrison. But not a word.

Shinwell kept at it: "We have a right to know if it is true or not true."

But Mr. Morrison sat dumb. He knew it was not true, but he had not the moral or political courage to get up and say it was not true. But in 1945 the fact that the Russians had saved Europe was manifest to all. From the heroic days of Stalingrad, the greatest, grandest military feat of all time, the people of this and other countries had followed the ever-increasing momentum of the Red Army offensive that swept across Russia, through the

intervening countries and ended in Germany with the Nazi armies laid prostrate.

Yes, the people of this country at that time realised what they owed to the endurance and sacrifice of the Soviet people. So much so that even Churchill himself was constrained to say, on February 27, 1945, in the course of the debate on the meeting at the Crimea:

"The impression I brought back from the Crimea, and from all my other contacts, is that Marshal Stalin and the Soviet leaders wish to live in honourable friendship and equality with the Western Democracies.

"I feel also that their word is their bond. I know of no government which stands to its obligations, even in its own despite, more solidly than the Russian Soviet Government."  
(Hansard, 27.2.45. Cols. 1,283-4.)

Five years of dollar-sponsored propaganda have changed all that. Press, radio and cinema have all been brought into action to poison the minds of the people. They have undoubtedly succeeded to a considerable extent, but in 1945 this propaganda had not yet got going and although Labourites in Fife tried every method of spreading evil, vicious slanders, they did not succeed in undermining the support for our Party in the mining villages of Fife. So once again I was returned to Parliament as the representative of West Fife. But whereas in the earlier period I had been the lone Communist, I learned to my delight that in the 1945 Parliament I had a colleague in the person of Phil Piratin, who had succeeded in winning Mile End, Stepney, from the sitting Labour Member, who got only lukewarm support from the Labour men in the constituency.

Phil proved himself a great colleague. His manner was quiet and persuasive, which enabled him to get along well with most of the Labour Members. Generally much better than I did.

Well, anyhow, there we were, Phil and I. We met at the Party offices, King Street, Covent Garden, and went down to the House together. And what a House. Nearly 400 Labour M.P.s (384), most of them new and all eager and anxious to get down to the job. Such fire, such enthusiasm. They were on top of the world. They had the Tories down and meant to keep them down. They cheered and laughed and roared. When the Tories, conscious of defeat and dreading what might be before them, tried

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to make a demonstration on the entrance of Churchill, they met with a response from the Labour benches that just about frightened them out of their wits. For the first time they heard within the "sacred precincts" of the House the stirring chorus of the Red Flag:

"Then raise the Scarlet Standard high,  
Within its shade we'll live or die,  
Tho' cowards flinch and traitors sneer,  
We'll keep the Red Flag flying here."

Yes, sir, that was some demonstration. "We'll keep the Red Flag flying here", there in the House of Commons. Alas, they did not keep it flying long. That "once" not only frightened the Tories, it frightened the Labour leaders even more. They soon made it apparent that the Red Flag was ruled out of Labour policy and ruled off Labour platforms. But in the first days it was, metaphorically, flying high and the Tories were correspondingly feeling low, and looking low. I've never seen a body of men so cowed and beaten as they were in the first few weeks of that Parliament. It was a common remark amongst the new Labour Members: "They're finished, they'll never rise again." That's how they felt, that's what they wanted.

The Tories were the enemy—not the Communists. Our relations in those early days were of the closest and the best. But that did not apply to the leaders of the Labour Party; it did not apply to the Labour Government. About this time I wrote the concluding chapter of *The Rolling of the Thunder*. The last paragraph starts off with this:

"Labour has a great opportunity. Let the Government seize it and use it and Toryism is for ever dead in this country. But it won't be an easy job; it will be hard and difficult, with every obstacle thrown in the way. All the forces of the working class must be brought in solidly behind the Labour Government. For this purpose the Communist Party is absolutely essential. It alone can do the job. Because of this I make a forecast that I made before the election—the Labour Government will have to capitulate to the Tories or call in the support of the Communist Party."

The latter course the leaders of the Labour Party were not prepared to take. The consequences soon became obvious. On behalf of the Communist Party, and as an essential part of genuine

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working-class policy, I demanded the withdrawal of our troops from Greece. Here was the earliest test. Bevin, as Foreign Secretary, brought comfort to the Tory enemy, oh, what comfort, when he declared that he was continuing at the Foreign Office with the same staff and the same policy as that pursued by Churchill and the Tories.

See, look across at them. The dull, deadened eyes look up, lighted by a gleam of hope. They look around at one another. They begin to smile. They're alive again. Bevin has caught them right at the brink of the pit and brought them back on to safe ground. How they cheered him, how they praised him in those early days, as he went blundering on, preparing the great revival of Toryism.

But Bevin, although he always used the personal pronoun (never was there at any time or any place a greater egotist), was actually speaking for his Cabinet colleagues. The Labour Government had started out on the path of capitulation to the Tories.

## CHAPTER II

### THE AMERICAN LOAN

WITH THE end of the war against Japan on August 15, 1945, Lease-Lend also came to an end, an abrupt end. This put the Labour Government in a difficult situation. The balance of trade was heavily against us and a very great amount of reconstruction and reconversion had to be carried through. In place of Lease-Lend the Americans offered a loan. This the Labour Government eagerly accepted. In these early days the whole of the working-class movement, including the Communist Party, was prepared to give wholehearted support to the Government, to see it safely started on its way.

When the proposed loan came up for discussion, Phil and I on balancing all considerations went into the lobby and voted for the loan. Now, loans from one government to another are quite normal practice and in ordinary circumstances would call for only passing notice. But in the early days after the war, circumstances were anything but ordinary. America, with its economy unhampered during the war, had come out of the war with all the advantages, while Britain and the countries of Europe laboured under every disadvantage.

In America the big monopoly capitalists were all-powerful and would, naturally, use all their tremendous resources to further their own interests at home and abroad. But to this we gave little thought at the time. A loan would help the Labour Government to surmount its immediate difficulties and allow it to get ahead with its programme of nationalisation and housing. That is how we saw it.

Personally, I have the feeling that had we looked ahead with a clear understanding of the character of the American capitalists we would have fought the loan and advocated, if necessary, a tightening of our belts in order to avoid the enslavement into which we were already beginning to drift. For so many years we had been watching the development of Roosevelt's policy of "pro-

gressive" capitalism, and had, to a considerable extent, lost sight of the real forces that dominated America.

We should have drawn a more severe lesson from the almost incredible distortion of Browder. Earl Browder, recognised leader of the Communist Party of America, was so affected by Roosevelt's policy that he propounded the preposterous theory that capitalism was now so "humanised" that it would co-operate with the Communists in order to evolve a new form of society. In view of this, he proposed and got carried, a resolution for liquidation of the Communist Party of America. There was no one in the British Party who was not opposed to Browder's action. Nevertheless, there were none of us who were not affected to a greater or lesser degree by the friendly policy being pursued by Roosevelt.

But the end of the war presented American capitalism with a situation that called for a rapid readjustment of policy. Only the countries of Eastern Europe had set out on the path of Socialism. In Western Europe the reactionary forces, supported by the American and British military administrations, had succeeded in grasping power and set themselves as a first task to disarm the workers who constituted the main forces of the Resistance movements. American foreign policy, as a consequence, was to keep these capitalist governments going at all costs and to establish American hegemony over all of them.

This should have been clear to us from the beginning.

See Mr. Bevin getting up in the House of Commons and making the emphatic declaration :

"... we have to consider the ownership of the basic German industries. These industries were previously in the hands of magnates who were closely allied to the German military machine, who financed Hitler, and who, in two wars, were part and parcel of Germany's aggressive policy. . . . Our intention is that those industries should be owned and controlled in future by the public. The exact form of this public ownership is now being worked out. They should be owned and worked by the German people." (Hansard, 22.10.46.)

But the Americans told him something different. America took over the British zone and Bevin could only play the part of "yes-man" to the new bosses, while under their supervision the old gang of landowners and capitalists came back into full possession

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of the land and industries. War against Socialism—war against the workers of Europe to keep decrepit capitalism on its feet—that was the foreign policy of American capitalism and it set itself to the task of ruthlessly carrying it through.

One by one, men who had been trusted friends of Roosevelt, men who had been noted for their loyalty to him, were turned out of Truman's administration, and those acceptable to the big monopolies put in their places. It became a government of generals and bankers. All violent enemies of Socialism—all strong advocates of the ruthless pursuit of private gain.

We had in this country during the latter stages of the war and for the early period following the war, an exceptionally loyal adherent of President Roosevelt, in the person of John Winant. I remember one night at a reception given to Molotov, he made a remark about me being well known in America.

"So well known", I said, "that they won't let me in for a visit."

He was astounded to hear this, and, after I had explained that I had been refused a visa in 1936 when I made application to visit Chicago for a visit to my sister, he told me to come to him if I wanted a visa and he would see that I got it. He was tall and dark, with jet black hair, and the face of what might be called the regulation Puritan of the seventeenth century.

He was honest, quiet spoken, and obviously sincere, but apparently lacked the saving grace of humour. This was made manifest during the proceedings. Standing there in front of us at a well-laden table was Molotov, face to face with Bevin. They were drinking toasts, which meant that they were steadily consuming more than enough of hard liquor. No sign of it could be seen on Molotov, but Bevin was just noticeably under the influence. Molotov proposed a toast to the Red Army. One of the lads, noticing that I was without a drink, came over and tried to push a glass into my hand.

"No, no", I said quietly, "take it away."

He insisted: "You must drink the toast."

"Take it away", I shouted, letting my irritation get the better of me.

The assembled guests were somewhat startled. Molotov, with a smile, remarked: "Forty years I have been a Communist, but I have never met a Communist like Gallacher."

To which Bevin contributed: "He's a Presbyterian Communist."



While the others laughed, John Winant put his arm over my shoulder and said: "That's very good, I'm a Presbyterian, too."

So far everything was nice and pleasant. If there was a laugh it was against me, and who was going to worry about that? Then Molotov had a bright idea.

"We'll drink a toast to Comrade Gallacher", he said to Bevin.

"Agreed", Ernie replied.

Had they drunk it then and there, all would still have been well, but Molotov had more to say.

"Comrade Gallacher", he informed the company, "has two advantages over Mr. Bevin—one he is a Communist, two he is sober."

That got a laugh. This time against Ernie. That's something he will never forgive. He likes a laugh, but always at the other fellow's expense. Touchy, touchy, very touchy, with the elephant absent-minded in comparison with him.

In the early days of the war, conditions were anything but good in the factories, and his hectoring manner as Minister of Labour did not help to create a feeling of confidence. He went up to Edinburgh one Sunday afternoon, to speak to a meeting of shop stewards. He got a pretty rough time. In the evening he met the Clyde shop stewards in Glasgow. He got an awful barracking. The police had to be called in to restore a semblance of order. A bad affair.

When Russia was invaded, Beaverbrook, who was Minister for Aircraft Production, went on a mission to Moscow, and soon came to an understanding with Stalin on the kind of material aid Britain could supply to the Soviet Union. When he returned he planned a campaign to cover the main industrial areas with an appeal for increased production. Feeling was still running high in some of the industries, particularly on the Clyde. A friend of Beaverbrook spoke to me down at the House, and suggested that I might use my influence with the Clyde shop stewards in order to avoid anything untoward happening when he went up there to speak. I agreed to do what I could. I got in touch with the leading shop stewards and asked them to call a meeting, at which I would make a statement.

We met on a Saturday afternoon, a week before Beaverbrook was due to visit the area. I made a statement on the policy agreed to between Beaverbrook and Stalin, and asked them to make the

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meeting the following week a real demonstration of solidarity between the workers of this country and the workers of the Soviet Union. I had considerable difficulty in getting agreement. There was really bitter feeling about how they were being treated in the shops and the yards, and especially at Bevin's unsympathetic attitude. But after three hours we got agreement. Following this I sent out a press statement, which got quite wide publicity, stating that the shop stewards would welcome Beaverbrook and demonstrate their support for the alliance with the Soviet Union.

Well, the meeting was a great success, although it was obvious, even to Beaverbrook, that at certain stages it was touch and go. The following week every cinema in the country was showing Beaverbrook and the Clyde shop stewards. It was a wonderful film.

On the Tuesday of that same week I met Ernie in the library corridor of the House.

"You're a bloody fine man", he barked.

"What's wrong now?" I asked.

"You go up and get a reception for that — Beaverbrook, after what you did to me." He glared as he said it.

"After what I did to you?" I said. "I had nothing to do with what happened to you."

"It's all right", he went on, "I know who arranged it all right."

He left me at that; but I am certain nothing would convince him that the shop stewards were venting their wrath on a Minister of Labour whom they felt was not giving them justice. All he could think of was someone making a personal attack on Ernie Bevin.

John Winant did not get me a visa. He went back to America. For one who had spent years under, and associated with, the benign influence of Roosevelt, the rabid hatred that was everywhere being incited and stimulated must have struck him a terrific blow. All he had lived for, all he had hoped for, all the silent dreams of quiet, peaceful progress which the spirit of Roosevelt represented shattered and destroyed. Black fury and destruction the guiding principles of those who now held the place of power.

"To be or not to be?" John Winant decided "not to be". There can be no other explanation of the suicide of this good, well-intentioned, honest man.

## THE AMERICAN LOAN

But in 1946 I got a visa. Not without trouble. I made application through the American Consulate in Glasgow. After waiting quite a while (I had sent on my own and my wife's passport), I went up to see what progress was being made. No progress. I got our passports back and sent them to London, from where the matter was referred to the State Department in Washington. But when I came out of the Glasgow office, some of my friends asked me how I got on.

"I didn't get on at all", I replied. "I got shocking treatment. As a matter of fact", I added with a laugh. "I got treated like a Yugoslav."

That's what I said: "Like a Yugoslav." For in "them thar" days the most "savage barbarian enemies of democracy and the human race" were the Yugoslavs.

Tito and his crowd talked more about Communism than did the leaders of any of the other East-European countries. All of these countries, according to American and British Press, radio, cinema and political propaganda, were obedient satellites of the Soviet Union; and, according to the then accepted stories, the most obedient was Yugoslavia. Oh, the wild, mad ravings in the Press and in the House of Commons about Tito and the Yugoslavs. They, like the others, were slaves of Moscow. They could not think, could not speak, could not move, without sanction from the Kremlin. To question this was to put yourself outside the range of decent citizenship. Pritt, Platts-Mills, Phil and I continually questioned it, and what howls of derision went up from Tory and Labour benches. "Tito is a tool of the Kremlin, more so than any of the others, nothing can change that." It is written there in the pages of the Press, it is written there in the columns of Hansard. "Satellites, slaves of Moscow, incapable of moving of their own volition."

And then Yugoslavia moved—broke off friendship with the Soviet Union and went after dollars. What have they to say about it now? Do they admit their propaganda was lying propaganda? Do they admit that any of the other countries of Eastern Europe, if they desired to desert the path of Socialism for the rotten corruption of dollar capitalism, are quite free to do so? Free to do so, but strong enough in socialist conviction to resist all temptations placed in their way. Only those without faith in the working class, those who wish to strut in the affluence of borrowed wealth,

that must be paid for in the sweat and labour of the workers, only such will desert the path of Communism for the sham and shoddy glitter of dollar "democracy".

And what a fearful thing this dollar "democracy" is. When I was about to cancel our sailings, the visas came through, and my wife and I got a visit to America, just before the iron curtain was lowered against us.

Wealth? Yes, there is wealth in abundance. Nothing like it anywhere in Europe. Our own feudal barons in the days of their greatest prosperity were "pikers" (to use an American expression) compared to the big financial and industrial barons of America. A land of wealth and a land of appalling poverty.

We saw there slums and shocking, soul-destroying poverty, worse than anything in any country in Europe. All kinds and varieties of religion, but all contributing towards and holding high above all else the greatest religion of all—the worship of the almighty dollar. Everywhere you hear it: "Get dollars, no matter how or where you get them." When we visited old Paisley friends in a suburb of Chicago, the father, an old Social Democrat, was lamenting to me the sordid greed that was all around.

"Everybody's after dollars", he said.

"And why shouldn't we be?" sharply retorted his son, a lad about twenty-five. "It was dollars that made this country."

I'm quite sure that lad, uttering what had become a commonplace, had no idea that this utterly ghastly assumption that dollars, not men, had built up the country, had come from the union-hating enemy of the working class, Henry Ford.

"It was dollars that made this country." As I think of this incident, I recall what was written by Charles Dickens on this same subject. Martin Chuzzlewit arrives in New York, gets fixed up with board and lodgings, and listens to a discussion on American affairs. Then we get the following:

"It was rather barren of interest, to say the truth; and the greater part of it may be summed up in one word, dollars. All their cares, hopes, joys, affections, virtues and associations seemed to be melted down into dollars. Whatever the chance contributions that fell into the slow cauldron of their talk, they made the gruel thick and slab with dollars.

"Men were weighed by their dollars, measures gauged by their dollars; life was auctioneered, appraised, put up and

knocked down for its dollars. The next respectable thing to dollars was any venture having their attainment for its end.

"The more of that worthless ballast, honour and fair-dealing, which any man cast overboard from the ship of his good name and good intent, the more ample stowage-room he had for dollars. Make commerce one huge lie and mighty theft. Deface the banner of the nation for an idle rag; pollute it star by star; and cut out stripe by stripe as from the arm of a degraded soldier. Do anything for *dollars*."

And associated with this poisonous thirst for dollars was the incessant clamour for war. The Soviet Union and the countries of Eastern Europe refuse to accept or to worship dollars. Bomb them! While we have the monopoly of the atom bomb, destroy them off the face of the earth! In the Press, day after day, great glaring headlines. War, war, war. If we don't attack Russia while we have the advantage, we are lost. Books are published, one by Bullitt, a playboy ambassador, another by Byrne, ex-Secretary of State, and a whole host of others—bomb the Russians. Wipe them out before they have a chance of coming to America. What! My god, look over your shoulder, maybe they are here already. Listen to the political leaders, Republican and Democrat. What's the difference? Brother, don't ask me. Listen to them. "We've got to arm the nations of Europe and use them for our purposes." Not just as blunt as that, but that is what they mean.

I met a well-known Conservative Member of Parliament on a visit to America before I left New York.

"Did you ever read such papers?" he asked me.

I replied: "I have often talked about our Press at home being the 'Yellow Press', but in comparison to the American Press it's pure white."

"And the politicians", he went on. "Honestly, Gallacher, when I listen to them it makes me ashamed to admit that I am a politician."

I could sympathise with him. Yet these were the people who were offering a loan of dollars—a loan that kept us dependent on America and that, through an ever-increasing process of dependency, has forced us into a trade crisis with the dark shadows of a war of extermination looming heavily over the country.

## COAL AND SHINWELL

WHEN IN London I had a room at Chalk Farm with Olive and Page Arnot. They not only took care of my physical well-being, but also on the part of Page provided me when I got home at night with much-needed relief from the stress and turmoil of the day. For Page was engaged in writing a *History of the Miners*, a work that will be a classic for the mining industry.

The first volume is already published, the second is on the way. I had the opportunity, or should I say the privilege, of reading each chapter as it was typed. It is a story of bitter, long-sustained struggle against the rapacity of the mine-owners. In the course of this struggle there developed in the mining areas of the country a deep, intense hatred of the coal companies. In no other industry had feeling expressed itself as it did in the coal industry. Nationalisation had therefore become an urgent issue with the miners. This was their great hope for securing the shorter working week and a higher standard of wages. It should be noted that the miners were the first body of workers to get representation in Parliament. As Page Arnot says on page 55 of *History of the Miners*:

“Of this last Act [extension of the Franchise Act—W. G.] advantage was taken in the 1874 election when Alexander McDonald and Thomas Burt were elected to Parliament. Although they were Liberals, they were the first ‘Labour Members’, the first working-class representatives.”

From then on Liberals made way in certain constituencies for working-class representatives, later known as “Lib-Labs”. In 1888 it was again a miner, Keir Hardie, who stood for Mid-Lanark as the first Labour candidate, independent of and opposing the Liberals. In his first programme, which was backed by Cunningham Grahame, Sterling Robertson and the group that a few months later formed the Scottish Labour Party, there was, amongst other items, home rule for all territories and countries within the British Empire. That included Scotland and Wales. From that

time there was always as part of Labour policy for Scotland the now much-disputed question of a Scottish Parliament. Always that is, till 1947, when Morrison and company banned this proposal and frowned on any Scottish Labour member who gave it countenance.

Another item on Hardie's first programme was "Abolition of the House of Lords". Had he lived to see "Socialists" eagerly grasping at the opportunity of becoming a part of and sustaining this outworn relic of feudalism, he would have been strengthened in his desire for its abolition a thousandfold. He would have supported me when I said, in connection with Reform of the House of Lords (II.11.47):

"Today we hear Hon. Members opposite coming forward, as they have done in the past, and saying that they are so anxious to throw over the hereditary principle. They have been fighting to maintain the hereditary principle in this country generation after generation, yet now they say: 'Oh, we are not concerned about the hereditary principle.' Are they not? Will they apply the removal of the hereditary principle all around, from top to bottom? Will they? No, I do not think they will. But always, when they are faced with an attack of any kind, when they feel the people are likely to rise against them, they are prepared to make all kinds of concessions. As Tolstoy said: 'The wealthy will do anything for the poor but get off their backs.' So it is with the crowd opposite; when there is any proposal for dealing with such an anachronism as the House of Lords, they are ready to do anything but give up the Second Chamber, and what the Second Chamber means to them—the possibility of holding back the progress of the people of this country. . . .

"There is no justification, according to any democratic principle, for a Second Chamber. Either a Second Chamber has powers, or it has no powers. If it has no powers, it is no use, and if it has powers, they must be to stop progress being made by this House.

"The Hon. and Learned Gentleman, the Member for East Leicester [Mr. Donovan] asks what virtues there are in the two years more than in one year. I do not know why such a term is used in connection with such a Chamber. Many references have been made tonight to the Hon. Member for Oxford [Mr. Hogg]. I remember some years ago that the Hon. Member's respected parent and I were in conflict, as a result of which I went to Wands-

worth jail. Shortly after, his father went to the House of Lords. I would never allow anyone to say that he went into better company than I did. I would never admit that there is any virtue in two years, or in one year; I will not admit any virtue whatever in the House of Lords as a Second Chamber. I suggest that the Government should, at the earliest date, take their courage in both hands and carry out what leaders of the Labour Movement have always stood for in the years gone by—the abolition of the Second Chamber. This Chamber is quite capable of doing the job that requires to be done.” (Hansard, 11.11.47. Cols. 287-9.)

Hardie and the miners were strong for nationalisation of the mines. Each year that passed, each new struggle against the coal-owners, raised this question more and more urgently before them. One of Hardie’s first tasks, when he did get into Parliament, was to get a Bill presented for this purpose. So when on January 29, 1946, Shinwell introduced his Bill for the nationalisation of the mines, he was fulfilling a long-awaited hope and desire of the miners of Britain.

And Shinwell made the most of his opportunity. Clever, shifty, with a mind quick and active, he was able to express in the fullest degree the feelings and the aspirations of the miners. There was no real opposition from the Tories. As a matter of fact, when the Bill went to a Standing Committee for consideration of amendments—a Committee on to which I had been appointed—Shinwell was able to quote from a book written by the Rt. Hon. Harold McMillan, who was leading the Tory opposition on the Committee, in which he expressed the opinion that the only remedy for the crisis in the coal industry was nationalisation. Not only so, but in the latter stages of the war the Reid Report was published and was accepted by the Coalition Government.

This report, prepared as the result of a thorough examination of the mining industry by seven highly placed representatives of the big coal companies—not a miners’ representative among them—was a damning indictment of the British coal-owners. In general it could be said that they had taken all they could get out of the industry and put scarcely anything back in. The report just stopped short of nationalisation, but it was obvious to anyone who read it that nationalisation was the only hope, not only for the mining industry, but for all other industries dependent upon it. The Chairman of the Committee, Charles Carlaw Reid (later on



he was knighted) had been for many years General Manager of the Fife Coal Company. He was recognised to be one of our leading mining engineers, and as such really progressive. The Comrie Pit, of which much has been written, testifies to that. The Rothies Pit, which is at present being sunk and the first sod of which was cut the day before the pits were taken over by the Coal Board, will be an advance on Comrie.

Yes, Sir Charles was a progressive engineer. But in politics, when he came up against something he didn't like—and he certainly didn't like my politics—his mind just shut. During the war he was appointed, with Lord Traprain and James Barbour, to the Scottish Central Board for the mining industry in Scotland.

I spoke in the House and in the country against the consequent and quite unworkable dual control. Later I met the Control Board at Edinburgh to put my view before it. When I got into the room, Traprain and James Barbour were already there. We had to wait a few minutes for Carlaw. When he came in he glared at me and burst out with: "Come on, Gallacher, cards on the table. What's all this about dual control?"

I explained, in what I thought was a fairly clear and simple manner, what I had in mind. The Control Board had, presumably, control of the pits, and was responsible for production. But the coal companies, not the Control Board, had control of the mine managers, and they in turn had control and direction of the mines.

I insisted that the managers should be responsible to the Board and all differences between management and miners come immediately before the Board, instead of going to the companies' agents and then, failing solution, to the General Manager of the companies. Lord Traprain and James Barbour showed considerable interest in what I had to say, the latter making later on quite a fine contribution of his own. But as soon as I finished Carlaw barked: "A lot of damned nonsense."

I looked at the other two and I said: "That reminds me of a story Ponsonby tells in the life of his father. His father was Private Secretary to Queen Victoria and Ponsonby says that when they went to Balmoral an elderly Scottish lord always conducted the religious service. He had a habit when he was reading the scriptures of interjecting remarks of his own. On one occasion he gave them the following: 'It is easier for the camel to pass

through the needle's eye than for a rich man to enter the Kingdom of Heaven. A lot of damned nonsense. Let us pray.'"

The other two burst out laughing. Carlaw looked at them, then looked at me and quietly remarked: "Well, if it's in the Bible it's true." His mind had been shut tight.

But the Reid Report is a testimonial to his knowledge of the mining industry, and of the fact that he was prepared to take pretty ruthless measures to get it out of the hole it was in. At any rate, it was obvious to everyone that there was no active opposition to nationalisation on the part of the Tories. What they were principally concerned about was compensation. On this Shinwell and the Labour Government went right over to the Tories.

The idea was presented that there were only two alternatives: compensation in the form in which it was granted, or confiscation. This is not the case. I put forward a quite feasible proposition, on which any genuine working-class government could make a fight and get the support of the people. Compensation in the form it is now being paid means that we have a horde of "perpetual pensioners" battenning on the country.

My proposal was that the coal-owners and others affected by nationalisation should be given a life annuity comparable to their present income. There's nothing unfair or unjust about that. With the passing of the present generation of coal-owners, the country and the mining industry would be free of all liability. But no, they wouldn't accept this. Had they done so there would have been a real fight with the Tories, with victory sure in the hands of the working class.

In the Bill there was provision made for a global sum (£164 million) to be allocated to the mine-owners. The vesting day, the day on which the Act would become operative, was fixed for January 1, 1947. Two years was allowed in the Bill for the division of the global sum to the respective claimants. Two years seemed a long time to get through the "sharing-out of the loot". In the meantime, during these two years the Bill made provision for "interim payments" to the coal-owners out of the mining industry. For, while subsidies had been paid out to the mining industry when it was under private ownership, the Government made it clear that the industry, from the beginning, had to stand on its own feet and would get no assistance out of Government

funds. So, for 1947 and 1948 the coal-owners got "interim payments", about which I asked of the Minister of Fuel and Power the following question on July 22, 1948:

"... whether having regard to the economic position of the industry and of the country he will now introduce legislation to reduce the amount of compensation payable to the former owners, and also the interim income payable while the division of total compensation is under discussion."

MR. GAITSKELL: "No, Sir."

MR. GALLACHER: "I wish to ask the Minister, very seriously, would it not be very much better that the ex-coal owners should go on the National Assistance Board rather than that the industry should be handicapped in its efforts to get fully reconstructed? Why should money be paid out to these people in this manner? Will he not discuss with the leader of the House legislation to put a stop to it? . . ."

MR. EMRYS HUGHES: "Is the Minister aware that the latest report of the National Coal Board states that for the first quarter of this year it made a profit of £4,551,000, and that of this sum £3,800,000 is going to the coal-owners?" (Hansard, 22.7.48. Cols. 558-9.)

Then, towards the end of 1949, we were suddenly presented with a new, small Bill, entitled "Continuation of Interim Payments Bill", in which we were told that it had become necessary to make "provision for interim payments for 1949 and subsequent years". "Subsequent years." That's a sombre thought. There's a bunch of barristers and solicitors, I don't know how many, all working at the "division of the spoils".

It had been handed over by the Government to the coal-owners as a whole, but they couldn't agree on the split-up. It's their money, it's their problem the barristers and solicitors are working on; but they don't pay for them. I got the shock of my life when Gaitskell, who had succeeded Shinwell as Minister of Fuel and Power, told us that we were paying all expenses for these barristers and solicitors.

If the coal-owners had been made to pay, as they ought to be paying, I'll bet the job would have been completed long ago. "1949 and subsequent years." However hard things may be for the low-paid miners, it can certainly be said that the coal-owners and the barristers are getting "fair shares".

But in the committee stage of the Bill, Shinwell handled the situation with the skill of a master. The miners' representatives on the Committee and the miners throughout the country thought they had never seen his like. I doubt if anyone ever made such an impression as he made through his handling of that Bill. Compensation was forgotten or ignored. So with all other weaknesses. He was the champion of the miners and missed no opportunity of showing his strong partisanship for their cause. There was little for the rest of us to do, although now and again one or other of us would weigh in with a blast against the Tories. We were still close colleagues—the Labour members and the Communists. The Tories were still the enemy. The dollar propaganda had not yet got going properly in this country.

So we were all good friends and colleagues, anxious to get ahead with the job. So much so that when the Bill became an Act, and the Coal Board had to be set up, Shinwell, with the knowledge and consent of Attlee and the Labour Government, declared that the one man he wanted from the Miners' Union for the Coal Board was Arthur Horner, the Communist. Just think of that and of what is going on now since American monopoly capitalism has taken over this country. Horner for the National Coal Board, and Abe Moffat, the Communist, for the Scottish Coal Board. Yes, sir. They must get Horner. None of the others were of any use. Horner and Moffat were the two most able, most intelligent, most trustworthy men in the Miners' Union. I can understand how difficult it is for anyone to believe it, when you see what is being said and done today. But there it is, or there it was.

Why didn't our lads go on? Are we against helping nationalised industries? Certainly not, we are all for nationalisation and for playing our part in making it a success. But we don't believe it can be made successful by filling up boards with enemies of Socialism—with the friends of private enterprise.

Some Labour members argued with me on this topic. They said that we needed men who understood business methods. To which I replied that we had plenty such in the trade union and co-operative movements. The difference, I said, between the businessman and our own people is that the businessman has developed his mind, his whole mode of thought, along the lines of how to get the greatest advantage for the few, directors and

shareholders, regardless of the welfare of the many. After a lifetime of thinking that way, he cannot change.

Our own people, whatever their limitations, have always had to think of the welfare of the many, regardless of the interest of the few. That's why it now comes as such a shock to many workers when they hear trade union and Labour leaders defending profits against their demand for increased wages.

There, then, was our attitude to the boards. Make the boards representative of the working-class movement, whose main concern would be the men employed, with salaries similar to those of trade union officials, and our lads will go on. But they refused to go on as a sort of trade union cover for the activities of anti-socialist big-business manipulators.

But, despite his failure with Horner, Shinwell was on top of the world. Not only the miners but the workers in other industries, affected by the general atmosphere, looked on him as the outstanding "Left" in the Labour Government. The man who would fight the workers' cause come "hell or high water".

Then, in the winter of 1946-47, snow and ice froze up trucks on the railways, and power stations could not get their much-needed supplies of coal. It was a transport problem which was solved by using men from the forces to clear the snow and ice from the lines. But it provided a god-sent opportunity for Attlee.

He's a small man, Attlee, in every way, small in body, small of mind, not a deep or earnest thought in word or action. This roaring rabbit! This remark I happened to make when I was up home at Chalk Farm. "Oh", said Robin Page Arnot, "you don't have to have any trouble about that, Marx provides the answer." He turned to Olive, and he said, "Translate that description of Lord John Russell". So Olive got busy and provided me with the following translation from the German :

"His true talent consisted in the ability to reduce everything he touched to his own dwarf-like dimensions, to draw the outer world together into an infinitesimally small scale, and to turn it into a vulgar microcosm of his own invention. His instinct of making the great small is only surpassed by his art in making the small look large.

"As a speaker he has never let drop an idea worth mentioning, not one deep maxim, not a single weighty respectable

observation, not one powerful description, fine thought, lively allusion, humorous sketch, or true perception.

"He has a characteristic habit of combining his dry, drawling, monotonous, auctioneer-like delivery with pedantic illustrations from history and a certain pompous gibberish about 'the glory of the Constitution', 'common liberties of the country', 'civilisation', and 'progress'.

"He shows true warmth only when personally provoked or stung by his opponents out of his hypocritical attitude of arrogance and self-satisfaction into all the symptoms of impassioned weakness."

He reminds me of a foreman I knew in a small engineering shop. The few men employed were all easy-going, mediocre turners and fitters, and he and they got on happily together. Then one day he started a new man who turned out to be an exceptionally good engineer. Sammy, the foreman, nagged at him and pestered him till he got him out of the shop. Attlee must have felt like Sammy when he looked at Shinwell and realised that he was the most-talked-of man in the working-class movement. The "freeze-up" gave him his chance to deal with this growing menace. He knew the strength his own position gave him, and he knew the weaknesses of Shinwell—the fear of a struggle that would throw him further to the Left than he wanted to go. So although the clearing of the coal trucks was actually the responsibility of the Minister of Transport, he sent for Shinwell, not Barnes, and tried to shoulder him with all the blame. Shinwell should have told him off in straight language and told him to put the blame where it rightly belonged. When he refrained from doing this he was finished. The next step was to remove him from the job where he was dangerous and put him where he could do no harm to Attlee and no good for himself. From the mines to the War Office. From recognised spokesman of the working class to spokesman for the Brass-hats.

Oh Manny, Manny, "what a fall was there". No more a menace to Mr. Attlee or to Mr. Bevin—you know what you think of them, Manny. No more the spokesman for the working class. Just a "stooge", however high-sounding the title, a "stooge" for the imperialist war-makers of this country, and worse, much worse, a "stooge" for the imperialist war-makers of America.

In the House one night I could not resist reminding him how,

at an anti-war demonstration at Glasgow Green in 1918, while talking of the British bourgeoisie, "the real enemies of the working class" as he and so many of our present Labour leaders, including Ernie Bevin and Morrison, were wont to declare, he went on to say, "We'll hit them so hard we'll make their teeth rattle".

I always remembered that phrase and I remember many other things about him. For we were very close for many years. I was more than anyone else in Glasgow his confidant and friend. I have always had hopes of him. So quick, so brilliant, but always just one thing lacking, stability based on faith in the working class. Many times he has come up against trouble and shifted from one foot to the other. But the great test came when Attlee proposed to separate him from the workers who were pinning such faith on him. Had he said to Attlee, "My own job or no job", Attlee would have been defeated. Even if Attlee, in face of such a challenge, had put him out, the workers, particularly the miners, would have put him back in. But lack of faith was his undoing.

CHAPTER IV  
THE CRISIS

HUGH DALTON, as Chancellor of the Exchequer, was a big bluff, hearty, back-slapping Minister, with a loud, noisy voice and a still louder and noisier laugh. But no Minister was easier of approach. No trouble speaking to Hugh. You met him in the Lobby.

"Hello Hugh, I'd like to have a talk with you."

"Alright Willie", he'd boom. "What's it you want and I'll see what I can do to help you."

That is always how the members found him. He was a believer in a cheap-money policy, so those of us who were advocating a reduction in the interest rate found him particularly accommodating. Time and again I had raised this question, before, during and after the war. I always maintained that local authorities should get loans free of interest for building houses.

In one of my speeches I drew attention to the fact that the only justification that was ever given for charging interest was that the lender was taking a risk in lending his money, and the interest was payment for the risk he was taking. I denied that the money-lenders took a risk. They always made certain that there was collateral that would enable them to collect. I drew attention to some of the adverts in the press, "Money lent. Anything from £5 to £5,000. No security", and went on to say that if anyone could get me £5,000 without security I'd halve it with him.

But whatever justification there might be for interest on ordinary loans, and I was not prepared to admit there was any, there certainly could never be any justification for imposing interest rates on the local authorities for the building of houses. The loan was sure to be repaid. Not only so, but the more houses the local authorities are able to build, and the cheaper the rents at which they can let them, the better and healthier will be the general population.

As I said, on more than one occasion, the local authorities will return the highest form of interest any government or any nation can desire—strong men, healthy mothers and happy children.



Away back forty years ago, John McLean, John Wheatley, Davie Kirkwood and I were hammering away in Glasgow and the West of Scotland on this all-important question of housing. At that time local-authority building was unknown. Wheatley in particular came to the forefront with his demand for £8 cottages. Yes, cottage homes at a yearly rental of £8. Meetings were held, conferences called, every phase of housing was discussed, and always the demand was for housing for those in the greatest need. Housing with rents at a minimum. From then on that was always the main feature of housing policy. Low-rented houses for those who needed them most. Alas, we've got far away from that today. Every local authority, burdened by interest payments, is pushing rents up instead of down, so that it is not those in greatest need who get the houses but those who can afford to pay the rent.

Well, at any rate we got Hugh Dalton to reduce the interest rate to  $2\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. That was a help but it was just a start. We pressed on him to bring it down to 2 per cent with the hope that we might ultimately force it down to  $1\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. If you think this is drastic, just ask your local authority what it would mean in helping them to balance their Housing Accounts. But even the slight concession made by the Chancellor brought down on his head the wrath of the Tories. They never missed an opportunity of attacking him and his "cheap-money" policy. But he took it all in his stride and gave them back some heavy-handed knocks in the passing.

Then in May 1946 he made a speech at the Labour Party Conference, a speech high with optimism, in the course of which he declared: "I speak here today with a song in my heart."

How they fastened on that. Economic difficulties staggering in their immensity (how the Tories could exaggerate), a growing adverse balance of trade, and the Chancellor parades around with a "song in his heart". As the year drew towards its close and the difficulties increased, their taunts and jeers became louder and more persistent. "A song in his heart."

At first, when they jibed at him, he scorned them with his boisterous laugh. The song was obviously still there. But as the months passed the laugh was less hearty, until it was easy to be seen that even a tentative smile had to be forced to the surface. Then Easter 1947—so short a time, but what a change. He came to the House, not with a song in his heart but with a pain in his

head, to announce with all solemnity that we were in the throes of an economic crisis. It was a sad day for the Chancellor, and the Tories did not spare him.

What had happened between May 1946 and Easter 1947 to change the happy warrior into a prophet of gloom?

At the end of 1946 Truman removed controls from prices in America, and there was an almost immediate jump in prices of 40 per cent. Since the end of the war we had been getting, are still getting, a disproportionate amount of our goods from America while America takes very little in goods from us. That meant a serious adverse balance of trade in our relations with America. Even that, however, could have been faced and overcome; only for everything we got from America we had to pay in dollars. That's what held us back and held us down. We couldn't get the dollars to meet our commitments to America.

In such a situation there was only one thing to do, encourage alternative sources of supply. The alternative sources of supply were the Soviet Union and the food-producing countries of Eastern Europe. True, in the first years after the war, their export surplus would be limited; but had we supplied them with much-needed agricultural and other machinery, in the shortest possible time we would have been repaid with much-needed imports—free from dollar obligations. That's the important thing always to have in mind.

But we could not meet our dollar commitments to America—what's to be done?

"Don't worry", said the big-hearted American capitalists, "we'll lend you dollars to enable you to pay, sufficient to keep you going till the end of 1949."

But by the end of 1946, the dollar-loan was running out in payments to America at a greater rate than had been expected, and the question of retrenchment was already under serious consideration.

Then came the jump in prices, and that finished us. At the new rate of spending, the dollar loan would vanish by the end of 1947. Then we would be sunk. Not only was there the jump in prices to harass the unfortunate Chancellor, but Canada, which up until that time had been taking sterling payments, was now forced into a position by America where it also demanded dollar payments. We had not only to pay dollars to America, but we

had to pay dollars to Canada so that Canada could pay dollars to America.

And they try to kid us that the big-dollar boys are our friends. Never! Since the end of the war, America has been bleeding this country white and only providing a "hand-out" to keep us paying, to keep us enslaved.

See—when in 1949 we had long-drawn-out negotiations with the Argentine about a meat agreement, we were desperately short, and desperately in need of meat. Dr. Edith Summerskill informed the House that the Argentine was demanding dollar payments and excessive prices, and that we refused to meet these demands. Anthony Eden got up to declare for himself and for his Party that they were in complete agreement with the Government in refusing to be "blackmailed".

What do you think of that? "Blackmail", the foulest crime in the calendar. But he had nothing to say when I shouted across, "Hey, what about America?—America's been doing it all along."

We stood up to the Argentine and refused to be blackmailed. Why don't we stand up to America and say—"No dollar payments—no excessive prices." When Britain can do that, Britain will be free and independent. That's what we Communists want to see. This country strong and self-reliant. A country owned and controlled by its workers, with a happy, prosperous life for all, built on the sure foundation of socialist economy.

It's a lie, a gross foul lie, to say we serve, or desire to hand over this country, to the Russians or to anyone else. It's those traitors who have sold this country to the big-monopoly capitalists of America who peddle this lie as a cover for their own treachery.

When we had difficulty with the Argentine, where did we turn? We went to the Soviet Union and made a deal for a large supply of feeding stuff for our cattle, to extend our own herds and increase our own meat supplies. The grain was delivered according to schedule and with the highest regard to quality. Such was the statement made by the President of the Board of Trade. Who can fail to appreciate that this supply of feeding stuffs to extend our herds, strengthened us immeasurably in our dealings with the Argentine and made it possible for us to take the stand we did? And should it not be clear to even the dullest student of affairs, that by building up trade and friendship with the Soviet Union, we'd soon be strong enough to stand on our own feet and put an

end to the present one-sided trade between America and this country?

Anyhow, there's the cause of the crisis—dollar payments at excessive prices—a crisis forced on this country by the American capitalists. Deliberately created, deliberately maintained, in order to keep us under the control of the "Almighty Dollar".

This was what the Chancellor had to face when he came to the House with his Budget at Easter 1947. What had he to propose? Cut imports, cut domestic consumption, increase exports. No suggestion of an alternative source of supply. No proposals to place the burden on the big capitalists—no mention of a capital levy. No, the burden had to go on the people. Higher indirect taxation, with an awful jump in the price of tobacco and the minimum of goods for the working-class housewife.

When tobacco went up to 3s. 6d. an ounce, we made a special appeal for relief from the extra tax for old-age pensioners, disabled soldiers and other pensioners. Dalton was sympathetic to the proposal, but could not see how it could be operated. I drew up a very simple scheme and sent it to him. It was so simple his experts would not look at it. They worked for a month, those experts, trying to find a difficult method of working it, then having failed in their efforts had to apply the exceptionally simple scheme I had offered a month before. Only where I proposed two ounces of tobacco per week at 1s. an ounce, they made it one ounce a week at 2s. Apart from this and the failure to extend it to the disabled soldiers and long-term hospital cases, the scheme is as I presented it. A simple, easily applied method of dealing with such a concession, but marred because of narrow parsimony.

On this I had the following to say when we discussed the Finance Bill on June 1, 1948:

"Take the position of elderly people who are not old-age pensioners. They are not given the tobacco concession, and they have to pay the full amount for it. It is the same with the disabled soldiers, the men to whom we pledged our all. Everything was going to be done for them when they came back, and now these disabled soldiers, if they want to smoke, have to pay 3s. 6d. an ounce for black twist. I do not know the price of other brands.

"In addition to the disabled ex-soldiers there are the long-term hospital cases where the wife or the mother at home is

making every kind of sacrifice in order to make things as easy as possible for the husband or son in the hospital. Yet this heavy penalty is imposed on them of having to pay this additional tax. . . .

"When any kind of concession is made it is always the minimum concession instead of being broad-minded and humanitarian in a way which would cover all those in need. This concession was given solely to the old-age pensioners and the others were left out. I want to make an appeal to Members on this side of the Committee to bring pressure to bear upon the Chancellor so that an end can be made of this extra tax, and if it cannot be withdrawn altogether at any rate to force the Chancellor to withdraw it from the disabled soldiers, from the long-term hospital cases and from the elderly people of sixty-five and upwards who do not happen to be old-age pensioners." (Hansard, June 1, 1948, Cols. 839-40.)

Hard work, greater production, more and ever more exports. This latter soon became the daily chant not only of the Tory leaders but of the Labour leaders as well.

Cut down home consumption—increase exports. Yet prior to the 1945 election, Mr. Aneurin Bevan wrote a small book which was published by Gollancz, and was widely used in the election campaign, entitled *Why Not Trust the Tories?* Mr. Bevan supplied a number of arguments to show why the Tories should not be trusted. In general his arguments were quite sound, particularly his strongest one, the one on which he placed the greatest weight. What was it? If the Tories are returned, he argued, they will go all out for exports at the expense of living standards. He quoted Churchill, he quoted Erskine Hill and other Tories, on this subject; then he went on :

"The logic of that is clear. We are to accept a lower standard of life in order to sell more goods abroad. . . . But if we accept a lower standard of life in order to export more goods, by that very act we require less goods from other nations and so make it more difficult for them to buy from us.

"If we adopt a policy of scarcity here we help to impose it on other nations, and the last result will be worse than the first. . . . Plenty begets plenty and scarcity begets scarcity. . . .

In short, attempts at increasing exports by lowering consumption contract the world market instead of expanding it. It is a gospel of despair, of desperation, and of ultimate disaster."

Well, it looks as though he was right about "ultimate disaster", although it is not the Tories but he himself and his colleagues who are operating the policy.

I took the opportunity, during the discussion that followed Dalton's speech, to point out that an economic crisis could not be overcome by cutting down the amount of goods the people consumed. That is the way to make a crisis. Always in the socialist movement, from its earliest days, we showed that all capitalist crises arose from the accumulation of capital in private hands and the mad competitive scramble that increases the output of goods while at the same time the purchasing power of the working people is kept down. Thus there is a gap between what is produced and what is consumed, and hence a crisis of over-production—"poverty amidst plenty". Always we insisted that more and more of the goods they produced should go to the people until their final emancipation, when the exploitation of man by man would be ended for ever.

Here, for instance, is a quotation I made from a book written by Attlee in 1937, entitled *The Labour Party in Perspective*:

"In every country in the world where modern capitalism has developed there is to be found in some form or another a revolt of those who suffer from its conditions and reject its assumptions. . . . The evils that capitalism brings differ in intensity in different countries, but the root cause of the trouble once discerned, the remedy is seen to be the same by thoughtful men and women. The cause is the private ownership of the means of life, the remedy is public ownership."

Never did we dream that alleged Socialists would come along and advocate the opposite. Less for the people, more for export.

It's the dollar situation that is responsible for this position, yet the fact remains that no matter how high exports go, and there is a limit to the possibilities, we can never through exports solve the dollar problem. Never. But they went ahead with their cuts, their increased taxation, and their higher exports as a cure for the crisis.

Then in the autumn we got another—an autumn—budget, which gave the Chancellor an opportunity of showing how his

cure had worked. Was the situation better? Were we feeling a bit easier as a result of the cuts earlier in the year? No, the situation was very much worse. Instead of getting out of the crisis, we were getting deeper in. Glum, everybody glum, not a cheerful face anywhere.

Yet the way out was there, as simple and clear as the scheme for the pensioners' tobacco. Put the burden on the capitalist class—make a real cut in their profits and their capital, and develop new sources of non-dollar supply. There's how to solve the crisis, and the only way to solve it. Get your experts on the job. Dozens of them, hundreds of them, all of them that can be collected. Let them twist and turn and wriggle over every kind of complicated and meaningless formula, such as cuts in domestic consumption with increased exports, they will never make it equal dollar commitments.

In the House I tried to hammer this home: the only way to end the dollar crisis is to end dollar payments—and dollar commitments. Time and again Labour Members have said to me: "That was a great speech, Willie, one of the best I ever heard you make", but that was as far as it seemed to get with them. I had, apparently, like G. B. Shaw's hero in *Man and Superman*, talked well enough to interest them, but the content of what I said did not seem to matter. So far as the House of Commons was concerned I was wasting my breath.

The cuts had brought no remedy. The situation had worsened. So what to do? More cuts, still higher taxes, and ever-greater drive for exports. So we staggered along till another budget was due at Easter 1948. Once again Dalton took the floor only to report a further setback. The alleged remedy was destroying any hope of recovery. But on the way into the House Dalton, in his loud, breezy manner, had talked to a reporter and given him a lead on what was in his budget. The reporter rushed for a phone and got on to his paper. In the normal course of events his story would have got an edition which would have appeared after the Chancellor's speech. But an earlier edition was being held up for a "Stop-press" report of a race. The budget secret caught the stop-press of this edition, which was on the street as the Chancellor got up to make his budget speech.

This was disastrous for Dalton. Nobody had gained anything by the report. It appeared too late for the gamblers to make use

of it. Nevertheless, Dalton was doomed. The day before, one of the foremost leaders on the Tory front bench, Oliver Stanley, had accused Dalton with his cheap money policy of being a menace to the financial stability of the country, and demanded his removal from the office of Chancellor. The Tories, it will be observed, after their period of submersion, had now come to the surface and were feeling quite bossy. In such circumstances there was no hope for Dalton. The Tories would have him out, and out he had to go. He apologised to the House for his mistake and his apology was accepted by the House. It seemed the matter was ended. Next day, however, the Tories renewed their attack and demanded a Select Committee to inquire into his indiscretion. Attlee and Morrison agreed to such a committee and brought in a motion to that effect.

I was the only Member to speak against it. Phil and several of the Labour Members agreed with what I said. Here it is:

"I do not think it possible for this motion to be passed without comment, and without the proposal being made that it should be rejected. I consider as shameful the way this matter has been treated, and the attitude which has been adopted in regard to a mistake made by the Right Hon. Gentleman the Member for Bishop Auckland [Mr. Dalton]. The Prime Minister said the other day that there is nothing to reveal and nothing to conceal. If that is the case, and I am certain it is the case, what is the necessity for this motion? Everyone knows the character of the mistake which was made. I am quite sure that the Right Hon. Gentleman, when he spoke to the journalist concerned, was quite certain in his own mind that it was impossible for the matter to reach the streets before he made his speech. That was the mistake. He made a frank and manly statement in this House in regard to his mistake, and it was accepted by the House and by the leader of the opposition.

"It was a shock to all of us to discover that the matter had taken such a course, but I consider it is very undesirable to carry it still further. I am definitely of the opinion that the right honourable gentleman should not have given up his position as Chancellor of the Exchequer for the mistake he made. I want to put on record my very strong objections to this Motion." (Hansard, November 20, 1947, Cols. 1,467-8.)



There's a lot of lads, such as Crossman of Coventry, who have tried hard to talk themselves on to the front bench. Dalton succeeded in reversing the process. He talked himself off it. The one day he presented his budget, the next day, to the delight of the Tories, he was out.

His successor was his exact opposite in appearance, manner and approachability. To the loud acclamation of the Tories, Sir Stafford Cripps, cold, inhuman, aloof, came in to fill the gap created by the resignation of Dalton. If Dalton had "scourged us with whips", Cripps was to "whip us with scorpions".

With every series of cuts, as has been remarked, the crisis worsened. Now Cripps came forward with the heaviest cuts of all. To cuts in domestic consumption were added cuts in capital expenditure. Cuts in Government expenditure on housing, health and education, but no cuts in armament expenditure. Cripps, allegedly a Socialist, yes and allegedly a Christian, a presumed follower of the Prince of Peace, there he was, proposing cuts in all directions affecting the health, the education and the well-being of the people, but resolute in maintaining the armaments demanded by the American and British imperialists.

The pretext for this heavy burden of armaments is always given as fear of an attack from the Soviet Union, the great First Socialist Republic. What sort of men are these, who were wont in days gone by to posture and prate on socialist platforms—men who so often declared that all modern wars were brought about by the rapacity and greed of the capitalists, and who now in the service of the dollar demagogues of the United States repudiate their own past, burn, as it were, their own books, and keep going the fear-some propaganda and policy that may bring the whole world down in ruins?

Let us here, before dealing with the cuts in capital expenditure and the alleged and utterly fantastic "menace-of-Russia" story, have a look at some of these characters, to find out if we can what they are made of.

## CHAPTER V

### MEN OF CHARACTER (?)

*"O villains, vipers, damn'd without redemption!*

*Dogs, easily won to fawn on any man."*

(Shakespeare, *King Richard II.*)

WHEN CHURCHILL took over the premiership from Chamberlain he sent Sir Stafford Cripps to Moscow as British Ambassador. Cripps had been expelled from the Labour Party because of his association with the I.L.P. and the Communist Party in a peace and unity campaign during 1938-39. He had, as a consequence, a reputation of being an extreme left-wing socialist. This reputation was completely misleading. My experience with him during the unity campaign left me in no doubt about that. But anyhow, having such a name, Churchill apparently thought it would a friendly gesture to send such a man to the Soviet Union. But it would have required someone with more political guts than Cripps to bring about any change in the atmosphere that prevailed at the British Embassy in Moscow.

All our diplomats, wherever they are, are anti-Soviet. This is particularly so in the Moscow Embassy. In his magnificent book, *The Diplomat*, James Aldridge makes a scathing exposure of what goes on in that establishment. No attempt of any kind is made to get acquainted or to make friendship with the Soviet people or the Soviet leaders. On the contrary, every conceivable barrier is erected to keep the Embassy and the Embassy staff in ignorance of what is going on around them. Visitors from other Embassies pay regular visits to our Embassy and exchange every form and sample of anti-Soviet gossip. It would be difficult to get people more ignorant of the Soviet Union than those, our representatives, who are resident in Moscow, the heart and hub of Soviet life. Yet it is from the Embassy that the Foreign Office, and through the Foreign Office the Government, gets information on the Soviet Union and advice on what our relations should be.

The advent of Cripps made no change in the unfriendly anti-

Soviet atmosphere of the British Embassy, nor in the nature of the "information" that came out of it. This was made manifest when Hitler invaded the Soviet Union.

"This is the finish for Hitler", I said to Alex Sloan. "The whole Soviet people will rise against him and he can never conquer a resolute people."

But the Foreign Office, Churchill and the members of his Government, were led to believe something entirely different. "Three months and the Soviet Union will be out of the war." That was the confirmed opinion of all the people "in the know". When Cripps returned to London there was no change in the general opinion. The Red Army was on the point of collapse. Any day now would see its finish. Cripps made a report to Churchill and the Government. What it was, was never made public; but whispers went around the corridors that the report was anything but favourable. But discounting the whispers, there is Elliott Roosevelt's report of Churchill arguing with his (Elliott's) father about supplies to the Soviet Union. Better, Churchill argued, to give the supplies to Britain. When Russia collapses they will fall into the hands of Hitler.

"When Russia collapses." There was no doubt in his mind as to what was going to happen. No "if Russia collapses". He had been getting information and so he was quite definite on the subject. Later on, when the Red Army was, in his own words, "tearing the guts" out of the Nazi armies, he used the expression in the House of Commons, "the un hoped for, undreamt of, victories of the Red Army".

From this it is abundantly clear that he and the experts had been hopelessly misled. For this the Embassy in Moscow, even with Cripps as Ambassador, must be held responsible. But when the war had been brought to a victorious conclusion, thanks in the main to the heroism and sacrifice of the Soviet people, the same Sir Stafford Cripps wrote an introduction to a book which claimed to be a life of Stalin, from which introduction I quote :

"This book deals with one of the greatest men of all time judged by the immensity of the changes he has brought about in the largest country in the world. Unless we appreciate the purpose of the Revolution and the policy of the man who has been responsible for its direction ever since the death of Lenin, we shall be incapable of carrying out our own policy of friend-

ship and co-operation with the Soviet Union. Upon the success of this policy our own future and the future of the world will very largely depend."

Did Cripps really mean this? Was he genuine when he wrote it? I don't think so. I am of the opinion that he was just "mouthing" what was popular at the moment, merely echoing what had already been said by his master, Churchill, a few months earlier. Compare this: Churchill in Parliament on August 2, 1944:

"In talking about all these various campaigns that are going on at once all over the world, I have left the obvious essential fact till this point, namely, that it is the Russian armies who have done the main work in tearing the guts out of the German Army. . . .

"I salute Marshal Stalin, the great champion, and I firmly believe that our twenty years' treaty with Russia will prove to be one of the most lasting and durable factors in preserving the peace and the good order and the progress of Europe." (Hansard, August 2, 1944, Col. 1474.)

The similarity is obvious. When account is taken of what has happened since, what is there can be said of such men?

What should be said of Cripps, who for so long paraded around as an extreme "left-wing" socialist? "Where is the mountain that will cover my iniquity, where the torrent that will wash away my shame?" You may think that I don't like Cripps. Well, if it's a guess, you've guessed correctly. I don't. I can remember him, all too well, when he was outside the Labour Party and before he had been taken over by Churchill.

I wonder, does he ever think of those days now he is lined up with the anti-Communist campaign of the Big American multi-millionaires? That should be graven on his conscience, if he can now afford such a luxury.

Then, take the egregious Strachey. While I write, the *Evening Standard* is making a sensational man-hunt out of the "spy scare" that has become an essential part of the war preparations of the imperialists. The purpose of the *Standard* attack is to throw dirt on the Communists. Strachey plays up to this. He is now an enemy of Communism. He is prepared to say or do anything against it. Was there ever such grovelling? I'll bet if the *Evening Standard* had challenged him to collect the books he had written

and to make a bonfire of them in Trafalgar Square, he'd have agreed to do it.

He wrote a series of pseudo-Marxist articles for the *Daily Worker* and for a time made a pose of being an authority on Marx and Revolution. But I could never take to him. He was, in my opinion, too unstable, too unreliable.

Later events gave a striking demonstration of his lack of stability and the ease with which he could jump from one position to another. We have had too much experience and too much trouble with such "characters" playing around our Party.

Take Mainwaring, the member for Rhondda East. He was at one time tutor in the National Council of Labour Colleges in London. I was invited there on one occasion, to give a lecture to the students. Mainwaring and Sandy Robertson, an old friend of mine from Glasgow, were there as the tutors in charge. I gave an address on Revolutionary Politics. When I finished, some questions were asked, but all the time the students were looking at Mainwaring, the Marxist(?), to see what he had to say. After considerable hesitation he took the floor. He opened up with "Comrade Gallacher knows I am a Communist, but he'll agree with me that a Communist can do better work outside of the Communist Party than in it". He kept that sort of thing going for quite a time, then he delivered himself of what might be called an ultimatum, "When the Communist Party is worth joining, I'll be the first to join it". That's right. Plunk, out like that.

I looked at the students, and I asked them, "Have you ever, anywhere, heard anything like that? He says I know that he is a Communist. I can assure you I don't, and nothing he has said here would lead me to believe him. Consider, have you ever heard anything so presumptuous? If Harry Pollitt and the rest of us battling against adversity succeed in building a Party strong enough to attract Mr. Mainwaring, he'll generously condescend to join up with us. Well, let me tell Mr. Mainwaring that if our Party becomes strong enough to attract him, I hope it will be strong enough to keep him out."

Then there were my very words, and the popularity or otherwise of Mr. Mainwaring was evidenced by the cheers and laughter of the students.

And talking of a miners' agent, brings us naturally to the case of a miners' President, to the benighted Lawther, Sir William,

no less. Oh, the boasts he made. Nothing would ever turn him against the Soviet Union, nothing would ever turn him against the Communist Party. Here is what he had to say at a Labour Party Conference before he was qualified for a knighthood:

"We say quite frankly that in our campaign for increased wages the Communist Party helped us with our literature—not theirs—went to . . . places we could never touch and delivered it. . . .

"Therefore we are convinced and determined that, on no consideration whatever, shall we incorporate in our rules, resolutions excluding from membership men whose only crime is they think a bit differently or a bit more quickly than the majority."

What can one say of such men as these? All of us, as the years grow upon us, look back over the past, and lament our mistakes and failings. None of us can be free of them. But it is somewhat of a comfort to know that we've always tried to give service to a great cause, that we've always been loyal to those with whom we've worked, who, like ourselves, had the cause and that alone at heart. But, as I think of some of these people, all I can say is, I wouldn't like to have their memories.

## CHAPTER VI

### THE PEOPLE BEAR THE BURDEN

BEFORE THE American-manufactured crisis hit Britain, the Labour Government was already well on the Tory road. Feeling was strong in the ranks of the Parliamentary Labour Party about Bevin's foreign policy. The critics were many, the supporters were few—the opposite was the case on the Tory benches. Many of these Labour members tried to console themselves with the astounding contradiction, that although the Government was pursuing a Tory policy abroad, it was pursuing a socialist policy at home.

I talked often with one or other of them, and tried to hammer some sense into them. But their capacity for self-delusion, a necessary pre-requisite for carrying illusions out among the workers, was impervious to attack. What they didn't want to see, they wouldn't see. Yet it should be clear to all of them that foreign policy must be brought into harmony with home policy, or home policy would have to be brought into line with foreign policy. There could not possibly be a situation where home and foreign policy were travelling in opposite directions.

The "Keep-Leftists" thought they could get over this by the advocacy of a middle-way foreign policy. There was Communist Russia on the one side, and rapacious American capitalism on the other. The middle way, according to these, in their own opinion, very clever gentlemen, was a socialist foreign policy.

"Socialism a middle way between Communism and Capitalism!" Heard ye ever the like of it? Karl Marx and Frederick Engels were the founders of scientific socialism as distinct from utopian socialism. They were Socialists. Who will dare deny it? They were also Communists. It was Marx who said, "Socialism is the only hope of the workers, all else is illusion". And in the concluding paragraphs of the *Communist Manifesto* we read :

"The Communists disdain to conceal their views and aims."

And we should not forget that the Labour Party published a

"Centenary Edition" of the *Communist Manifesto*, from which we get the following:

"In presenting this Centenary volume of the *Communist Manifesto*, with the valuable historical introduction by Professor Laski, the Labour Party acknowledges its indebtedness to Marx and Engels as two of the men who have been the inspiration of the whole working-class movement."

In the preface to the 1890 German Edition, Engels gives the reason why they could not call it a Socialist Manifesto. Not because its content was not socialist, quite other reasons. Let Engels tell it.

In 1847, he states, two kinds of people were considered socialists:

"... on the one hand the adherents of the various Utopian systems ... on the other hand, the most multifarious social quacks, who by all manner of tinkering professed to redress, without any danger to capital and profit, all sorts of social grievances."

It was in order that the *Manifesto* be distinguished from such quacks that it became necessary to give it a distinct working-class character, which would leave no room for confused interpretations. And so, it was launched on the world as the *Communist Manifesto*. For, as Engels adds, "whatever portion of the working class ... had proclaimed the necessity of a total social change, called itself Communist."

But always it must be understood, its content is socialist and communist. There can never be any hope of a communist society except on the foundation of a socialist economy. Socialism is the alternative form of economy to capitalist economy. Common ownership of the land and the means of production, distribution and exchange, as against private ownership and private profit. On a socialist foundation new social relations will be established. There will be no landlord class, no capitalist class. No superiors, no inferiors. All men and women will stand on an equal economic footing, one towards another. "And then no man will be glad, at his brother's fall or mishap, to snatch at the job he had."

And how that applies to Parliament!

How greedily they watch if there is a likelihood of a Minister or an Under-Secretary losing his job. How quick they are to jump into the vacant place, if the job-giver makes the signal. No friendship, no loyalty is allowed to stand in the way. I don't



suppose there is a case on record where one has had the manhood to say, "No, I'm not taking the job, so and so is a friend of mine and I think he is getting a dirty deal."

A classic case was when Lloyd George, quite high-handedly and quite unjustifiably, dismissed from his Cabinet the trade unionist Arthur Henderson—a clear case of victimisation—and the trade unionist George N. Barnes, without the slightest hesitation, walked in and took over his job. What a business. Just offer an Under-Secretaryship to any of the "Keep-Lefts" and see what happens. As a matter of fact they didn't have to be offered jobs. A cold blast from Transport House and the "Keep-Lefts" went spinning over to the Right.

There is now no more talk of a middle road, no more talk of socialism. It is now the "Welfare State". To quote Engels again :

"Social quacks who by all manner of tinkering professed to redress, without any danger to capital and profit, all sorts of social grievances."

That is where we have got to with the Labour Government. For the crisis, when it came, was the test. Who would bear the burden—capital and profit—or the people? Dalton's cuts were a start—the cuts in capital expenditure introduced by his successor went the whole way. Profits had to be protected whatever the price the people had to pay.

I and Phil, with D. N. Pritt and a number of Labour men, put up strong opposition to these cuts, but always in these matters a combination of Tories and Labour were able to carry them through.

Right away came a great cut in the housing programme. Gone were the election pledges to treat this vital issue as a "military operation". Gone and forgotten was Aneurin Bevan's declaration in the first months after the election, that before this Parliament was ended the back of the housing problem would be broken. In Scotland the local authorities had planned to build 60,000 houses during 1948. This was cut down to 24,000.

Early in May the Buckhaven and Methil local authority asked me to come and meet them on the housing question. They had planned and had sites for 160 houses. They were cut down to sixty-five. Already they had got ahead with quite a number. When I was there, in May, fifty had the roofs on. That left them

with only another fifteen for the rest of the year. They had a good team of building workers which was, as a consequence, threatened with break-up. It was an all-Labour council, with one Communist member. They were feeling very bitter about the business and decided to send a deputation to the Scottish Office, St. Andrew's House, Edinburgh, to put the case for a bigger allocation.

I accompanied the delegation which was received by the Under-Secretary of State, Mr. Robertson. A very strong attack was made on the cuts by the members of the delegation, after which we got a statement from the Under-Secretary. It was long and rambling, never getting anywhere except for a continued repetition of the phrase, "We're short of timber". When he was reminded that there were dockers on short time at the Leith Docks and that not a single shipload of timber had come in from the Baltic, he muttered something about Government policy being outside of his control. It never seemed to strike him that he ought to have made an effort to change Government policy to ensure that timber would be available. It was a wasted afternoon. On that all of us were agreed.

Another problem affecting us in Scotland in relation to housing, was that caused by the activities of the Scottish Special Housing Association. This body was set up by the Baldwin Government as an auxiliary to the local authorities. It was originally intended that it should build houses in areas that would prove difficult for the local authorities. Now it is all over the place, so that there may be on one side of a street local authority houses, while on the other side the Special Housing Association has done the job. In such circumstances trouble soon arose. The Special Houses were let at rents considerably dearer than the council houses. This upset the points system of the local authorities. Tenants whose turn it was to get houses, would not go into the dearer-rented houses, so these had to be let to those who could afford to pay—often quite out of their turn.

Complaints arose in a number of districts. The Clydebank Town Council called a conference of local authorities affected. This conference also decided to send a delegation to the Scottish Office. Davie Kirkwood and I, as the only Scottish M.P.s who attended the conference, were appointed to accompany the delegation. On this occasion also we were in the hands of Mr. Robert-

son, who was the Under-Secretary in charge of housing.

Davie Kirkwood put the case for the local authorities, which was supplemented by several of the delegation. Again in his reply Mr. Robertson meandered on for about half-an-hour, ending up at a dog-racing track and the local pub. Yes, he told us he couldn't understand why people could not pay the rents referred to. "Up where I live", he said, "there is a dog-racing track, and they appear to have money for that and for the public house."

From the other end of the table I interrupted him. "Hey", I exclaimed, "what's the matter with you? You're supposed to be a Socialist, and you're serving up the same old stuff the Tories used to give us forty years ago."

He stuttered for a bit, then finished up the meeting without giving the least satisfaction to anyone present.

Scottish housing is an exceptionally serious problem. Whatever may be said about health in other directions, the fact remains that the incidence of tuberculosis and deaths from this dread disease are on the increase. When national insurance was first introduced in 1912 I got appointed on to a Sanatorium Committee in my home town, Paisley. From then on I have periodically visited sanatoria in different parts of the country. I have sat and talked to hundreds of patients and 99 per cent of those affected came from tenement slums or rural slums, where the housing conditions and the drainage sapped at the health from infancy.

The root of tuberculosis is bad housing and the bad, fetid air that goes with bad housing. At the rate of 24,000 a year Scotland can never overtake its terrible housing problem—can never make headway against this wasting disease that is eating its way into the fibre of our people. Clear the slums—build the houses—and tuberculosis can be overcome.

The cuts in capital expenditure have doomed many of our people to lingering death. The "pious" Sir Stafford Cripps should think of that. Then consider education. In 1944, we passed the Education Act. We decided in favour of raising the school-leaving age to sixteen, but we left the date for this in abeyance. We fixed a date, however, for raising the school-leaving age to fifteen. Of course we expected that all the necessary arrangements would be made to meet the new situation that would be created. New schools, full educational facilities, and the necessary teaching staff.

The appointed day arrived, and, automatically, up went the

school-leaving age. Then what do we find? Many of the children from fourteen to fifteen get the same education in the same classes, as from thirteen to fourteen. A wasted year. They cannot be pushed forward, so they block the way for those coming behind. It has become increasingly difficult to make room at the other end for the five-year-olds.

In Scotland there is a crisis in the schools. We cannot get teachers for higher education—science and maths graduates go into industry where they get substantial salaries instead of going in for teaching. We discussed this very important subject in the Scottish Grand Committee, with Mr. Woodburn as Scottish Secretary of State in charge. In the course of the discussions one of the Conservatives offered the fatuous observation that the teachers had won the esteem of the community, and he hoped they would not lose it by making excessive demands for salary increases. To this I replied that the lads going into industry were not worrying about esteem—they got good salaries. I went on to say that for the sake of the children we had to get the best teachers, and we could only expect to get them if we paid the best salaries.

Mr. Woodburn, a "socialist" (?) who used to go around Scotland giving lectures on Marxism, made the appalling observation that we could only hope that sooner or later the industries would become saturated, then they (the graduates) would have to take jobs in the schools. In other words, we could only hope that sooner or later the well-paid jobs would all be filled and then they'd be forced to take the poor-paid jobs.

We can never deal with our educational problems under such conditions. Yet instead of facing up to this, new economies are being demanded in the schools. The cuts in capital expenditure hamper housing and hold back education.

And the Health Service—what has happened to it?

Mr. Bevan, on one occasion, declared, "The Health Service is sacrosanct. There can be no cuts there". Conveniently forgetting that serious cuts had already been made, Mr. Bevan, who is inclined to be a bit flamboyant on the public platform, has time and again made the somewhat rash pronouncement that we have the finest Health Service in the world. Members of the Labour Party have lapped that up and spread it far and wide. I only wish it were true. But we'll take Mr. Bevan as chief witness against his own claim.

When the Health Bill was introduced on April 30, 1946, he said there were three factors that went to make an efficient Health Service. First hospitals—they were there already. Second doctors—they also were already functioning. Then, he went on—it's his story, not mine:

"The third instrument to which the Health Services are to be articulated is the Health Centre, to which we attach very great importance indeed. . . . The general practitioner cannot afford the apparatus necessary for a proper diagnosis in his own surgery. This will be available at the Health Centre. . . . The Centres will vary; there will be large centres at which there will be dental clinics, maternity and child welfare services, and general practitioners' consultative facilities, and there will be smaller centres—surgeries where practitioners can see their patients. . . .

"The small ones are necessary, because some centres may be a considerable distance from people's homes. So it will be necessary to have simpler ones, nearer their homes, fixed in a constellation with the larger ones." (Hansard, April 30, 1946, Cols. 57-8.)

"Fixed in a constellation." The Minister has been out on a starry evening. He has gazed into the firmament of heaven and been hypnotised by Orion and the Great Bear. Maybe gone wandering off along the Milky Way, coming back to earth inspired with a grandiose picture flashing through his mind. But it has remained a picture. Never a constellation anywhere in the country—not even a solitary Health Centre. Here's how he ended his speech:

"I should have thought it ought to have been a pride to honorary members in all parts of the House that Great Britain is able to embark upon an ambitious scheme of this proportion. When it is carried out it will place this country in the forefront of all countries of the world in medical services. . . . (Hansard, April 30, 1946, Col. 63.)

"When it is carried out." It never has been carried out, but the Minister of Health goes on talking as though it had, while the general practioners still "cannot afford the apparatus necessary for a proper diagnosis".

One day in the House, I asked the Minister if he would not follow the example of his great compatriot, the late Lloyd George,

who made a visit to Germany when he was preparing his Unemployment Insurance Scheme, and in his case make a visit to Czechoslovakia and see what a Health Centre looked like. I did not get any thanks for the suggestion. On the contrary, I got an indignant scowl.

Not only have they Health Centres in Czechoslovakia, but also they have Health Resorts. I don't mean convalescent homes—Health Resorts. My wife and I had the opportunity of visiting Karlovy Vary (Karlsbad) and Mariánské Lázně (Marienbad), two of the finest health resorts in Europe, built for Emperors and Kings; now for the first time ordinary workers go to these famous Spas to "take the waters". Mariánské Lázně was even more select than Karlovy Vary. When you drive into the Spa, there are luxury hotels all along one side of the street, and wooded gardens on the other. At the top there is a cross-street—more luxury hotels. On the surrounding hills, still more of them, many with English names such as the "Gold" Hotel, the "Astoria", the "Titanic" and one really magnificent place, "The King of England". Most of these hotels are now administered by the trade unions on behalf of the national health service.

All over the country, in Moravia as in Slovakia, similar health resorts are at the service of the workers. My wife and I were in the Pacific Hotel in Mariánské Lázně, and an old-timer on the staff told us how King Edward VII had been a regular visitor there, and about the banquets that took place with no one but Royalty in attendance.

Well, it's the workers who are doing the banqueting now, I told him; but I could see that he preferred the Royalty. He was accustomed to bowing before pomp and ceremony and he could not take to the free-and-easy conditions that now prevailed.

One day, while I was standing outside the hotel, a young couple approached me. He was a tall, fair young fellow, a fine type of working-class lad. She was a bit shy and seemed to be holding back. Maybe they were a newly married couple. I don't know. He spoke to me in Czech. I shook my head and said "English". He spoke sufficient English to be understood. He wanted to know how to get to the waters. The "waters" I may mention, come spouting up from the ground and are supplied in special jugs and slowly consumed as the drinkers parade along a beautiful prom-

## THE PEOPLE BEAR THE BURDEN

enade. I directed the lad on his way. Apologetically he said "My first time here", to which I made reply, "My first time too".

"Yes", was his comment, "but I'm a Czech."

"The first time", so many workers can say. For hitherto such places were the preserve of the privileged few. Health Centres, according to the Minister, are essential for an efficient Health Service. The cuts in capital expenditure rule them out. The burden must be borne by the people.

## CHAPTER VII

### MARSHALL AID (?)

ECONOMY CUTS or cuts in capital expenditure were of no avail. They could not get Britain out of its difficulties. Nor could increased exports. The crisis is not a production crisis, nor an export crisis. It is, as has already been stated, a dollar crisis—a dollar deficit, and all the exports in the world are useless in so far as solving it is concerned unless they bring in dollars to feed the insatiable greed of the American monopoly capitalists. So either find alternative sources of supply, or down we go.

That was how matters stood when General Marshall stepped in. General Marshall was a member of the Generals' and Bankers' Government of the United States. He was, in fact, the Secretary of State (equivalent to our Foreign Secretary). But to have a "Brass-hat" parading around as a Foreign Secretary would not look so good. All the blah-blah about "democratic institutions" would hardly go down if they were mouthed by a military chief. So the "General" was dropped and for the successful carrying out of American imperialist policy he became plain Mr. Marshall.

But by dropping the title, did he cease to be a Brass-hat, did he cease to be a friend and colleague of the Bankers and Generals who made up the Government? Surely not. Clearly realising the danger that confronted capitalism in Britain and Western Europe, he made a speech in which he proposed that the United States should expend a considerable amount of dollars to keep these countries (the capitalist system in these countries) on their feet. What a hullabaloo followed this pronouncement. Bevin went quite maudlin about Marshall and his proposal. Every capitalist and every capitalist's lackey in Western Europe joined in the chorus. Marshall Aid—dollars—had become the most potent saviour of civilisation.

Never was so fraudulent a piece of business so widely and so persistently blessed. Deliberate calculated policy to keep us from trading in other directions, where dollars would be quite unnecessary. To make sure that there would be no such trading, the war



scare was worked up to a white heat, and on the strength of this, a whole long list of goods was banned as exports to the Soviet Union and the New Democracies. We were in a dollar trap, and the Americans were determined to keep us in it.

There we were, running about and banging up against the bars. But see, there is an opening in one corner. Let's get out of it. What! Get out of it? Don't you know that if you go through that opening the Communists are waiting to get you? Oh my, that's too bad. So there's nothing for it but to stay put. That's sensible, just you stay in the trap and we'll see that you get a bite of food when you need it. But don't poke your nose out or the Communists will snap it off.

We remain in the trap. Cripps ran around trying one expedient after another, always at the expense of the workers. Cuts and more cuts. Profits go up, prices go up, but wages are kept down. All this represented a repudiation of all that the Labour Movement was brought into existence to achieve. Could any of the pioneers of the Labour Party, the trade union movement, or the co-operative movement, ever have conceived it possible, that instead of leading the workers forward and upward, the leaders of these movements would be holding them back and keeping them down? It is almost incredible that such a thing could happen, but that's what we had to face and fight as best we could in the House of Commons.

Behind it all, and responsible for it, was pressure from America. But why did the Government not resist the pressure? Because its leaders had already abandoned Socialism, and had entered into an alliance with the Tories to maintain British imperialism. For this purpose they needed American aid. So it came about that America had a strangle grip upon our economy and was able to impose the will of Wall Street on us.

In a certain secret order in this country, the initiate is led with a rope around his neck. In the manual of instruction he is told that it is in the form of a running noose, so that if he should prove refractory he could be brought to his senses by a gentle application thereof. A very nice way to put it. And Britain, like the initiate, has a rope in the form of a running noose around its neck, and a gentle application thereof is made now and again through a speech in Congress, or an admonition by Gauleiter Hoffman.

To what sad state has this once-proud country been reduced? I

## RISE LIKE LIONS

remember speaking one night on this subject, and I quoted the well-known lines of Shakespeare :

“This England never did, nor never shall,  
Lie at the proud foot of a conqueror.”

Maybe not, I added, but at this present time it is giving a very good imitation of that very thing. When I think of what is going on, I am tempted to paraphrase Blake :

Bring me your dollars, bring them fast,  
Bring me your bombs, that kill and maim,  
Bring me your soldiers, so at last,  
I can from traitor's heart exclaim :

I will not lead the workers' fight,  
Nor raise the flag for which they stand,  
But I will make a Yankee base  
On England's green and pleasant land.

I would dedicate these lines to so-called Socialists, who participate in the sale and betrayal of their country to the rapacious, dollar-greedy capitalists of America. And having gone thus far I may as well perpetrate another paraphrase on Marshall Aid, this time of Kipling :

If you can work until your back is broken,  
And frozen wages clutch in loyal fist;  
If you can scorn the rebel word that's spoken  
By John Platts-Mills or by the Communist;

If you can get production higher and higher,  
And do without the pleasant things of life;  
If you can get for British goods a buyer,  
And keep them from your anxious, fretful wife;

If you can do with less from other nations,  
What haps to them is neither here nor there;  
If you can sell them more of your creations,  
And keep your own old cupboards strictly bare;

MARSHALL AID (?)

If you can keep world prices firm and steady,  
A job you'll find it somewhat tough to do;  
If for atomic war you're always ready,  
Without a thought of what may come to you;

If you can give this country to the Yankee,  
And in all things be modest and discreet;  
If you can swallow Marshall's hanky-panky,  
You'll never more be standing on your feet.

In short, if you believe old Stafford Crippsie,  
That by this course your freedom can be won,  
Then in the Thames you'd better take a dipsie,  
For you are just a bloody fool, my son!

No, freedom can never be won by depending on the American capitalists. That way lies subjection and disaster.

What a pathetic spectacle to see a man like Bevan, drawn from the exploited mining valleys of South Wales, telling a Labour Party Conference that if it were not for "Marshall Aid" (the helping hand of the workers' enemies, the Tories of America—in his own inelegant language, "vermin") there would be a million and a half unemployed in this country. From Morrison, who is capable of anything, we got added to the possibility of mass unemployment the possibility of a heavy cut in our rations. "Our generous friends in America" were saving us from this, according to Herbert. It's just a lot of bunk. If we had built up trade and friendship with the Soviet Union and the New Democracies we could have enough work to keep our industries going for generations to come.

Oh, but they say, we require certain goods from America. Well, we could buy them, on our conditions. For, please understand, if we urgently need goods, America urgently needs to sell goods. And if, as a result of friendship with the Soviet Union, the war scare was removed, then America would have to sell her goods under any condition, or face a general collapse of her economy. At present a full-scale crisis is only being averted by a great armaments production, for which we are helping to pay.

The one thing, above everything else, the American capitalists fear is peace. With a cutting down of armaments production they

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would be truly desperate for markets. There would then be no question of dollar payments and excessive prices. We would buy with sterling and our exports to other countries would provide us with the means of doing so. The one Party in this country that is earnestly, genuinely fighting for the economic independence of Britain is the Communist Party.

Yes, let our enemies, the enemies of the working class, rant and rave, lie and slander, the facts are there. Subjection to America, or friendship with the Soviet Union and complete economic and political independence.

I was told one night, by one of those politically squint-eyed lads who can't see where he is going or what is happening: "We don't want Russian Commissars over here." To which I retorted: "There is not, and never can be, any question of Russian Commissars coming over here. But even if they wanted to come, they wouldn't be able to get in for American Commissars."

Friendship and trade with the Soviet Union! Oh, says the President of the Board of Trade, we are prepared to trade with the Soviet Union and the countries of Eastern Europe. We're doing our best to increase our trade with these countries. Other Ministers, including the Prime Minister, on occasion, serve up the same cheap hash. How is it possible to build up trade, unless of a most limited character, when the very goods these countries want—and which we can supply—are denied them by command of our American masters?

Speaking on this subject, I made a challenge to the President of the Board of Trade. There were negotiations going on at the time for a limited trade treaty with Poland. I reminded the President and the members present that they have a habit of referring to Poland as a satellite of the Soviet Union. All right, I went on, the President is at present having discussions with the representatives of the Polish Government. Whatever goods he cares to ask for—agricultural, handicraft, or industrial—the Polish Government is free to sell them, without outside interference of any kind. Will the President deny that, I asked. He couldn't. But, I said, does the same thing apply the other way round? Is the British Government free to sell whatever goods from this country the Polish Government might ask for? The answer is no. The Polish Government is free to sell whatever

is within the confines of its own country—the British Government is not. Which, I asked, is the satellite?

Here is a small selection of goods—a small selection from a very long list—that Britain cannot sell to the Soviet Union or the New Democracies :

Metal-working machines; vertical boring and turning mills; broaching machines; all types of forging hammers with over 3½ tons falling weight; forging machines with over 1,000 tons capacity; gear-cutting, grinding and shaving machines; camshaft, crankshaft and combined camshaft, crankpin and crankshaft grinding machines; centreless external grinding machines; internal grinding machines; camshaft turning lathes; crankshaft turning lathes; surfacing and boring lathes over 10-inch centre height; turret lathes over 3-inch bar capacity and over 24-inch chuck capacity; hydraulic and mechanical presses with over 100-ton operating pressure; marine and aircraft propeller-blade profiling machines.

That is industrial equipment which these countries badly need for the purpose of getting on with their reconstruction. Then there are such things as tractors, road transport and other vehicles, all very essential to countries with extensive agriculture. These also are banned.

That is a statement that should shock every Britisher, were it not for the fact that a spate of infamous propaganda blanketing our thought has been carried on in the Press, the cinema and on the radio. We have got, apparently, to a stage where we hug our chains. Here is Sir William Rootes, of the Rootes combine, saying a word for private enterprise, and in the course of it showing what we have come to. Read this:

“I know a little of what I am talking about. I have, on behalf of free enterprise in Coventry, travelled as an industrial ambassador of Britain to practically every country and territory in the world where there are vehicles with wheels that go round—*except Russian territory, where we are forbidden to sell.*”

“Forbidden to sell.” To what base depths has this country been dragged to save decrepit capitalism from the fate that history has prepared for it. Our country sold so that the parasites may lord it over us just a little longer.

## RISE LIKE LIONS

But, try what they may, they cannot hold back the advance of the working class. Confusion, dismay, frustration—yes, all these for a time they can spread, and seem to hold back the forward march. But it is only seemingly. Steadily behind it all the forces of the working class are gathering and the day is not far distant when they will ask for an accounting. Today, as when they were written more than a century ago, the words of one of England's greatest poets ring out :

Rise like lions after slumber,  
In unvanquishable number,  
Shake your chains to earth, like dew,  
Which in sleep had fallen on you,  
Ye are many—they are few.

## CHAPTER VIII

### THE NENNI TELEGRAM

IN THE first months of 1945 Mr. Eden made the—to me—astounding pronouncement that there were twenty Communists, apart from Phil and myself, sitting on the Labour benches. They were dubbed crypto-Communists. Crypto meaning hidden.

If Eden was right, they were experts at their job. They were so deeply hidden I was never able to discover them. Month followed month, year followed year, and they hid themselves deeper and deeper. Truly they were “cryptos”. None the less, there was for a time, particularly during 1947, a fairly lively group well to the Left of the Labour Government, as distinct from the “Keep Lefts” who were like the signpost that pointed the way but never went there. That is a faulty analogy, for the signpost remains constant, while the “Keep Lefts” pointed one way and went the other.

Two of this lively group were Emrys Hughes, a Welshman domiciled in Scotland, and Tom Scollan, like myself born and raised in Paisley. Emrys was an out and out pacifist, and fundamentally loyal to his belief in Socialism. He never missed an opportunity of fighting military expenditure and military conscription. Tom Scollan, short and stocky, had a habit of getting up in the House and in the Scottish Grand Committee and irritating his Scottish Labour colleagues by his forthright manner of expressing himself on a variety of subjects. But he also was an opponent of conscription. A tough, energetic fighter, he was very reluctant to accept the rigid discipline of Transport House on questions of principle.

He and Emrys were in striking contrast to the general body of Scottish Labour Members, who were inclined to treat them, and gossip about them, as sort of Labour “Ishmaels”. On Tuesday, April 1, 1947, the week of the Easter recess, the renewal of National Service was coming up. Quite a large number of Labour Members were going to vote against it, and I had promised to go into the lobby with them. I was feeling particularly bitter about

what was going on in Malaya. When the victory march took place in London a contingent of Malayan partisans, heroic fighters against the Japanese invaders, took part in it. When the celebrations ended, they came to see me and they told of how things were shaping up at home. The rubber and tin monopolies, greedy for profits, were dead set on getting things back to where they were before the war. Good jobs for the whites, ruthless exploitation for the people.

They wanted to have a talk with the Governor, Mr. Malcolm MacDonald, but they couldn't reach him. They asked me to give them a letter addressed to him, as that might help them in their efforts. They had quite desirable proposals for the progressive development of their country, which they believed he would consider.

I told them he was pretty poor stuff. That he had followed his father into the Labour Party and just as slavishly followed his father into the Tory Party. He would be the ideal man for the tin and rubber barons. Still, they thought it worth a trial.

Whether or not MacDonald got the letter I cannot say, for by the time the lads got back he and the reactionary forces he represented had opened out the attack on the Communists, the Trade Union Federation and the partisans, with the obvious intention of destroying anything or anybody that stood in the way of profits at the expense of the people. It is a sordid, dirty business. Bombing planes, artillery, machine-guns, all the most deadly weapons of war used against the native people by lads from this country, only a year or two out of school.

Terrible, terrible and shameful, that a Labour Government—men who at one time believed in Socialism (or did they?)—should make themselves responsible for such happenings.

Mr. Morrison, who when he was of military age was a pacifist writing in the *New Leader*, said then that talk of democracy was a mask behind which was hidden the evil face of imperialism, and then went on to declare that whatever happened "we must keep our internationalism intact". He should be sent out to Malaya to read the articles he wrote when he was fit for military service to the young lads who are now being used to fight the tin and rubber war.

Well, there I was, on that Tuesday morning, going down to the House from King Street to register in the evening my first vote



## THE NENNI TELEGRAM

against the Labour Government. A vote against the continuation of conscription. I cut through into St. Martin's Lane, I stood for a moment or two looking in at a bookshop, then turned and stepped on to the road right in front of a fast-moving motor car. I made a jump to try to escape it, but it got me on the right leg and back, and sent me up in the air. Had I stayed up I would have been all right, but I came down—on my head. Blood started running down my face. I must have been a ghastly sight as a couple of men helped me to my feet. I got into the car that hit me and was driven round to Charing Cross Hospital.

A nurse started dressing my head, and while she was at it a policeman came in. I didn't want any fuss, and I didn't want them to know who I was or there would have been a sensational story in the Press and I didn't want my wife at home in Paisley to get unnecessarily upset. So when the policeman asked my name, I told him all in one breath: "Mr. Gallacher, I'm down on a visit from Paisley. It was all my own fault. I didn't look, the driver did his best to avoid me but I made it worse by jumping the way he swerved."

The policeman was quite sympathetic. "You've got to be careful when you come to London", he told me, "the streets are very busy."

Then a doctor came. Have you any more injuries? No. Have you a headache? No. I got out, and somehow or other made my way up to Chalk Farm and got to bed. I didn't vote that night against the Labour Government. I didn't show up again till after the Easter recess.

Then I saw Will Whitley, the chief Labour whip. I said to him: "The next time you want to stop me voting, don't be so rough. Put some easy poison in my tea." When I told him what had happened, he enjoyed the joke. It was certainly on me.

But a quite substantial vote was registered against the Government. Sufficient to cause considerable concern to the operators of the party machine. Then in April 1948 came the telegram to Signor Nenni, wishing him and his party success in the Italian elections which were then pending.

During the war the Communists and Socialists in Italy were united in the fight against German and Italian fascism. They decided to remain united when the war was over. The Labour Party sent a couple of its stalwarts over for the purpose of per-

suading the Italian Socialist Party, which was under the leadership of Nenni, to break away from association with the Communists. In this they failed. But they succeeded in getting a splinter group, led by a small-time banker named Saragat, to break away from the Socialist Party. When the Left group, which included John Platts-Mills, Leslie Solley, Lester Hutchinson, Zilliaccus and a considerable number of others, sent the telegram to Nenni and the Italian Socialist Party, they brought upon themselves the violent and pent-up wrath of the Labour leaders, who claimed they were infringing Labour policy, which was expressed in support for Saragat. All who signed the telegram were ordered to appear before the party "inquisition". They were warned about their behaviour and given an opportunity of signing a declaration that they would be "good boys" in the future. A meeting was held to discuss this. Several were for defying the "inquisition". They were over-ruled. The declaration was signed and all but Platts-Mills were given another chance to show how they could behave. He was reserved for special treatment. He got expelled from the party. He was henceforth on the outside, with D. N. Pritt, who got expelled in the days of the phoney war for writing and speaking in favour of the Soviet Union.

Platts-Mills was one of the most outspoken, one of the most indomitable and courageous Members of the House of Commons. When he would get up to attack American and British foreign policy, he had often to face a barrage not only from the Tories but from Labour Members as well. But he never flinched, no matter how hard or vicious the opposition might be. Neither Tory howls nor reprimands from the chair upset him. I used to sit and listen and say to myself: "This fellow's amazing, by God he's got courage."

But the capitulation of this group had a disastrous effect in the Labour Party as a whole. The "Keep Lefts" couldn't get far enough over to the Right, while the others started moving over towards the centre. Only one or two kept up anything like a critical attitude, and they were dealt with later on. No more support for Nenni. Saragat was the man for the Labour Party.

But the Americans had their greedy eyes on Italy, as they have on the rest of Europe. America has a foreign policy that is designed to bring about dollar domination throughout the world. The last thing the Americans would ever think of would be to

encourage a policy anywhere in Europe, or throughout the world for that matter, that would make Great Britain greater. No sir, there's no chance of that, and not even the most servile dollar dancer in this country could ever get himself or anyone else to believe such a thing.

So the Americans got busy in Italy, and if all reports are true they captured Saragat. They've captured quite a lot of people over there. An old friend of mine, an Italian, went over to his home town for a holiday. He met a couple of trade union officials, representing small, insignificant breakaways from the Trade Union Confederation. They were quite cynical about what was going on. "We've had enough of the hard times", they said. "These people [the American and British trade union leaders — *W. G.*] have money to throw away and we're going to have our share of it while it's going."

That's a nice state of affairs. We pay our dues to our respective unions, we pay our political levy, and they're being used to subsidise cynical adventurers who represent practically nothing but themselves. Dollars and sterling are being used to corrupt and destroy the working-class movements of other countries.

The Americans, having got at Saragat, something had to be done, so another split was made, this time from Saragat's group, the Socialist Labour Party of Italy (P.S.L.I.), and led by a lad named Romita. Here it may be well to issue a warning to Labour Members of Parliament: "Don't send a telegram to Saragat, he isn't the white-haired boy any more."

Over in Italy there have been accusations and counter-accusations. Romita accusing Saragat of taking orders from the Yanks, and Saragat accusing Romita of being a stooge of the British. It got so far that Saragat, in his journal, published an open letter to Leon Blum, asking him to intervene with the British Labour Party and get that party to stop supporting Romita. Arising from this I sent the following letter to Herbert Morrison:

*December 1, 1949*

Dear Herbert,

As an old Socialist and one whose whole desire is to end at the earliest possible moment the robber rule of capitalism in this, as in other countries, I feel I must draw your attention to a matter that must come as something of a shock to you.

I know how you feel about one country interfering in the internal affairs of another, and your high moral attitude about people receiving "payments from abroad".

I have received a copy of *L'Umanita*, dated November 22, 1949, the paper of the Italian Social Democrats who follow Saragat, an old friend of yours, I believe.

In that issue Saragat has an article in the form of an open letter to Leon Blum. Here is an extract from it:

"I know that the sympathy of the English comrades turns towards this new organisation whose birth they have favoured; an organisation which, in the conditions in which it is developing, does not represent progress towards unity but a new split in the Italian working class.

"The attitude of the English comrades, although for us a cause of bitterness, does not surprise us. The reasons for our painful resignation in face of their attitude are already written in the story of my country from liberation until today. Moreover, it is only just to recognise that the English comrades have followed a logical line of conduct, for they 'suffered' the progressive inclusion of Italy in the system of Western democratic powers, but they never fostered it or promoted it. They put every obstacle possible in the way of the birth of the P.S.L.I., though knowing it was the aim of Nenni to bind Italy to the Eastern system. They have tried to cover us with shame, writing in their paper that our act, dictated by the will to withdraw Italy from a new totalitarian tyranny—a will that had almost the force of despair—*was inspired by American diplomats*. They opposed for long months our admission into the family of socialist parties and only on the eve of the elections of April 18, 1948, when this decision might decide the destiny of the young Italian democracy, when you held out your hand to us, did they decide to join with you in helping us.

"But shortly after the English comrades took up with regard to us their habitual attitude and began to give their patronage to the new party which was being formed under the banner of struggle against the P.S.L.I., guilty of having given its support to the Atlantic Pact. . . . To accept or refuse the Atlantic Pact is to accept or to refuse American friendship, which for Italy is a question of life or death. . . .

"You know, Comrade Blum, that England, up to the very last

THE NENNI TELEGRAM

moment, was opposed to the adhesion of Italy to the Atlantic Pact. The attitude of the English comrades towards the new party, which is developing under the banner of the union of all those who have fought against the Atlantic Pact or have not accepted it, is therefore logical."

You will see from this that Romita is accusing Saragat of being a stooge of the Americans (can you smell dollars?), while Saragat accuses Romita of being a stooge of the British (a sterling character).

I'm sure you'll take the earliest opportunity of repudiating these allegations of Saragat.

You would never be a party to such practices. What!

Yours sincerely,

WILLIAM GALLACHER

Herbert's reply is canny, very canny, and very non-committal. Obviously something rotten in the State of Italy—something putrid and stinking, and here's all that Herbert has to say about it:

*Privy Council Office,  
Great George Street,  
London, S.W.11  
December 6, 1949*

Dear Gallacher,

Thank you for your letter of December 1 enclosing an extract from *L'Umanita*. I have noted what you say.

Yours sincerely,

HERBERT MORRISON

Yet the group of Lefts was brought before the inquisition and John Platts-Mills expelled for sending good wishes to an honest socialist fighter in the person of Signor Nenni. There's something rotten elsewhere than in the State of Italy. Trade union branches should demand a reckoning. How much of their dues, how much of their political levy is going to maintain undesirables in Italy and elsewhere?

## DARTMOOR

ON MAY 3, 1948, I got a letter from a prisoner in Wandsworth Prison. Such letters were not uncommon. My interest in prisons and prisoners was well known, and many prisoners, when they wanted to let off steam, wrote to me and gave me the sum of their complaints. These I always took up with the Home Secretary, sometimes with good results.

But this particular prisoner in Wandsworth was so very urgent in his request that I went to see him. He wanted advice and he wanted help. I applied for, and received, a visiting order from the Home Office and made my way down to what had been my enforced residence for quite a spell twenty-odd years before. The prisoner was a good-looking, well set-up lad with a quite intelligent mind. Like most sensitive prisoners, he was in a highly nervous condition. He was actually serving a penal sentence at Dartmoor, but had been brought to Wandsworth while a legal case of his was being decided at the Old Bailey. It was about this case that he wanted to see me.

It is too personal, as well as too complicated, to go into here, but I tried my best to help him. After my interview I had a talk with the prison doctor about him. I suggested he get special care and attention because of his high-strung condition, which was making him somewhat intractable. He had received, both in Dartmoor and Wandsworth, a whole series of punishments for a variety of offences including insolence to officers. The doctor was of the opinion that he was very clever and that he was doing a bit of acting. What for I could never understand, as every offence meant further punishment and a loss of remission—poor pay for a clever actor.

However, when the case was decided in London, he went back to Dartmoor. From there also he wrote to me, with a request that I pay him a further visit. One or two other prisoners to whom he had talked about the possibility of such a visit also wrote to me and asked me to see them if and when I visited

Dartmoor. I decided to take a day off to see these lads. I looked at the map and saw that Tavistock was the nearest town to the prison—seven miles over the moors. I travelled to Tavistock and arrived there in the evening, intending to get a bus to Princetown the following morning to get me to the prison at ten o'clock, the time appointed for my visit. I got fixed up in an hotel in Tavistock, and then went out to make enquiries about the bus service. No bus! What about a train? I could get a train to Yelverton, change there and get a train coming from Plymouth through Yelverton to Princetown. This would get me into Princetown at twelve o'clock. Far too late. The only thing left was to walk.

I got an early call, a bite of breakfast, and set out about 7.45. What a walk! You start going up and keep going up. You get to the top of a tor, and there you see before you a long stretch of road, up another tor. Seven miles is nothing much on a flat road, but the walk from Tavistock is a terror. It was market day in the town and vehicles of all kinds passed me on the road coming in to the market, not a solitary one going out. Coming back I was more fortunate; I had only walked about a mile when a lad with a van stopped and picked me up. He told me that folks round about there generally said that it was seven miles from Princetown to Tavistock, but fourteen miles from Tavistock to Princetown. There's something in that.

When I made a report of my visit to the Home Office, I said that not until then had I appreciated Ramsay MacDonald's classic phrase: "On and on and on, and up and up and up."

Correspondence continued with ever more prisoners participating. Feeling had been for a time running high in Dartmoor. I decided to make another visit. This time I had twelve prisoners to see. I had no difficulty in getting a visiting order from the Home Office as, according to the Home Secretary, my visits seemed to be beneficial to all concerned.

On this occasion one of the prisoners had written to his mother to tell her I was making him a visit. The next thing was the Press got hold of it. Someone phoned King Street and was told I had gone to Plymouth. From there I'd get an early train to Princetown the following morning. Word was sent to Plymouth and a group of journalists started a round of the hotels until they found me. I gathered from them that there was great concern about what was going on in the prison. Rumours of all kinds

were flying about, but the Press got no co-operation from the prison officials. When a rumour of any kind got around, the Press phoned the prison; the gateman refused to put them through to the governor. "If you want information, phone the Home Office." That's all they could get out of him.

They would not hear of me taking the train. "We'll be round in the morning and run you out in a car. It's a lovely drive and you'll enjoy it." It was, and I did. But there was not just one car, there were five cars, the Press was out in force. So I arrived with an escort, much to the dissatisfaction of prison officials. As I was going to be inside for at least three hours they went off again, but promised to be waiting for me coming out of the gate.

They were there all right, with cameras ready to snap me as I stepped out. This was stopped by the prison officials. No photograph showing the prison. There you are, said the pressmen. That's how we're treated. Yet the country has been looking at a film "Escape" with pictures of Dartmoor prison from all angles. The thing is so stupid. However, they took some pictures of me standing out at the curb. Quite good pictures they were. Following this there was quite a splash in the Press which displeased the Home Secretary and the Home Office officials very much.

In the prison I saw the twelve prisoners I had come to visit and had a talk with each of them lasting fifteen minutes. Each of them had his own particular grievances but all of them were agreed about one thing. It had come up at the time of my earlier visit. The food for a considerable time had been badly cooked and had often been uneatable. Protests had gone to the governor and to the Home Office. Nothing happened, so the prisoners decided to stage a demonstration. When they were finished with yard exercise one day, they formed up but refused to march back into the prison hall. There had been no violence, no mutiny in any recognised sense, but it was treated as mutiny.

Certain alleged ringleaders were selected for punishment. They got so many days bread and water, so many days loss of stage (which means loss of certain privileges), and for several loss of twelve months' remission, and for the others loss of six months' remission. The Home Office had restored three months of this lost remission in each case. In my report to the Home Office I raised several matters for improving conditions, but the main part of my report centred on the question of trial and punishment.



If a prisoner commits an offence of a minor character he is brought before the governor. An officer or officers make a statement about the alleged offence. The governor is sitting behind his desk with the deputy governor and chief warder at his side. The prisoner stands at attention facing the governor. After the accusation has been made the governor says to the prisoner: "Have you anything to say?" The prisoner is often tongue-tied. He looks around at nothing but unfriendly faces. He stutters something, or if he is a "hard" case he makes counter-accusations against the officers. The governor cuts things short and imposes a sentence.

If it is a major offence with which the prisoner is charged the governor holds off the case for the Visiting Committee. The procedure is repeated. The prisoner stands to attention and faces the Visiting Committee, the governor and deputy governor and several prison officers. What chance has he? None at all. Yet he can be sentenced to twelve months' imprisonment. That is what loss of twelve months' remission actually means.

Just try to think of anyone outside being tried and punished under such conditions. I insisted in my report and in my discussion in the House that prisoners going before the Visiting Committee and subject to such punishment should have the right to legal advice and if necessary to legal representation. I wrote an article on this subject for the *London Star*, which brought quite a lot of attention to the subject, and I believe one way and another I got the Home Office officials to take a more favourable view of this proposal.

Word of what was happening at Dartmoor penetrated into Parkhurst and soon my correspondence was considerably increased by letters from the Isle of Wight prison. Of course, I wrote to every prisoner who wrote to me, and soon the request came for a visit to Parkhurst. These letters were always interesting, sometimes there was real pathos in them, often a dour determination not to "knuckle down" to the forces which they believed to be arrayed against them. That is one of the great difficulties and the great problems of our prisons. The bitter, bad feeling that can arise between prisoners and prison officers. Conditions are changing for the better, but we have a long way to go yet before we get conditions that are truly reformatory.

It was with a feeling of this kind that on my return from

## RISE LIKE LIONS

Dartmoor I wrote several verses which I gave, amongst others, to my very good friend James Hudson, M.P., who had one thing at any rate in common with me, hatred of the "cursed alcohol" which James never misses a chance of fighting. He gave the verses to some Quaker friends and they were published in the weekly journal *The Friend*. I will give them here for those who like metric sentiment.

### DARTMOOR

Silent evening steals across the land,  
There's red and amber in the western sky,  
So peaceful, as on lofty Tor I stand,  
And watch the day around me slowly die.

Soon, soon dark night will settle o'er the moor,  
The stars alone will guide my wandering feet,  
But through the silent night my heart is sure,  
A dawn of light and freedom I will greet.

Not so for those within those sombre walls,  
That scar the view and fill the soul with dread,  
Oh, woeful men that tread the silent halls,  
Of Dartmoor Prison—with its living dead.

For them the dawn but brings another day,  
Of torment—weary longing to be free,  
Whate'er their guilt the price they have to pay,  
Takes no account of what a man might be.

For none so evil, but some good is there,  
If we but search and give it room to live,  
Regenerate them—let us do our share,  
And help and hope, in generous bounty give.

Tear down these fearsome walls, down to the ground,  
Give to these men the chance to build anew,  
Till in their hearts some joy of life is found,  
And welcome dawn becomes their portion, too.

And now, before leaving the subject, I'd like to quote a word or two from one of my prison letters. It is an expression of pride in craftsmanship, although I earnestly hope that the lad, whom

I liked very much when I visited him and several others at Parkhurst, will put his talents to a more desirable pursuit. Here is what he says :

Dear Mr. Gallacher,

"I'm just another convict who resents the attempt to be subdued by brute force, starvation, or any other of the inhuman attributes of the present prison officials or prison system.

I know of you through other people, through the Press and through Hansard. I have found great stores of strength in your actions and your speeches. I am very pleased to say many of my principles coincide with yours. Your recent speeches in the House on the Army Estimates, etc., have remained unanswered by those you oppose, and, unfortunately, by those who should be the first to support you.

I am by trade a cat-burglar, good at my trade . . . .

Not a bad lad, a bright, cheery, laughing-faced lad, but just one punishment on the top of another. No, it's not a good system—far from it.

As I am discussing prisoners, it may be desirable to introduce one for whom the aforementioned James Hudson and I have a very warm regard. One who is also keenly interested in prisoners—prisoners of the State and prisoners of the devil—Commissioner David Lamb of the Salvation Army.

One night I went to a gathering at the Chinese Embassy. I did not want to go, but felt it necessary to accept the invitation. I went. Two large rooms were being used. I stood towards the top end of the first room. Different people came up and shook hands with me and then squeezed their way into the second room. I noticed two Salvation Army officers sitting on a couch in the corner. One of them, grey and elderly, the other dark, well built and strong looking. After a bit they got up and came over to me.

The older one with very pleasant frankness said to me: "I've been watching you for quite a bit, I like your face. Would you mind telling me who you are?"

I smiled at him and replied: "Oh! I'm just a lad from Paisley." "From Paisley", he exclaimed. "I have happy memories of

Paisley. My wife and I went there shortly after we were married."

We talked for quite a bit about Paisley and about mutual friends, then he suddenly remembered: "But", he said, "you haven't told me who you are."

"Willie Gallacher is my name", I answered.

He gazed at me. The big, dark fellow laughed. "That's hit the target", he said. The Commissioner, whom I should have mentioned is a Scotsman, was delighted to make my acquaintance and readily agreed to come one day for tea on the terrace.

When he did come down I had quite a party prepared for him, including George Mathers, M.P., High Commissioner for the Church Assembly, and Joe Westwood, Secretary of State for Scotland, who in his early years had himself been a member of the Salvation Army. He and Commissioner Lamb got on great together.

It was an enjoyable afternoon for all concerned. The Commissioner, who was turned eighty years of age, was young in spirit, fresh in mind and a most congenial companion. It was a terrible shock to him, as it was to all of us, when Joe and his wife were the victims of a fatal accident while motoring to keep an engagement. I wrote two verses about Wee Joe and sent them to the Commissioner. A few days later a large number of Scottish Members attended a memorial service held in the Royal Scottish Church near Covent Garden. There was a large attendance from the Lords and Commons. The clergyman in charge called on Commissioner David Lamb to pay tribute to Joe and to his work. Towards the close of a moving speech, he said: "I am now going to give you a few lines written by his colleague, Willie Gallacher."

His delivery made them sound better than they really are. But they expressed what I felt about Wee Joe. He was a good Secretary of State. Hardworking, earnest, always a trier. Here are the lines:

He thought of Scotland—of its vanished men,  
With brightened eye, like ancient prophet wise,  
He saw re-peopled every Highland glen,  
And breathed the spirit strong, that never dies,  
E'en though he lies in never waking sleep,  
The seed he sow'd, auld Scotia's sons will reap.

So for a moment, by his sorrow'd grave,  
 We share the grief of those so near and dear,  
 With tribute for the service that he gave,  
 And for his loss an unrestrained tear.  
 Then to the cause we'll pledge ourselves anew,  
 For this is what "Wee Joe" would have us do.

And now back to another incident at the Chinese Embassy. Bill Rust, the late Editor of the *Daily Worker*, came in and joined me after the Salvation Army friends had gone. We were standing talking when there was a commotion at the door. We looked out and saw it was caused by the arrival of Ernie Bevin. All sorts of people wanted to talk to him, but he appeared to be a bit fed up. He pushed his way through the crowd and got his eye on me. Over he came. For Ernie, however egotistical he might be, however dangerous as a Foreign Secretary, always retained a certain proletarian familiarity and bluntness that was entirely lacking with most of his colleagues.

"What are you doing here?" he opened up with.

"That's just what I am wondering", I replied, "but orders is orders and I always obey."

We had a crack or two, then I said: "I want to introduce you to one of your enemies. In fact *the* enemy."

He looked at Rust. "This", I told him, "is Bill Rust, Editor of the *Daily Worker*."

"Oh, how are you?" said Ernie, vigorously shaking him by the hand. "I'm very pleased to meet you."

"I'm pleased to meet you", returned Bill as courteously as Ernie. Then, after a few more words, he asked Ernie: "What did you think of the film?" At the beginning of that same week there had been the *premiere* of the film *Fame is the Spur*, to which all members of the Labour Government had been invited.

The leading character in the film was easily, very easily, discernible as James Ramsay MacDonald. An awful example of the personally ambitious Labour leader. Ernie's face fell a notch at the question.

"I didn't like it", he replied. "I don't approve of this raking up the past or personal abuse." To which Rust quickly responded; "No, except against us."

"You're different", said Ernie. "You're a Party." Then he added: "I keep you alive."

"Careful, Ernie, careful", I warned him. "The other day Cripps said that every time Churchill spoke it meant new recruits for the Labour Party. Do you want to tell us that you are in the same way making recruits for the Communist Party?"

Ernie hurriedly corrected himself: "No", he said, "I put it the wrong way. You keep me alive."

"Well", retorted Rust, "believe me, it's not intentional."

I must say Ernie took that one very well. "That reminds me", he told us, "of the old docker who said to me: 'You know, when you die, by Christ we'll give you a wonderful funeral.'" We little thought as we laughed at that one that in a short year or so I would be attending the funeral of my comrade, Bill Rust.

What a shock I got when Phil Piratin broke the news to me in the House of Commons public lobby that Bill Rust had collapsed at 16 King Street and died a short time later at the hospital to which he had been hurriedly taken. He and his wife, Tamara, occupied the bottom floor of the house at Chalk Farm where I had a room. We had come out together in the morning, he had gone to King Street and I to the House. From his boyhood we had been so closely associated, Young Bill and Old Bill.

As a Party comrade he was brilliant, hardworking, devoted and loyal. As the Editor of the *Daily Worker* he made a name that was honoured by every comrade and respected by every journalist. His passing, so early in life, was a grievous loss to our Party, a loss to the working class, and a loss to clean, honest journalism. But the paper he did so much to establish carries his spirit in its columns. Though he is dead he marches with us to the great goal on which his heart was set—the Communist society of the future, built on a foundation of Socialist economy which alone can promise peace and joy and hope for all mankind.

## CHAPTER X

### COMMUNISM AND RELIGION

ON A bright Saturday afternoon, I went to East Wemyss to attend the opening of a newly built canteen at the Michael Colliery. I was standing talking to a group of miners when Mr. Baird, at that time manager of the pit, came over and invited me to meet some of the "folks". The "folks" were Lord and Lady Traprain (now Balfour), Captain and Lady Wemyss, a courteous, friendly couple, Mrs. Baird and several others. In the course of a chat, mention was made of a concert the following Wednesday.

"Will you be there?" Lady Wemyss asked me.

"No", I answered, "I'll be at my work."

She looked at me somewhat surprised. "Oh", she said, "do you work?"

"I'm your M.P.", I told her.

"Oh, that!" she exclaimed, and the scorn in her voice had to be heard to be believed.

She had not a very high opinion of M.P.s. Nevertheless it was a job of work for me, hard work. I had to be there practically all the time, with propaganda meetings every Sunday, and in between lectures at trade union branches, women's co-operative guilds, old-age pensioners' associations, universities, schools, clubs and what not. One of the most interesting of these lectures was at the Imperial Military College.

When I got the invitation to lecture on "The Communist Party, its Present Policy and Future Aims" on July 24, 1946, I started preparing a talk for young people qualifying for a commission. Then an Air Vice-Marshal came to see me by appointment at the House, to have a chat about the lecture. I learned then, to my astonishment, that the "students" were Generals, Air-Marshals and Admirals, taking a course that would prepare them for the Imperial General Staff. Eden, Clem Davies and Attlee had already addressed them, so it had been decided to complete their political education by having me along. He informed me that several American officers had been invited along as "guest"

students. In view of this, I framed my lecture to show the importance of working-class activity and the important part it could play in domestic and external politics. In this connection I referred to the American civil war.

I was able to show that while all credit must be given to Abraham Lincoln and the armies of the North, nevertheless it was the political tenacity of the British workers that saved the Union from disaster. The North had blockaded the South. No goods could get in, no cotton could get out. There was mass unemployment in this country and appalling suffering. The Government wanted to recognise the South and use the Navy to break the blockade. The workers alone prevented them. Here is how Marx describes the situation :

"The misery that the stoppage of the factories and the shortening of the labour time, *motivated* by the blockade of the slave states, had produced among the workers in the northern manufacturing districts is incredible and in daily process of growth. . . . English interference in America has actually become a bread-and-butter question for the working class. Moreover, no means of inflaming its wrath against the United States is scorned by its '*natural superiors*'. The sole, great and widely circulated workers' organ still existing, *Reynolds Weekly Newspaper*, has been purchased expressly in order that for six months it might reiterate weekly in raging diatribes the *coclorum censeo* of English intervention. The working class is accordingly fully conscious that the Government is only waiting for the intervention cry from below, the *pressure from without*, to put an end to the American blockade and English misery. Under these circumstances the obstinacy with which the working class keeps silent, or breaks its silence only to raise its voice against intervention and *for* the United States, is admirable. This is a new brilliant proof of the indestructible excellence of the English popular masses, of that excellence which is the secret of England's greatness."

That's the grandest tribute ever paid to the workers of this country. Strangely enough, after I had given this lecture, I came across in one of Upton Sinclair's books a tribute of the same character. He is the only American I know of who gives credit to the British workers for saving the Union.

When I finished my talk we had some questions, then a recess



for a cup of tea, then back to the lecture room for discussion. One of the Americans wanted to know if Communists believed in democracy. To this I answered yes, and no colour bar. This made him and his mates very angry and they tried to justify their own attitude towards American Negro citizens. I hit them hard, and demanded to know if any of those present considered themselves superior to such a man as Paul Robeson, one of America's outstanding citizens.

"Democracy", I went on. "In the Soviet Union all men stand in an equal relationship to one another whatever may be the colour of their skins. In the Soviet Union there are black men, white men, red men, yellow men." Then I stopped, looked at them and added, "But no green men. The green ones are here."

Some of the English members of the audience laughed and gave a cheer, but not the Yanks. They were about ready to let loose with a tommy-gun.

In the conversation that followed the discussion, I was told what I heard on many other occasions, that the other three speakers, although trading under different labels, had all said the same things and expressed the same sentiments. No difference whatever. They all, except the Yanks, enjoyed the lecture and discussion, and they looked forward to seeing me the following year. But it never took place, much to my regret, for I had enjoyed myself.

In the midst of all this activity, Emile Burns, the Party's indefatigable propaganda organiser, had an idea for keeping me going in my spare time. John Parker, M.P., had written a Penguin about the Labour Party and its policy. Quintin Hogg, M.P., had written a double Penguin on Conservatism. Emile thought I ought to write to the Penguin people and offer to do one on Communism. I wrote, and after certain negotiations, signed a contract to produce 60,000 words of which Penguins would produce 60,000 copies. I got started on the job, but here let me say, I could never have carried it through had it not been for the assistance I got from Bill Wainwright, now with the British Soviet Friendship Society.

He collected and sorted out all the material I required and did it in such a way as made the writing of the book a pleasure.

When it was finished, there was a hold-up. Penguins were inclined to hedge on publication. The following is a letter I received from Mr. Lane, a director of Penguin Books Ltd.:

October 13, 1948.

Dear Mr. Gallacher,

I need hardly say that I read the typescript of your book on Communism with the greatest interest, as did my colleagues on our Editorial Board, and I feel very distressed at having—as they do—to conclude that this is not the book we had hoped to get from you.

As I said in our previous correspondence about the book, what we had hoped for was a presentation of the general Communist case that would act as a counter programme to the books which Barbara Ward and Douglas Woodruff are writing on the political philosophy of Catholicism. It had seemed to me that international Communism on the one hand, and international Catholicism on the other are, broadly speaking, the two great forces competing for the chance of shaping history in the near future, and that what was wanted on your side was an explanation of how Communism had grown up as a world force, of the philosophical and political theory behind it, and of why it feels that it has history on its side.

The book which you have written seems to me to be not so much a theoretical justification of the Communist philosophy as an explanation of what the Communist Party wants to do *in this country*, and of how it feels that it, and not the Labour Party, is the real representative of the working class. In other words, I cannot help feeling that you have written largely a book which has its eye on immediate propaganda value, and which certainly seems to be more concerned with the temporary issues of immediately current politics than the wider and deeper trends of our time.

It will be some time before Barbara Ward's book can be ready, and as we wish to publish the two together, it would seem that a number of points you raise would by then have lost their immediate interest.

All things considered, I am afraid I must say that the book does not really cover the ground we envisaged when you approached us about it.

Yours sincerely,

ALLEN LANE.

While the book was hanging fire, another of my comrades, Hymie Fagan, Secretary of the Parliamentary Department at Party

Centre, drew my attention to the report of a speech by the Archbishop of York, and suggested I should write a letter to *The Times* about it. Always someone finding something for me to do. Occasionally I would protest, but it was no use, they always got the better of me.

So I wrote to *The Times* on "Communism and Christianity". That started a very animated discussion that went on for a couple of weeks. All sorts of people were drawn in, and it was clear that Communism was a subject of very great interest. I do not know if this affected the Penguin people, but shortly afterwards, on December 29, I got a letter from Mr. Glover, of the Editorial Board of Penguin Books, Ltd., in which he said:

Dear Mr. Gallacher,

I think Mr. Lane has written to you separately this morning. We are putting in hand immediately the printing of your book with a view to getting it out at the earliest possible moment.

In the same post, I had the following letter from Mr. Lane:

Dear Mr. Gallacher,

In reply to your letter of November 25, as a matter of fact I had been rather expecting you to call me up as you suggested you might do in the last sentence of your letter to me of November 9. The time that has elapsed has not, however, been wasted, as far as we are concerned, as we have had several discussions here on it, and as a result I would very much like you to see Mr. Glover of our Editorial Department, who, in addition to having read the book himself, has been in close touch with all the readers concerned, and has all the arguable points at his fingertips.

If you agree, perhaps you could telephone him here so as to make an appointment to see him sometime in London. I hope that this can be as soon as possible as we would like to be able to publish the book as early as possible in the New Year.

Yours sincerely,

ALLEN LANE.

One hundred thousand copies were actually printed, and Penguins were astounded at the rapidity with which they sold.

But on this question of religion, it is necessary to say a word or two. History is writ large with the names of scoundrels of all

kinds who have used religion as a cloak for their frauds and crimes.

Briefly, it can be said, wherever there is fraud, theft or exploitation of one class by another, it will be covered or obscured by one form or another of religion. There is an extraordinary demonstration of this in *The Key to Uncle Tom's Cabin*, by Harriet Beecher Stowe. While the churches in the North were backing Lincoln and free wage-labour, the churches in the South were supporting Davis and slavery. Each side was making liberal use of the Scriptures to prove that the particular form of exploitation they favoured was ordained by God.

The Communists propose to end exploitation in all its forms. The simple, yet fundamental basis of Communism is that all the land and all the means of wealth, production and distribution, should be the common property of the people. There is no need of a religious sanction or cover for that. It is based on a high conception of social justice, a high conception of free social relations. Yet, in view of the fact that Christianity is in the main a body of moral precepts associated with a mythical heaven and hell, it is possible for those who accept them to apply them to a "heaven" on this earth in preference to a legendary heaven after death.

But when we discuss this question of religion it is amazing how little those who profess to be its champions know about it. Thus it is not to be wondered at that the most beautiful and entrancing *Life of Jesus* was written by a non-believer, Ernest Renan. The Jews, according to the scriptures, were "The Chosen People". Chosen what for? To carry God's Commandments to the peoples of the world. Commandments relating to conduct, social relationships, and to hygiene and health. Many Patriarchal Jews have believed, and still believe, in this mission. Why, as one Jewish writer puts it, has the great Jehovah allowed all these generations of unceasing dreadful torment and suffering, if not for the purpose of keeping the Jewish people and their message ever before the eyes of the world? Another writes, "Considering their religion from the highest standpoint, their creed today is at one with the latest doctrines of science, proclaiming the unity of the creative force". (Emma Lazarus.)

Jesus was a Jew, and a firm believer in Moses and the Jewish Mission. Anyone who fails to understand that can never under-

stand—and is incapable of understanding—the Scriptures. He was born and lived among Jews, and preached to Jews. There was not a Gentile associated with him or with his mission.

When the woman of Canaan followed after him “His disciples besought Him, saying, Send her away; for she crieth after us. But He answered and said, I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of Israel.” (Matt., xv, 23, 24.)

When he was crucified, his disciples carried on his work. The outstanding man of the sect, for it was a sect—a Jewish sect—was St. Peter. Peter also was a firm believer in the Jewish mission, and under no circumstances would he associate with the non-Jews, with the uncircumcised.

Let us re-emphasise this, every one of the immediate followers of Jesus, men and women, were Jews and had the sect remained as it was, under the leadership of Peter, it would in the course of a very short time have died out. It certainly could never have become the “Christian” religion. But a new force came upon the scene. Saul of Tarsus, who seemed to have an understanding of the dialectic, from being a Jewish persecutor of a somewhat unorthodox Jewish sect, launched out with an entirely new religion. When the Lord called upon one of the disciples to receive Him that disciple answered:

“Lord, I have heard by many of this man, how much evil he hath done to thy saints at Jerusalem. And here he hath authority from the chief priests to bind all that call on thy name.

“But the Lord said unto him, ‘Go thy way, for he is a chosen vessel unto me, to bear my name before Gentiles and Kings, and the children of Israel.’”

(Acts, ix. 13-15.)

This was the introduction of an entirely new element. In the hands of a clever agitator, and the New Testament Paul was certainly that, the new religion attracted large crowds and many converts were made.

But it caused, as can be understood, quite a commotion in the sect, and a meeting was called in Jerusalem to consider what should be done about it. Several of the disciples were opposed to the admission of the uncircumcised. But to Peter it was clear that the new religion had come to stay. Yet he was looked upon as the stalwart, unshakable champion of the Mission as it had been

bequeathed to them by the Master. Something had to be done and done quickly.

Peter had a dream, and in his dream he was hungry. A basket of food was lowered from on high. When he saw it he was shocked. Some of it was clean (kosher) and some of it was unclean. Being a sectarian Jew, he protested. But then a voice came to him which said, "Rise, Peter; kill and eat. But Peter said, Not so, Lord, for I have never eaten anything that is common or unclean. And the voice spake unto him again the second time, What God hath cleansed, that call not thou common." (Acts, x. 13-15.)

Peter, on the strength of this, "changed his line" and went over to Paul's new religion. And it was not a religion which met with the approval of the then ruling class. It was, in fact, a protest against the Roman invaders and at the same time against the religious formalism and hypocrisy of the "Scribes and Pharisees". It was also essentially ascetic. When the young man asked what he must do to be saved, he was told to keep the Commandments. To this he answered that he had observed these from his youth up. Jesus then said, "Sell all thou hast and give it to the poor. And he went away sorrowing, for he had great possessions." Nothing there for the lad with money. Then in Acts iv. 34 and 35, we read:

"Neither was there any among them that lacked; for as many as were possessors of lands or houses sold them, and brought the prices of the things that were sold. And laid them down at the Apostles' feet; and distribution was made unto every man according as he had need."

A crude form of voluntary Communism, it's true; nevertheless it shows a groping after something different, something better than what was going on around them. It brought upon them the hatred of the ruling class of their day, with all the same unscrupulous slander and venom that is poured out on the Communists today. Just consider Paul, in his first epistle to the Corinthians:

"We are made as the filth of the world, and are the off-scouring of all things unto this day."

To whom does this apply? Not to the sanctimonious gentlemen who, behind a cloak of religion, make themselves the servile tools of robber capitalism. For these early Christians were not after "dollars". They were not serving the oppressors of the people. They were not received into "high society" as cowardly

henchman of the ruling caste. No, Peter was thrown into gaol, not inducted into a palace.

When we find those of his followers, or who claim to be his followers, ready to go to gaol for a worthy cause, then we may give some heed to what they are saying.

What about Cardinal Mindszenty? A traitor to his country—to his own people. There they are, the people of Hungary, freed after centuries of oppression, rebuilding with heroic effort their war-torn, broken and battered country. And this high-placed cleric conspires with the American capitalists to sabotage and destroy their efforts. If there had been nothing—and there was much more—than the letter from the American Ambassador, that was sufficient to condemn him. In that letter, which will be quoted later, duly signed, and the signature couldn't be denied, the Ambassador thanks the Cardinal for the information he has sent to the Embassy and which he, the Ambassador, in turn had sent to the State Department in Washington. He then goes on to inform the Cardinal that it would be bad policy for America to intervene in Hungary in order to change the Government, which made it clear the Cardinal and his fellow-criminal Prince Esterhazy, were counting on America for such action. Of course if the Ambassador had been honest, he would have said "America can't interfere openly, but we'll do our damndest by other means".

In the House of Commons, Catholics and non-Catholics made fearsome howls about Cardinal Mindszenty. Such "holy" men they were. I knew them and knew how "holy" they were. But day after day it went on. The Cardinal got a life sentence. So did Prince Esterhazy. Fed up listening to them, I got up and asked, "Isn't there anyone in the House prepared to say a word for the great landowner, Prince Esterhazy, or are we to take it that there is one law for laity and another for the clerics?" The damned hypocrites!

When my wife and I were in Czechoslovakia we visited Pilsen, the home of the famous Pilsen beer, and the great Skoda steel-works. We were taken to visit a castle on a hill which was being used for a workers' school. The former owner of the castle, and of an exclusive estate, got out when the workers took power. He's still out, but he would like to get back to his castle and his estate. But will he go around saying that? Not likely. Neither Catholic workers nor Protestant workers would pay him any heed if he did

so. No, not his castle, not his estate, not in these is he interested. It's religion. His whole aim in life is to see that the peasants, who now own the land, hand it back to him and so ensure that they'll go to heaven when they're dead. Poverty, illiteracy and disease while they were alive, but the "Pearly Gates" kept open for them if they submit to the extortions of their lords and masters.

Such rotten, immoral teaching has nothing in common with the early Christians. Paul, the great evangelist of the new religion, what sort of man was he? Was he fit company for the Bishops and the Cardinals? Could he take his place with the "high ones" of the land, and provide a suitable decoration for a fashionable drawing room? See, read this and have a look at your Bishops and your clergymen, and ask yourselves who it is they serve—God or Mammon?

"Are they Hebrews? So am I. Are they Israelites? So am I. Are they the seed of Abraham? So am I.

"Are they Ministers of Christ? (I speak as a fool.) I am more. In labours more abundant, in stripes above measure, in prison more frequent, in deaths oft. Of the Jews five times received I forty stripes save one.

"Thrice was I beaten with rods, once was I stoned, thrice I suffered shipwreck, a night and a day I have been in the deep.

"In journeyings often, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils by mine own countrymen, in perils by the heathen, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils amongst false brethren.

"In weariness and painfulness, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness."

(2 Corinthians xii. 22-27.)

That's a hefty list of labour, of endurance and suffering. He must have been a tough, tenacious, determined lad. There are a few, only a few of our present-day clergy who would take their stand with Paul and the savage hate and unpopularity he brought upon himself. For men such as Paul today we must look, not to the "Christian" church, we must look to the Communist Party. Would the Archbishop of Canterbury or Cardinal Griffin care to challenge that?

We will never persecute as the ruling class of his day persecuted Paul and his associates, we will never persecute and slander as



the Communists are being persecuted and slandered today. We have always been for religious freedom. Here is what I said in *The Case for Communism*:

“We accept the Marxist theory of Dialectical Materialism as the guiding principle that determines our policy. But our policy is directed towards the changing of social relations in favour of the people. We are for the people, not against them, therefore it would be folly to ignore the fact that the people, in general, have religious beliefs, or to interfere in any way with these beliefs. We would give no State assistance to any religious body, but we would allow the utmost freedom of worship for those, whatever their creed, who desired to participate in religious activities.”

## CHAPTER XI

### "LIES—LIES AGAIN—AND STILL THEY LIE"

THESE WORDS from Browning's *Confessional* aptly apply to the propaganda that is being conducted against the Soviet Union and against Communism. Never in history has there been anything to equal it. Never has there been such a powerful medium at the disposal of a ruling class. The millionaire press, mendacious, unscrupulous, uncontrolled by any sense of decency, the radio and the cinema screen. These are used to pour out, morning, noon and night, slanders, misrepresentations and plain, downright lies.

The Government, the opposition, the Foreign Office, the Home Office, the various Ministers, all take a turn. The Churches lend a willing hand. With all this going on, thinking is at a discount. There is no need to think. Not only so, but it is dangerous to think.

The churches at one time stood alone in prohibiting thought. "Don't think, believe." It was Robert G. Ingersoll who said, "They tell me I'll be damned if I don't believe, and I tell them I'll be damned if I do".

But now the political leaders are lined up with the churches. Who will dare defy them?

"Believe or be damned." The two-party system, Labour on one side, Tories on the other, that is the absolute limit of political advance. "Believe or be damned." Stop thinking. You've reached the end of political thought. If you seek to go further, then woe betide you.

Yet the two-party system is a fraud. Capitalism, in a condition of perpetual crisis, must have a policy that puts the full burden on the people. On this both parties have to agree or face the consequences—a bitter struggle for power—one for the capitalists, the other for the workers. But no one could imagine for a moment the petty-bourgeois Attlee and his cronies lining up for such a battle. On all essentials they are in full agreement with the Tories. Time and again in the House of Commons, a Tory would get up and say, "All parties are agreed on this". It might be the "Atlantic

War Pact”, “Western Union” or “cuts in capital expenditure”.

When it was, say, Oliver Stanley who made such an observation, and I chipped in with “Eh, eh, correction”, he would smile quite amiably and say, “I’m sorry, I should have excluded the Communists”.

But when it was Churchill holding, or trying to hold the House, in a spell of carefully prepared oratory, and he heard the irreverent “Eh, eh, correction”, he’d stop, glare across like an angry bull, and bellow, “We don’t want the Communists”.

To which the obvious retort was, “You know you can’t get them”.

There they are, united on fundamental issues, only now and again indulging in a bit of rhetorical slap-stick, nothing like as realistic as the shows that were at one time put on between the Liberals and the Tories. Where is there one of them who could arouse the rage of the parasites with the penetrating darts that flew from the silver tongue of Lloyd George? Yet he wasn’t a Socialist. On the contrary, he was a defender of the present system. With another Welshman it was different. Modelling himself on Lloyd George, Aneurin Bevan made a tremendous “splash in the duck pond” but—as a Socialist. Yes, sir, a Socialist well over to the “Left”. Nothing would stop him till the Tory “vermin” were exterminated and the capitalist class laid low. Now see where he has got, this man whose conscience, like Morrison’s, would allow him to fight for capitalism under the command of General Eisenhower, Yankee Tory. He joins with Shinwell and Strachey to make up Mammon’s Trinity of Death. What a fate, what a miserable, melancholy fate!

There used to be a crack about the “Devil” being absolutely necessary for the Salvation Army. But not any more necessary than the Tory Party is for the Labour leaders.

Suppose the Labour Government pursued a policy that won over the great mass of the people of this country. A policy designed to put the capitalists out of business and to raise the general living standards of the workers and the professional classes. What would happen to the Tory Party? With no big capitalists to supply it with funds and no popular support in the country, it would fade out of existence, leaving one party—a party of the people. For if such a policy was being pursued, the Communists would be a part of the forces pursuing it.

## RISE LIKE LIONS

The Labour leaders daren't face the possibility of that, so the Tory Party must be kept going and the capitalists must be there to supply the funds, therefore the Labour leaders must support and maintain capitalism. It's as simple as a simple equation in algebra.

So the sham fight goes on, with both sides venomous against the Communists who want to dispense with the capitalists, and as a consequence dispense with the party of the capitalist class, the Tory Party. The lies and slanders pour out in a constant stream, until, and it is no wonder, the minds of millions of people are poisoned with them.

Poisoned! That reminds me, I gave a talk one night to a Co-operative Guild on this very subject—thinking. I pointed out that ideas were manufactured and sedulously planted with so much insistence and so much cunning, that for many people thinking had become unnecessary. They picked up the paper, they saw a story; they turned on the radio, they got the same story; they went to the cinema, there it was again. It must be true. These Communists must be a bad lot.

For instance, I said, we often heard Labour leaders declare that communism and fascism were the same, they were both totalitarian. Now, apart from the fact that "totalitarian" is a somewhat ugly word, it can only mean one thing, that all power and all resources are in the hands of a particular class. But, I went on, suppose I were to say that water and prussic acid are the same, they are both liquid, would anyone swallow that? They might swallow the water, but not the other. Any chemist would tell them that while they were both liquid, the content was entirely different; while one was life-giving, the other was death-dealing.

So in considering communism and fascism, we have to examine the content. While communism means power, all power and all the resources of the country in the hands of the workers, fascism means the brutal power of monopoly capitalism over an exploited working class.

I asked at that meeting, as I have often asked, "Is there anyone who claims to be a Socialist who would say the workers shouldn't take all the power and all the resources, but should leave a share of the power and a share of the resources in the hands of the capitalist class?" I have never found one yet prepared to give an open affirmative to that.

Then take the roar that went up against Sir John Anderson, in

which I joined, when in the course of the discussion on the capital cuts he made the statement that the Government should have waited until the economy of the country was balanced before it advanced such reforms as increased pensions and family allowances. Listen to the Labour benches' howl. "There's Toryism for you." "You've given the game away." "Now the people will see what you are." Such a demonstration! The poor "cratur" could only stand there appalled at the storm he had unwittingly raised.

Very good. Labour was not being taken in by Sir John. Then, a short time later, just a few months after, Sir Stafford came along with his policy of restraint in personal incomes. Profits going up, prices going up, production going up, what about wages? Oh, says Sir Stafford, wait till we balance our economy and then we'll consider wages.

Any howls from the Labour benches? Only from the Communists and one or two others. The Labour members at first sat sullen and silent but after a party meeting with the threat of a split putting the "fear of God" into them, they fell into line. What smelled to high heaven when it was offered by Sir John became a quite palatable dish when it was served up by Sir Stafford.

"We're terrorised. We daren't open our mouths." So said a young Labour M.P. to Harry Pollitt, while they were travelling together on the train. It was not Harry who told me of this conversation, it was the young Labour member himself.

Over in Paris, at the United Nations meeting during the latter part of 1948, Mr. Bevin made a speech. As usual, a violent attack on the Soviet Union. According to Ernie, nobody knew a thing about what was happening behind the "Iron Curtain". Everything there was kept hidden—secret, impenetrable. The Press, radio and screen gave that, and Ernie, a great show. It got general acceptance. What's going on? Nobody knows. Ernie said it, so it must be true. As for the democracies, he went on, we publish full information about our armed forces. We have nothing to hide.

That was in the first half of his speech. In the second half, he made a "full revelation" of the strength of the Soviet armed forces. That also got a big play—that also was accepted. "We don't know anything." "We know everything." Both stories handed out,

both stories taken up. I go into the tea-room for a cup of tea. Labour members fasten on me. "Why is everything secret in Russia?" Before I can make an attempt to answer, another joins in. "Why does Russia maintain such a powerful army?" Don't think, believe—that is the answer.

But only believe one side. . . . The Soviet Union publishes its budget as we do. Anyone can read it and get an idea of the tremendous reconstruction that is being carried on in that great country. But—believe Bevin, believe Churchill, believe the Americans, but don't under any circumstances believe the Russians.

So the war-mongers seek to mould the minds of the people. Not long after this speech of Bevin, we had a discussion in the House on Army Estimates. Labour members, and Tory members, begged and pleaded for a little information about the British Armed Forces. How many divisions? What kind of equipment? What progress in this or that particular direction? But the Minister was a clam. No information. Not in the public interest.

Members got up and protested. The information demanded couldn't possibly do any harm. No matter—no information. I know nothing about the strength of the British Armed Forces. The same applies to every Member of Parliament. Of course, I could look up the estimates and get the amount of money spent and the numbers of personnel, but I could do that also if I looked at the published estimates of the Soviet Union.

"The 'Democracies' publish everything." It's not true. The "Democracies" publish nothing of any real value, even to the representatives of the people. The other "great democracy", America (tell it to the coloured citizen and poor whites), has a pile of atom bombs. How many? Speak up Ernie, we're all listening. You're a great pal of the Generals and Bankers who constitute the Government of America. Whatever they command, that you do. Surely they've taken you into their confidence? The "Democracies" publish everything. Tell us then how many atomic bombs America has got, and at what rate and what cost they are making them?

I won't pause for a reply, for I know it will take Ernie a long time to get one prepared. We'll continue.

"We have nothing to hide", he says. My, oh my, "nothing to hide." There's been no purge in the Security Services, and no "Spy Scare". I remember getting after him in the House about something M.I.5 had been doing. I ended up with, "M.I.5, an

organisation about which the Foreign Secretary knows as much as I do, and that's damn all". Nothing to hide! I can't help thinking of some lines written by Hilaire Belloc after he had spent about a year in the House of Commons:

"I love to think of Mr. Myers,  
I love to think of Mr. Bing,  
I love to think of all the liars,  
It pleases me, that sort of thing."

Well, I must say, it doesn't please me. Quite the contrary. Somebody, somewhere, renamed the two parties, Kiddem and Coddem. Mr. Bevin, we may say, was carrying out a "combined operation".

The cause of all the trouble in the world, we are so often told, is Soviet Imperialism—Red Imperialism is a favourite expression. It is such palpable nonsense, but the enemies of the Soviet Union keep on repeating and repeating the phrase, without ever stopping to examine or explain its meaning, until the ordinary man and women, bemused and befuddled, begin to accept it as a matter of course.

In the House, I tried to counter this evil, lying propaganda. I made a speech on Imperialism. I put the question, "What is Imperialism?" I then gave a definition.

Imperialism is capitalism in the stage of monopoly, when the export of capital becomes absolutely essential for the maintenance of its economy. In the nineteenth century, Britain became "the workshop of the world". It produced goods and sold them everywhere. But in the second half of that century, the beginnings of monopoly began to evidence themselves. The accumulated capital couldn't any longer find suitable investment at home, export of capital had become imperative. But the export of capital was an entirely different proposition to the export of goods. Wherever capital went, soldiers had to go with it to protect it. During that early period we had in this country what were known as "Little Englanders", those who were opposed to colonial expansion—opposed to imperialist development. These were the people who were interested in the sale of goods as distinct from those who were concerned with the export of capital. Soldiers to protect capital meant increased taxes and they didn't like taxation. Thus there developed the struggle between the Empire men and the "Little Englanders", a losing fight for the latter.

Between the wars, in America, there were "Little Englanders" known as "Isolationists". There was the whole of the American continent to absorb investment capital. Yet even before the war, although they were relatively strong, they were fighting a losing battle. America had about reached the limit of absorption and investment capital was steadily increasing. Then came the Second World War, and with it an accumulation of investment capital in America, far, far ahead of anything ever known or dreamt of in the history of capitalism. That killed "Isolationism" in America.

It is somewhat pathetic to hear men who make a claim to be socialist, babbling about the "welcome change" in American policy. Elliott Roosevelt in his book about his father, *As He Saw It*, tells of a conversation between his father and Churchill, in the course of which Roosevelt had put his views quite clearly and frankly:

"Gradually, very gradually, and very quietly the mantle of leadership was slipping from British shoulders to American. . . . Churchill had got up to walk about the room, talking, gesticulating, at length he paused in front of father . . . Mr. President, he cried, I believe you are trying to do away with the British Empire. Every idea you entertain about the structure of the post-war world demonstrates it. . . . You know that *we* know without America, the Empire won't stand!"

He also reports a talk between his father and the Sultan of Morocco. Roosevelt told the Sultan that all the British were interested in was to exploit backward countries and backward people:

". . . as the conversation proceeded, Churchill grew more and more disgruntled. What was the trouble? Father and the Sultan were animatedly chatting about the wealth of natural resources in French Morocco and the rich possibilities for their development. . . . Father, dropping in a remark about the past relationship between French and British financiers combined into self-perpetuating syndicates for the purpose of dredging riches out of colonies, went on to raise the question of possible oil deposits in Morocco. . . .

"The Sultan eagerly pounced on this: declared himself decidedly in favour of developing any such potentialities, retaining the income therefrom. . . .

"Father pursued his point. . . . He mentioned that it might easily be practicable for the Sultan to engage firms—American



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firms—to carry out the development programme he had in mind, on a fee or percentage basis. Such an arrangement, he urged, would have the advantage of enabling the sovereign Government of French Morocco to retain considerable control over its own resources, obtain the major part of any incomes flowing from such resources, and indeed eventually take them over completely.

“Churchill snorted and tried not to listen.”

That’s what the change in American policy means. World-wide investment of capital at the expense of Britain and the other capitalist countries. That is imperialism. Britain has capital invested in Hong-Kong. Britain has soldiers there. The Dutch have investments in Indonesia, her soldiers are there—to be replaced by a puppet government. France has investments in Indo-China, and her troops are there fighting against the Liberation Forces as ours are fighting against the Liberation Forces in Malaya. America has capital in Britain and—but we’d better go no further along that road. It’s thought-provoking and thought is dangerous. Thought must be avoided.

In the Soviet Union there can be no accumulation of capital investment without an outlet, such as is the case in capitalist economy. The greater the production, the greater the return to the workers. There are no monopoly capitalists piling up huge profits at the expense of the people, and then desperately searching the world for profitable investment. There can, therefore, be no Soviet Imperialism—no worry there about “export of capital”.

But how different with America. The greedy eyes of its capitalists are on all corners of the world. Look at the map. From Iceland and Greenland, right down around the South Seas, and up the other side of the world to the Aleutians, then across from the Far East, through the Middle East, the Near East, across North Africa to Britain, America has bases, military, naval and air forces. The whole world surrounded. That is imperialism at its highest, most desperate and final stage. The world will never submit to dollar domination. The lesson of China should be read and understood by those who think it will.

In the history of the miners, Featherstone and Tonypany are written in letters of blood. Shameful episodes in Britain’s history. But surely no less shameful was the shooting down of the miners of Nigeria, striking for an increase in their miserable wage. The

Colonial Secretary told the usual story in such cases—there was rioting; but we forced out of him the admission that not one policeman was injured, even in the slightest degree. A strange sort of riot where nobody was hurt. Twenty-one miners shot dead and not one miner holding a job in the Labour Government was prepared to resign as a protest.

International Brotherhood has fallen on evil days under a Labour Government. Nay, we had even worse than that in connection with the war in Malaya. Shinwell, of all people, tried to arouse prejudice against the liberation forces by referring to them as being not Malaysians but Chinese. Such a mean attempt to use racial discrimination. True, there are many Chinese in Malaya; they have been there for generations, exploited by the tin and rubber monopolies.

When in the pre-war Parliament a Tory member shouted to Shinwell, "Go back to Poland", Shinwell crossed the floor and smacked him hard on the side of the face. I stepped out of my place and lined up with Shinwell. Had it been necessary I was prepared to defend him. I walked out with him down to the terrace, where I gave him all the comfort and encouragement I could.

So I now take my stand with the Malayan Chinese against Shinwell. He now occupies the position of the Tory whom he struck. He and the others in the Labour Government are with the imperialists; I am with the workers fighting for freedom—fighting for emancipation—fighting against the lying propaganda of the capitalist class and their Labour lackeys.

## DOWN GOES THE £

BUT ALL the lying propaganda could do nothing to solve the economic crisis. No more could the cuts. The worse our attitude towards the Soviet Union—the worse the crisis. As Attlee's stock went up in America, Britain's stock went down. That's something for the wiscacres to ponder over when the reason for Attlee's rise to favour is taken into account.

Early in 1948, during a speech I made on Foreign Affairs, I drew attention to this. I said:

"But let us get to the guts of this matter. We need only to refer to the appalling and grovelling speech made over the radio by the Prime Minister a few nights ago. I use the term deservedly. I have here one or two quotations from a columnist, Don Iddon, of the *Daily Mail*, writing from America. Here are some:

'Messrs Attlee and Morrison, who usually trail at the foot of the Third Division in popular contests here, are now being promoted. Socialist theories are still anathema, of course, in this citadel of capitalism, but even the Union League Club (the American Carlton)'. . .

"hon. Members know how bad that is—

'is conceding that Britain's Cabinet Ministers have finally got the right idea about the Soviet. So after two and a half years of distaste and distrust from the United States, the Pinks in Whitehall and Westminster are being smiled and waved at. Wall Street is forcing itself to nod politely, and the Middle West is essaying a wink. If more affectionate gestures are required, then all the Prime Minister and his colleagues need to do is again to put the blast on the U.S.S.R. It is sure fire and cannot miss.'

"I would say in relation to that, 'Shame, a thousand times, on those who have dragged the sacred name of Socialism and the scarlet banner of Socialism into the filthy mire of American capitalism.'" (Hansard, January 22, 1948, Col. 480.)

Of course such language did not meet with approval from the leaders or from Labour members of Parliament who wanted to shut their eyes to the evil that was being done. Yet the fact was so obvious. The more popular the Labour leaders became with the Tories here and the Tories in America, the worse became the economic plight of this country.

Then our "generous friends in America", as Herbert Morrison called them, always anxious to seize whatever opportunity offered itself for pushing Britain deeper into the mire, started with a demand for devaluation of the pound. Some "friends"! With all the wealth of the world at their disposal, instead of helping Britain up, they insisted on pushing us down.

Members of Parliament began to get uneasy. They could hear the strident dollar voices and feel the merciless pressure, but they wanted to resist. What had the Government to say about it? Questions were directed to the Chancellor, who, in the month of August 1949, made the categorical declaration, "This Government has no intention of devaluing the pound". What a roar went up. From all sides of the House. Not one member—not one representative of the "sovereign people"—was in favour of devaluation. For the moment Cripps was their hero—whatever other Governments might do, "this Government" was resolute. The House of Commons breathed freely once again. So easily are they taken in, our loudly professed devotees of democracy.

It's a peculiar business, this British democracy. According to the theorists, all power is vested in the people. The people can delegate their power to a Party for specific purposes. That Party can form a Government and put the wishes of the people into legislation. If they don't want to do the job, or if they are incapable of doing it, they return the power to the people.

That's how the story goes.

But consider what actually happens. The Irish Republic decides to sever its connections with the British Crown, a step it is quite entitled to take. The Labour Government then brings in a Bill which is the direct negation of democracy. Through that Bill, they take the power delegated to them by the people of this country, and hand it over to the Tory minority of Northern Ireland. Now, instead of the people here having the power to settle the age-long Irish problem by removing partition, the power is in the hands of a small, but very powerful, Tory faction.

That's one instance of how these worshippers of "western democracy" flout the wishes of the people and prostitute the very thing about which they make such loud-sounding but always demagogic claims.

But worse was to follow. In August, Cripps, supported by the whole House, declared his opposition to devaluation. In September it was an accomplished fact.

After his August pronouncement, Cripps went off to Switzerland for a cure. I made a crack at the time, while speaking in Fife. I said, "Cripps is sick and Britain is sick. Cripps has gone for a cure—if he gets better Britain'll get worse". While he was away, Mr. Snyder, representative of the big monopoly millionaires, arrived. He insisted on devaluation, and the Government capitulated, in the absence of Cripps. When Cripps returned to find a *fait accompli* they had a hard time keeping him in his job. But a resignation at that time would have upset the whole apple-cart, so after a couple of days "sulking in his tent" he agreed to carry on.

Off he and Bevin went to Washington. There they accepted two propositions which were indicative of how low Britain's political leaders and Britain's economy had fallen: (1) devaluation of the pound, and (2) the right of the American capitalists to buy up industrial assets in Britain and the British colonies.

These two decisions meant selling out Britain—on the cheap. For devaluation doesn't help Britain—only a fool would be taken in with anything so absurd—but it's bound to be a very big advantage to American capitalists who are buying up British industrial assets here or in the colonies. That's the real meaning of and reason for devaluation.

These decisions were taken in a foreign capital, under the domination of representatives of a foreign government. The people of this country were never consulted. The representatives of the people in the House of Commons were never consulted on these matters of vital importance to the country. "These be thy Gods", oh, British democrats.

On the return of Bevin and Cripps, the usual secret meeting of the Parliamentary Labour Party was given a statement on the change of policy. When later we had a discussion on devaluation, we got to know the line taken by Cripps to soothe the ragged nerves of his supporters. Devaluation was the only alternative to

large-scale unemployment, and at all costs the Government was determined to maintain full employment.

The things these fellows will say and the things the back-benchers will swallow! In all my experience I never heard anything to beat that one.

We were finding difficulty, increasing difficulty, in getting dollars to meet our American commitments. If we could not get dollars to buy the raw materials we required, our industries would have to close down and mass unemployment would take the place of full employment. Not one solitary member of the House was aware of this in August, but by September the big majority had become "noddors". We haven't enough dollars to pay for the goods we want—so we decide to pay more for what we buy and to ask less for what we sell. It takes a real brainy lad to think that out.

Suppose you're in business. Eh, what's that? You're not in business, you're just an ordinary worker. I see. One of these rebels. Yes, I know you, one of the lads who agrees with the Communists, but you feel you've got to support Labour.

All right, you haven't too much pay. Your wife's complaining. She says by the time she has bought food and clothing she hasn't sufficient left to pay the rent. "Don't worry, Maggie", you say, "I'll soon fix that. I'll ask the boss to reduce my wages and I'll ask the landlord to raise the rent." You can just imagine the love-light in Maggie's eyes as she picks up the poker and bounces it off your head.

That's devaluation. That is served up as a solution for the problem that is confronting us, a problem that will become increasingly difficult as the months go by.

In the House we had a three days' debate. Never was there such a farce. The Government put down the following motion:

"That this House approves the action taken by His Majesty's Government in relation to the exchange value of the Pound Sterling, supports the measures agreed upon at Washington by the Ministers of the United States, Canada and the United Kingdom which are designed to assist in restoring equilibrium in the sterling-dollar balance of trade for the purpose of enabling the economy of the sterling area to maintain stability independent of external aid; and calls upon the people for their full co-operation with the Government in achieving this aim, whilst maintaining full employment and safeguarding the

social services." (Hansard, September 29, 1949, Col. 309.)

Phil and I put down an amendment. Here it is:

"That this House condemns the action taken by His Majesty's Government in devaluing the pound sterling, which is a direct consequence of its foreign policy, since the effect of devaluation is to lower the living standards of the people by increasing the price of food, goods and raw materials, thereby reducing the purchasing power of wages and pensions, unemployment and health benefits; particularly condemns the increase in the price of bread, which adversely affects the lowest paid section of the working class; is of the opinion that in reducing the consumption of the people by increasing the cost of living, and by slowing down the social services, particularly the building of houses and schools, the Government is bringing nearer the economic crisis, with its consequent mass unemployment, as in 1931, which policy is not only a betrayal of the working class, but also a betrayal of Britain to the United States; requires, in order to counteract the effects of this policy, to secure a complete break with the Government's policy of subservience and surrender to the United States; calls for the immediate increase of wages, pensions and unemployment and health benefits; for an increase in housing and schools; and for the speedier development of the social services; to be effected by drastically scaling down the high compensation and interest rates paid to the shareholders of nationalised industry; by curtailing the vast profits of industry; and above all, by substantially cutting down arms expenditure, so that the Government can find the means to raise the living standards of the people at the expense of the rich; and further declares that in order to reduce its dependence on the dollar, the Government should at the speediest possible moment extend its trade to the utmost with the planned economies of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, the East-European Democracies, and the People's Republic of China."

Now, had that amendment been called, we might have had a real debate with an opportunity of hammering in some much-needed home-truths. But when Phil went to have a word with the Speaker, with whom I had broken off "diplomatic relations" early in 1947, he was told that our amendment would not be called, that he was going to call the Tory amendment.

Have a look at the Tory amendment :

"That this House welcomes the measures agreed upon in Washington but regrets that His Majesty's Government, as a result of four years' financial mismanagement, should now be brought to a drastic devaluation of the pound sterling, contrary to all the assurances given by the Chancellor of the Exchequer, and considers that a return to national prosperity, the maintenance of full employment and the safeguarding of the social services can never be assured under the present administration, which, instead of proposing fundamental cures for our economic ills, resorts to one temporary expedient after another." (Hansard, September 29, 1949, Col. 309.)

There you are. Both sides agree on the main issue—the decision, the utterly undemocratic decision, taken at Washington. So what was there to provide three days' discussion? Cripps had admitted that devaluation would mean a big increase in profits. In order to create the impression that he was doing something about it, and to justify his opposition to increased wages, he introduced a small increase in the profits tax. Although it meant little or nothing to the profiteers, the Tories, as usual, made a song and dance about it.

One of the clever financial experts on the Labour benches got up and gave detailed figures to show that the tax wouldn't cause the slightest ripple on the heavy sea of profits.

"I don't know what all the fuss is about", he exclaimed.

I got up to tell him. "The fuss", I said, "is about nothing. But if they didn't make a fuss about nothing, the workers would become wise and they'd have to make a fuss about something."

And that was exactly what happened on the devaluation debate. A fuss about nothing so far as any difference between the main parties went.

On the second day of the debate, Churchill opened up with all his heavy artillery in full working order. "We're going down and we're going down fast", was the main theme of his speech. We were down deeper by far than any other country in Western Europe. The following day, the Minister of Health got after him with rapid-fire machine-guns. Facts, he would give him facts. Listen to the Labour Members' cheer. Facts! He rattled them across until he had the Tories blinking. And what did his facts prove? They proved, in contradiction to Churchill's argument, that the other countries of Western Europe, the countries receiving



Marshall Aid, were all going down faster and deeper than this country. Both agreed that every country blessed by Marshall Aid was on the way down, the only difference was failure to agree on which was deepest in the mire.

When challenged about his statement that Marshall Aid saved us from having  $1\frac{1}{2}$  million unemployed, Mr. Bevan and others of the Labour leaders point to these other countries, France, Belgium and Italy, and say, look at these, they get Marshall Aid but they haven't been able to maintain full employment. That of course doesn't alter the fact that both Mr. Bevan and Mr. Morrison gave credit to their "generous friends in America" for the advantage of full employment in this country. Yet like most of their other stories, there is no truth in it.

One of the major causes of full employment is the absence of competition from our great pre-war competitor, Germany. Our steel furnaces and shipbuilding yards have been going ahead at full capacity while most of the Ruhr furnaces have been cold and idle, and German shipyards lying dead. Now that American dollars are propping up Ruhr steel and the decision has been taken to boost up output and to get the German shipyards going again, the outlook for this country will become darker than ever before. Thus, America will use Germany against Britain, even as it uses Britain against the Soviet Union and the countries of Eastern Europe. Ruthless, brutal, they will spare none of their tools in their desperate drive for dollar investments. In the Far East, the Near East and in Western Europe, their slimy tentacles are spread. This mad pursuit of dollars and dollar investments forces devaluation on this country. It is not just devaluation of the pound, it is devaluation of Britain.

In the House of Commons, with Phil and a few others battling "against the stream", we tried to rouse the Members with little success for our labours. Much to my surprise the Speaker called on me during the debate, and I was able to show that devaluation represented a cut in the standard of living, just as if there were a general cut in wages. I went on:

"We are told that devaluation in itself is not a solution. I should say not. The Chancellor said that if we all pull together and nobody takes advantage of his neighbour, everything will work out all right. We have heard that a few times before. On the morning after the Chancellor's broadcast speech we had what the Prime Minister in a model of understatement referred

to as the 'unpleasant scenes in Throgmorton Street'. The street was blocked in a panic for profit. Had Throgmorton Street been filled by railwaymen in a demonstration for a living wage, an army of police would have been turned out against them. The sum of £150 million was made in one day, and then we are told that tin shares are up by 10s. Profits are higher at the present time than they have ever been, and, as a result of devaluation, they are now going to soar even higher. The workers of this country must now produce more and consume less in order to make greater profits not only for the British capitalists, but also for the American capitalists.

"Can any Labour leader or trade union leader deny that allegation? We have to consider, in the light of that, the betrayal of the workers at Bridlington. The miners have demanded a new wages structure to uplift the whole conditions in the mining industry, yet the miners' delegation at Bridlington voted for keeping wages as they are. The railwaymen demand 10s. a week, the engineers demand £1 a week; but the delegates at Bridlington voted to keep wages as they are. We are opposed to the betrayal at Bridlington, and the Communist Party will support every demand by the workers to increase their wages and to place the burden of the crisis where it belongs.

"It is interesting to compare the gentle tone of the Prime Minister in dealing with the gamblers in Throgmorton Street with the vicious hatred expressed towards the Communist Party and the workers. At the week-end he warned all and sundry that Communist mischief-makers would press for increases in wages. Someone says, 'Hear, hear', but who are the first mischief-makers? They are the workers who demand increases in wages! The Communist Party can only participate in a demand for increases in wages if the workers first make the demand. If the workers do not make the demand, how can we support an increase in wages? When the attack is made on the Communists, it is an attack on the working class.

"If representing the interests of the workers is mischief-making, then I plead guilty; I have been a mischief-maker for forty-five years, and in the course of those forty-five years I have had many associates, some of them now sitting in more or less comfort on the Government Front Bench. They have now

become recognised by the 'big shots' of America as useful cogs in the capitalist machine here in Western Europe. I can only say that their impudence in attacking the Communists for what they themselves claimed to believe is equalled only by the hypocrisy in their attitude towards the workers." (Hansard, September 28, 1949, Cols. 226-7.)

Continuing, I showed how all this was a logical outcome of the notorious speech made by Churchill at Fulton, Missouri:

"When the Atlantic Pact was discussed, the Leader of the Opposition could get up and say that the Atlantic Pact was the outcome of the policy he laid down at Fulton, Missouri. . . . Was there any Member of the Front Bench who could question it? No; they all knew it was true and everyone in this House knew it was true. At the time that speech was made at Fulton we said it was an offer to sell Britain and the British people to the American capitalists for war against Socialism in Europe, for the Leader of the Opposition has been notorious all his life as an enemy of Socialism.

"Now the decision on devaluation bears out what we then said about the Fulton speech, and the Leader of the Opposition could quite well have got up today and said: 'Devaluation is the logical outcome of what I said at Fulton, Missouri, in 1946'. Attempts have been made to create the impression that this decision was taken by the Government of its own volition. Does anybody really believe that? Where did the demand for devaluation come from? From the Labour Party? From the Trades Union Congress? No; it came from America and was persisted in in America, and Mr. Snyder, a typical representative of big American capitalism, came over here to London and cracked the whip until the Cabinet yielded. That is true." (Hansard, September 28, 1949, Cols. 228-9.)

I then went on to say:

"This country will never be economically free and independent until we say to America, 'We will trade with you and take your goods, but just to the extent that you take ours'. We can only say that if we have an alternative source of supply, and the alternative source is at hand. We can get supplies without dollars from the Soviet Union, the countries of Eastern Europe and from liberated China, as well as from the Dominions. Friendship and trade with the Soviet Union and

the other countries marching towards Socialism is the way to our salvation." (Hansard, September 28, 1949, Col. 232.)

Earlier, D. N. Pritt, a bonny fighter, a staunch Parliamentary colleague and a powerful, witty speaker, had managed to get in a few telling blows. He said:

"The real issue which lies between us and the Government on this topic is the far-reaching issue of whether the country shall continue to be dominated by the capitalists of the world—our own or those of some other nation—or whether, as we believe, a complete change should be wrought in our system by bringing under the control of this House the forces of finance and industry which have so great a power over the lives of individuals in this country. If anybody thinks that is rather better English than I usually achieve, I would say at once that those words are quoted almost textually from a speech made eighteen years ago on the National Economy Bill of the 1931 Tory Coalition Government, and that the words were used in a speech made by the right hon. and learned gentleman the present Chancellor of the Exchequer. He was not then a right hon. gentleman, but he was right and he was honourable. He was speaking in his socialist era, which has passed." (Hansard, September 27, 1949, Col. 61.)

In the country the workers listened, keenly interested in what we had to say. But they are still held by loyalty to the Labour Party—the Party built up by their political levy and the support that has grown decade by decade. To them it is not just another political party—it is theirs. It was born out of the trade union movement and nurtured from its infancy to maturity. It is not easy for the workers to realise, to believe, that the leaders of "their" Party would deliberately sell them out, even if they sometimes do recall the defection of MacDonald, Snowden and Thomas. But the sell-out has taken place, not only of the workers, but of the country. Devaluation is but an advanced stage of a process that has been going on since the Churchill speech at Fulton, Missouri. Britain is no longer a free and independent country. The decisions taken at Washington were a portent and a warning. Britain is a pawn in the hands of dollar-mad gamblers—a pawn they are prepared to sacrifice when it suits their play to do so.

That is the lesson devaluation at the command of the Americans should teach us—that is the lesson all of us must learn.

## CHAPTER XIII

### A WORD ON DRUGS

I HAVE already mentioned the spate of lying propaganda that followed the arrest and prosecution of Cardinal Mindszenty. Always the Princes of the Church have been associated with the temporal Princes as part of the ruling class. They have always been upholders of the "Old Régime" against the advance of new, revolutionary forces.

That applies to all countries at all stages of history. Catholics know that there have been "bad Popes", very bad Popes, and very bad Cardinals. The Borgias supplied a few of these. But despite this knowledge, they are very reluctant to admit, when an actual case comes before their notice, that a high dignitary of the Church can be a low, common criminal. They are, therefore, easily swayed by propaganda designed to turn them against their own class and to keep them subject to the ruling class of their own country.

Thousands of good trade unionists, Catholics, non-Catholics, may rot in Franco's gaols or in the terror-ridden gaols of Greece, but not a word about these. These are enemies of fascism and capitalism. Our rulers are not concerned with such as these. But a Cardinal, however clear his guilt, provides an excellent opportunity for disrupting the working class and so full use is made of it.

Over there in Hungary, there was not only the terrible devastation of the war, calling for heroic endeavour if the country were to be rebuilt, but there was also the appalling handicap of illiteracy that had to be overcome. Schools were few and backward, education was at the lowest level. It became necessary for the People's State to take an active interest in the education of its citizens. It was decided that the schools be taken over, that new schools be built and that the whole educational system be overhauled. In the measures drawn up for this purpose, full provision was made for the teaching of the Catholic faith.

But immediately this measure was announced, Mindszenty, supported by the political reactionaries at the Vatican, came out with the most vehement opposition. It was an attack on the Catholic Church. Here also we had our Mindszentys, large and small, all stridently yelling about the threat to the Church arising from the decision of the People's Government to take the necessary steps to carry education to the Hungarian people.

Yet the proposals put forward in Hungary, and now being operated, are similar to what is actually the practice in Scotland. There is very little difference between the Hungarian system and what is generally known as the Scottish system. If anything, the Church in Hungary gets even more consideration than in Scotland. But that meant nothing to reactionary Catholics and other propagandists. Shrieks sufficient to rend the heavens go up against this sacrilegious taking over of Catholic schools. And then, a short year or so later, the Hierarchy of England and Wales, faced with the heavy consequences of the crisis and Marshall "Aid" and the impossibility of maintaining their schools or of building new ones, publish a statement calling on the State, this Protestant State by law established, to take over all Catholic schools in England and Wales. What they damned in Hungary they are prepared to bless in England. Could cant, hypocrisy and humbug go further than that?

But while Mindszenty was trying to foment trouble amongst the Catholic peasants of Hungary, he was up to other tricks, such as spying, black-marketeering and conspiring with the hope of outside aid for the overthrow of the People's Government and the restoration of landlords and capitalists. His main accomplice was Prince Esterhazy. A "spiritual" Prince and a "temporal" Prince. A bonny pair.

When they were arrested, a large metal box was found buried in Mindszenty's garden, containing a mass of documents and correspondence. When these criminals were before the examining magistrates, all the documents were there. There was no possibility of denying their guilt. It was there, staring them in the face. That is why they made their confession. Their guilt could not be hidden.

If there had been nothing else, and there was abundance, the letter from the American Ambassador to Mindszenty was sufficient to damn him. I give it here :

Legation of the United States.

Budapest, Hungary.  
*December 27, 1946.*

Your Eminence :

I have the honour to acknowledge receipt of your letter of November 22, concerning certain actions taken by the Czechoslovak Government affecting the Hungarian minority in Slovakia, as well as your letter of December 12, concerning the programme for retrenchment of the Hungarian Civil Service, and your letter of December 16 containing observations on general matters of political interest in Hungary at the present time.

Copies of your letters have been forwarded to the Department of State.

It is noted that your letters of December 12 and December 16, touching on internal political problems of Hungary, requested the assistance of the United States Government in altering certain conditions which Your Eminence deploras. In this connection you are, of course aware of my Government's long-standing policy of non-interference in the internal affairs of other nations. This policy has proven over a long period of time and through many trying situations the best guarantee of spontaneous, vigorous and genuine democratic development. It will be clear to Your Eminence that it necessarily precludes action by this Legation which could properly be construed as interference in Hungarian domestic affairs or that which lies outside the normal functions of diplomatic missions.

I should like to take this opportunity to assure Your Eminence that I shall continue to welcome the expression of your views on any matters to which you may desire to draw my attention.

In conveying to Your Eminence my best wishes for the holiday season, I take the opportunity to renew the assurance of my highest consideration.

Signed : H.E. Arthur Schoenfeld,  
American Minister.

His Eminence,  
Joseph Cardinal Mindszenty.  
Prince Primate of Hungary,  
Esztergom, Hungary.

It will be seen from this—and the genuineness of this letter could not possibly be questioned—that Mindszenty was supplying information for the State Department in Washington and that he was asking for American intervention in the affairs of Hungary—for the overthrow of the Hungarian Government. In this, or any other country, that letter alone would damn the recipient and leave him subject to the death penalty for an act of treason.

Then there was the black-marketeering. Mindszenty got the dollars, and Prince Esterhazy did the changing. "Silver and gold have I none", said St. Peter, but Mindszenty was of different stuff. He had silver and gold—and dollars. And Catholic workers who make devotion to St. Peter get worked up into a passion about such a creature as Mindszenty.

I went to speak at a public meeting in Bowhill, West Fife. Catholic miners were there to protest against a People's Government dealing with this criminal and giving him his deserts. I told them I would come back the following Sunday and hold a special meeting on the subject of Mindszenty. It was held as arranged. The Institute in Bowhill was crowded. A large group of Catholics attended. After I had spoken for about an hour, outlining the case against the Cardinal, we had two hours of questions. I kept it going till the questions and myself were exhausted. They had no case other than that he was a Cardinal of the Catholic Church, and, despite the lessons of history, a "holy" man who could do no wrong. That is the attitude of most Catholic workers. Catholic intellectuals know better. They know that some of the greatest blackguards of our own as well as of past time have carried on their evil deeds behind a hypocritical cloak of religion and piety. It was our own poet, Burns, who said, so long ago :

God knows I'm no' the thing I should be,  
Nor am I even the thing I could be,  
But twenty times I rather would be an atheist clean,  
Than under Gospel colours hid be just for a screen.

And here I will give a real example of what Burns meant. Take this, from a leading article of the *Sunday Express*. First try to imagine the smug face of the lad who wrote it :

"Perhaps the gravest threat to civilisation and its freedom lies in the persecution of religion by Communism. The thirteen



men of the Kremlin realise that they cannot achieve domination of the world unless they can drive from the minds and hearts of mankind their faith in God, and set up in its place a materialistic image as cold as the Caucasus and as barren as the Steppes.

"It is the Roman Catholic Church which suffers the brunt of the attack in Europe. It is to the succour of this Church that all who profess and call themselves Christian, all who realise that faith is the sole shield against materialism and the decay of the human spirit, must rally. The trial of Cardinal Mindszenty is still clear in our minds. The Duke of Norfolk called it a sacrilege. Men of all other faiths agreed with him."

## CHAPTER XIV

### THE ATOM BOMB

As I HAVE said, the worse our relations with the Soviet Union, the worse our economic plight. But could I get Members of Parliament to realise that? I asked questions, I made speeches, interrupted, argued, persuaded, all to no use. There was an invisible web which I could not get round and could not penetrate. And always there was a chorus chanting away, like certain religious sects that practice self-hypnosis, "Whatever the Americans do or say is right, whatever the Russians do or say is wrong". Try as I might, I couldn't batter my way through that.

Jack Lawson, who has now been rewarded for his services—he has been "elevated" (?) to the Peerage—in the course of a speech devoted to this theme, asked, "What is it the Russians want?" I followed later on and said:

"He asked, what is it the Russians want? I will tell him. He should go to the bomb-shattered areas of the East End of London and ask the people there what they want, and what those people would tell him is what the Russians also would tell him. They want peace. Much nonsense is talked about one-Party Government. The logical trend of historical development is one-Party Government. (*Laughter.*) All right. Do Hon. Members on this side of the House who are laughing believe that Socialism is going to be successful? (*Hon. Members:* "Yes.") Very well, then, what will happen to the capitalists and the capitalist party? Do they mean that the Tory Party will exist when we get Socialism? When the Leader of the House, who was faced with this dilemma in his own mind, spoke the other day, he proposed political partition in Britain. 'Do not', he said, 'whatever you do, get a 100 per cent victory. The ideal thing is two-thirds Labour and one-third Tory.' I know from scriptural reading that Joshua ordered the sun and the moon to stand still, but the Leader of the House goes one better. He orders historical development

to stand still. What nonsense! Can Hon. Members laugh at that?" (Hansard, January 22, 1948, Col. 477.)

Then I went on to deal with the speech that opened the debate, the speech of the Foreign Secretary. I put it as strong as I could:

"I have never listened to a speech so rotten with misrepresentation and distortion as that made by the Foreign Secretary today. I am sorry I cannot go into all the details of the speech and that I have not the time to deal with the tragic situation in Greece, where workers are battling against most terrible obstacles as the result of intervention started by the Leader of the Opposition, continued by a Labour Foreign Secretary, and now handed over to the brutal overlords of America. I will give just two typical examples of that misrepresentation and distortion.

"The Foreign Secretary said—it is within the memory of all of us—that Russia was organising a self-contained *bloc* of States and cutting them off from the rest of Europe. Let the Foreign Secretary ask the President of the Board of Trade. He has got a trade agreement with Poland. Is that cutting it off from Europe? Is it part of a self-contained *bloc*? He has a trade agreement with Soviet Russia. Is that 'cutting off from the rest of Europe'? He is discussing a trade agreement with Bulgaria and with Rumania; he has got a trade agreement with Czechoslovakia. Is that 'cutting off' from the rest of Europe?

"Was there ever such blatant misrepresentation? The only case on record where we have outside interference is in the case of Britain. It is not the case in connection with any of these countries to which the Foreign Secretary referred; they are free to negotiate with any other State. Consider this country and America. The only case of outside interference is the declaration by Mr. Marshall that he was consulted about our trade agreement with the Soviet Union and he approved of it. What would have happened had he not approved of it?" (Hansard, January 22, 1948, Cols. 477-8.)

How they all sneered and jeered about Molotov and the stand he took on the Security Council. On that Council there was Britain, France and China. All of them receiving dollars from America. How often have we heard it said that "he who pays the piper calls the tune"? Did any one of those countries ever dare get up and oppose America? No, the dollar-donors had an automatic majority on the Security Council. Never once did Bevin or McNeil oppose

the will of their patrons. The one man strong enough to stand up against all the dollar power of America was Molotov.

In the same speech already quoted, I also gave some attention to the Deputy Leader of the Opposition, Mr. Eden.

"The Right Hon. Gentleman talked so much about propaganda from Russia against us. What about the propaganda of this country? Look at the papers day after day. Consider the feeling that is being created against Mr. Molotov. We have got such a vicious prejudice created against Mr. Molotov that sooner or later every little time-server will get into line and give out the bleat, 'Mr. Molotov said "No".' Yet Mr. Molotov has always been a fighter for the realisation of the socialist system of society. Surely, instead of being sneered at by Socialists he should be honoured. They should be proud of him because he was strong enough to stand up against the representatives of the big dollar boys. It is an indication of political degeneracy that we get Socialists lined up sneering against Molotov. I would remind the House that Mr. Molotov is in good company; because I have read about One who, 2,000 years ago, was led on to a high mountain by Mr. Marshall—I beg pardon—Satan, who showed Him all the countries of the world, and he offered Him all the dollars He could desire, if only He would serve him. What was the answer? An emphatic 'No'. And a continuing emphatic 'No'." (Hansard, January 22, 1948, Cols. 479-80.)

On another occasion I had to deal with the same Right Honourable Gentleman in the following terms:

"I have known the Right Hon. Gentleman for a great many years. His speech yesterday was a woeful and melancholy effort; it was the speech of a mendicant. It is amazing how rapidly dollar diplomacy can change the faith of a man. The Right Hon. Gentleman and others used to say that Britain stood between two extremes—the extreme of Soviet Communism, on the one side, and unbridled private enterprise in the Western hemisphere on the other. But now the Right Hon. Gentleman has joined the mad witch dance of the Un-American Committee that is giving such an exhibition of freedom of opinion, tolerance and democracy to a blaze of floodlights reminiscent of the Kroll Opera House.

"According to the Right Hon. Gentleman, one is either against the Communists or one is a Communist. That is how he put it—the Communists of Soviet Russia and Eastern Europe against the

Western European and American democracies. It is a nice way of putting it, if there was any truth in it. He, a Tory, a defender of the robber landlords and capitalists, is a democrat, while I, a proletarian who has been fighting all his life to put an end to the exploitation of his fellow men, am an enemy of democracy. No, the correct way would be to say that the countries of Eastern Europe are carrying on their reconstruction on the basis of socialist economy, attacked by the jaundiced, vicious hatred of the remnants of decrepit capitalism, whose only hope for survival is dollars from the monopoly capitalists of America. I challenge him, or anyone else in this House, to dare to get up and say that, if America were put out of the picture, capitalism in Europe would continue to live. Put America out of the picture, and within six months capitalism would be out of existence in every country, including this.

"There is not an idea, a revolutionary slogan, or a revolutionary symbol existing in Russia, or any of the European countries which, in the first place, was not exported from this country. As long as there is the exploitation of men by robber landlords and capitalists we shall have to fight for the realisation of Communism. Even if Russia were out of the picture, I would still be fighting for Communism, and more and more of the masses of the workers would listen to my plea for the support of Communism. Put America out of the picture, and capitalism would vanish from Western Europe. I would ask Hon. Members on this side not to have any illusions because in the Un-American Committee it has been laid down that un-Americanism is holding opinions against capitalism and private enterprise.

"Take Germany. We find that in Germany the British and the American zones are united. Then, there is the Soviet zone. What is the issue there? Is it Communism in the Soviet zone *versus* democracy in the British and American zones. Will any Hon. Member say it is? No, in the Soviet zone it is socialist economy, and in the British and American zones it is capitalist economy. That is the division. Can the Right Hon. Gentleman deny that? . . .

"But the Right Hon. Gentleman says that the Communists in France and Italy use the same language against the Marshall Plan. That is a terrible indictment. He forgot to mention that Britain and the other countries in Western Europe use the same language

in support of the Marshall Plan, and it is American language. Has the Right Hon. Gentleman, or any of the other Marshallites, ever mentioned the fact that America has put us on the means test? Has he ever mentioned the fact that any number of means-test inspectors have been sent to this country and other countries in Europe, both officially and unofficially, to examine our position, and to find out whether we have any furniture which is not actually necessary, and which we are able to dispose of? The whole Paris meeting was based on a means test, and the whole attitude of America towards us is that of means-test officials. It is an abominable position in which to place this country. A theme song ran right through the Right Hon. Gentleman's speech—as it runs through a lot of the speeches which we hear. It goes something like this:

'We once were great, mighty and strong;  
We built an Empire that spread around the world.  
Now we are down and cannot get up.  
Buddy, can you spare a dime?'

"Is it necessary that we should have to undergo such humiliation? No, it is not. Everybody ought to have understood that we were bound to be faced with an adverse balance of trade because most of our goods had to come from America and are needed by us, whereas America does not need ours. Therefore, we should have been looking around for other sources of supply on the basis of goods for goods. The Hon. Member for Central Cardiff (Mr. G. Thomas) was correct when he said, 'Trade for trade, goods for goods'. That is how to solve the crisis, how to put an end to the gap which has brought it about." (Hansard, October 22, 1947, Cols. 179-182.)

But the most tragic fact we have to face is not the mental and moral paralysis in the House of Commons. That's an old, old story. I remember in 1921, after a bye-election at Caerphilly, writing in the *Forward* in reply to a statement made by the successful Labour candidate, in the course of which I said "Go, take your seat in Parliament, sit there peacefully if you can, with dead hopes lying all around you".

Dead hopes! I have seen so many of them in my own experience. No, the real tragedy is that in every part of the country working men and women, members of the Labour Party and Co-operative

Guilds—a whole, huge army of them, working men and women—are used by the enemies of Socialism to go round the doors, into their neighbours' homes and carry the most pernicious anti-socialist propaganda, in the name of loyalty to the Labour Movement.

Transport House has issued a leaflet, in highly coloured print, but not nearly so highly coloured in print as in content. It's the worst piece of specious anti-socialist propaganda I have ever seen, and so many of these men and women have been spreading this poison all over their respective areas. The sum total of the leaflet is, every woe and worry from which we and the world suffers has been caused by the Soviet Union.

I will take one item—I could take all of them, but one will suffice—to show the character of the leaflet and of its authors. Before doing so, I would like once again to take liberties with Rudyard Kipling :

"Twas Fultah Fisher's boarding house,  
Where sailor men reside,  
And there were men from all the ports,  
From Mississippi to Clyde,  
And regally they smoked and drank  
And fearfully they lied,  
They lied about the purple sea  
That gave them scanty bread,  
They lied about the earth beneath,  
The Heavens overhead,  
But they never lied like Transport House,  
So crazy anti-Red.

We are told in this most mendacious leaflet that the Americans were willing to hand over control of the atom bomb to the United Nations—it was the Russian who were against this. Those wonderful, big-hearted American multi-millionaires, those "bloated capitalists" once so horrid and unsightly, they have now become fair-skinned and handsome, the most desirable of all mankind. Crawl, my brothers, crawl. Fawn before your new Yankee masters. They are handing out the dollars, they must be given service.

Speaking on this subject of the bomb in West Fife, I remarked that Mr. Bevin was going around twittering like a well-trained American budgie about international inspection which was being blocked by the Russians. Always the Russians.

What was he getting at? He was referring to what is known as the Baruch Plan. Mr. Baruch, one of the really big nobs in America and a close friend of Churchill, submitted a plan to the United Nations in June 1946. This plan—so called—proposed inspection and control of atomic materials. The main idea was inspection. America dropped a couple of atomic bombs on Japan. The world knew she had them. The Baruch Plan allowed for America keeping what bombs she had and for making as many more as she was able to make. No interference of any kind with America in the Baruch Plan. So far from America giving up the bomb, she wouldn't even give the secret to her servile ally and satellite on this side of the Atlantic, despite the fact that the chief physical discoveries on which the bomb is based were made in this country. In the American press there were daily incitements for war against the Soviet Union, while America had the monopoly of the atom bomb.

In the House of Commons Churchill, venomous in his hatred of Socialism and of the First Socialist Republic, viciously, oh so viciously, advocates that "while *we* have the monopoly of the atom bomb we should have a show-down with Russia". A Christian gentleman. We have a gun, the other fellow is without. Stick our gun against his head and make him deliver. With such language from what we are pleased to call statesmen, and such sadistic films as we get from America, who should take the blame for the crimes with violence about which there is such an uproar?

But think of that "*we*". "While '*we*' have the monopoly." That makes us part of America. The Forty-ninth State. Who are the traitors? Then the question keeps forcing itself on their minds, "Have we the monopoly?" The Soviet Union is "the unknown quantity". A very important factor in all such calculations. Can "*we*" take a chance? How far has the Soviet Union progressed? If only we knew that—so the Baruch Plan.

Poker is a favourite game in America. Now suppose you're playing poker and your opponent has a very strong hand. He looks at his hand and he looks at his chips and he wonders. Should he push them into the centre of the table—have a "shown-down". He hesitates. He looks at you but you are sitting saying nothing, your hand held close against your chest. He has another look at his cards, his hand goes down to shove in his chips, then he stops, and in the most gentle and kindly manner, he says, "Would you let



me have a wee bit look at your hand?"

That's the Baruch Plan. That's what Bevin and Attlee are trying to put across on behalf of the American paymasters. To that the Soviet Union gives a well-deserved and very emphatic "No".

They are not, however, against inspection. It's deliberate misrepresentation to say that they are.

At the Paris meeting of the United Nations, Vyshinsky put the only clear, definite and practical proposition on this issue. He proposed international control and inspection simultaneously with a decision to destroy all atomic weapons. On many occasions since he has put that forward, always America says "No", and of necessity Britain says "No".

The ignorance on this subject is appalling. The Russians are blamed for holding up a decision on this all-important issue—the most important facing humanity. It simply isn't true. It is the American monopoly capitalists who are preventing a decision that would bring peace and relief to the peoples throughout the world.

Labour Members of Parliament knew nothing of this. They swallow the pap prepared for them by the Foreign Office and broadcast in the Press and radio. We can understand how they are affected. But what are we to say when Ministers are affected by their own propaganda and get themselves into a condition when they don't know right from wrong? Speaking in the House on September 28, 1949, while the United Nations was sitting at Lake Success, I said:

"Here I will deal with a reference made to the atom bomb by the Leader of the Opposition. There is talk of increasing our defence expenditure. That is madness. The only true defence against the atomic bomb is destruction of atomic weapons with international control.

(Mr. Bevan indicated assent.)

"I notice that the Minister agrees with the proposition—destruction of atomic weapons with international control.

(Mr. Bevan indicated assent.)

"MR. JOHN LEWIS (Bolton): Does not the Hon. Member mean 'inspection'?"

"MR. GALLACHER: Yes: That is very important. I am going to send a cable to Lake Success tomorrow showing that the Government Front Bench supports the proposal of Mr. Vyshinsky for the destruction of atomic weapons with interna-

tional control and inspection. (Interruption.) The Foreign Secretary is not supporting that." (Hansard, September 28, 1949, Col. 232.)

Yes, the Minister of Health and other Ministers and every back-bencher present approved of that proposal when I put it before the House. The interruption was a denial by the Minister of Health and others that this proposal was being put forward by the Soviet Union. There they were, all of them, supporting it and they did not know that their "American friends" and their own Foreign Secretary were most energetically opposing it.

Has Mr. Bevan, who twice indicated assent—has he the political courage, and, I would add, the political wisdom, to come out openly and advocate what he, like myself, believes to be the only sure defence, destruction of all atomic weapons with international control and inspection?

I ended my speech with these words:

"If we can get a decision on this and can get it carried out, the people throughout the world will give a heartfelt sigh of relief and we can then make a tremendous cut in our armament expenditure, which together with a very big cut in profits will mean we can increase wages, increase our housing programme, the building of schools and hospitals, and meet the demands of the old-age pensioners. Is there any genuine Socialist who would object to that?" (Hansard, September 28, 1949, Col. 232.)

That still remains the question.

## CHAPTER XV

### FILMS AND FOLLY

IN THE cinema there is not only anti-Russian propaganda, there is also anti-tax propaganda. In the foyer or on the screen you will see a notice which informs the patrons that while there is one penny of tax on a 1s. 6d. theatre, music hall or football ticket, there is 7d. of tax on a 1s. 6d. seat in the cinema. This is, obviously, overdoing taxation. It places a heavy burden on the cinema industry and it is becoming increasingly difficult for the cinemas to meet it. It looks as though the high point of cinema attraction has been passed. At any rate there is a considerable falling off in patronage of many of them, and with the coming of television this decline may be more marked.

In such a situation it is quite natural that there should be a protest against what is considered a discriminatory tax.

Sir Alexander King, the President of the Scottish Cinema Exhibitors' Association, has raised the "Fiery Cross" and in Press and cinema is leading the campaign for a substantial tax reduction.

Then there is the quota. This was a measure taken to assist British producers and ensure that their films would get shown in British cinemas. But it has been an almost complete failure. It has become too easy for exhibitors to get released from the obligation to show the necessary quota of British films. Apart from that, or the reason for that, is the scarcity of good British films. Time and again when I have advocated a strengthening of the quota arrangements exhibitors have said to me, "Come and have a look at my books, see how the drawings fall off when we have an all-British programme". That's bad, very bad. And it is not only poor films, in the ordinary recognised sense, that are responsible for it. Sometimes a quite passable film is ruined by over-acting and by a "cultured", thoroughly artificial and affected accent that nobody, I can speak particularly for Scotland, can understand.

British film production has to its credit the finest film yet produced, "Hamlet". When I was speaking on this in the House one night, I said it was technically perfect, the casting of character

was remarkable, and the acting beyond praise. Whereupon another Member quietly interjected, "Yes, and the script isn't bad". That was one of the times someone else says something you wish you had said yourself.

The history of film-making in Britain has been a deplorable series of makeshifts and ruinous speculation. On many occasions I have suggested a conference of all concerned in the industry, Producers, Exhibitors, Technicians and other Unions, for the purpose of working out an all-over plan for putting the industry on its feet and keeping it there. But it was never possible to get them to come together. This was one of the complaints of the President of the Board of Trade. Yet when, for the first time, they did come together and agree to put forward a demand for a reduction of the tax, he referred to it as a "sinister conspiracy".

When the flour millionaire, Arthur J. Rank, broke into the industry, its fortunes were at a somewhat low ebb. He was going to do big things for cinema production. But instead of helping it up, he's run it up against a blind wall. Instead of laying a solid foundation of good, acceptable films that could satisfy the quota and satisfy British exhibitors, and from there build up, he set out to make "epics" that would capture the American market. Never did a man pursue an illusion with such tenacity. Time, effort, sets and money lavishly used and expended in this, a quite forlorn hope.

As I have already remarked, America has no intention, none whatever, of making Great Britain greater, and that applies to film production as to all other aspects of our economic life. America will drive British films out of every market in the world, including the British market, if it can. It will do nothing to stimulate or strengthen it. These "epic" films took up studio space for the maximum of time with the minimum of technical employment. During the time taken and for the money spent to produce "Cæsar and Cleopatra", at least half a dozen really good films could have been made, thereby providing employment for substantially more technical and other workers.

The "epics" got no markets in America and did much to prevent the production of films suitable for the British market, so that on November 7, 1949, Mr. Rank had to make a dismal report of the situation to the Film Industry which was quite devoid of self-criticism and which put the blame for all that had gone wrong on the heavy entertainment tax. Yet when the Finance Bill was

before the House in 1948, and I put down an Amendment to the cinema tax proposing a big cut on the tax on every seat, I got no support from the cinema producers or exhibitors. On the contrary, I was approached by their representatives and told that my Amendment would jeopardise their Amendment which was for a reduction on one type of seat only, the cheapest seat. So following the publication of Mr. Rank's report, I sent him a letter, a copy of which I sent to the British Actors' Equity Association. Here it is, with the reply from each :

*Letter to Mr. J. Arthur Rank, November 10, 1949.*

Dear Mr. Rank,

I was very interested in reading your report, to see what you had to say about the cinema tax.

I recognise that this tax has constituted a heavy handicap to an industry that is vital to this country. There are, of course, reasons other than the entertainment tax, fundamental reasons, why the industry has got into the present deplorable position, with an ever-growing threat of American absorption.

But it is not for the purpose of discussing these that I write to you at the present time. I want to say a word or two about the entertainment tax, and what happened when I tried to make a fight against it.

In 1948, when the Finance Bill was before the House of Commons, I put down a very drastic amendment to the entertainment tax on cinemas. That should have been the time when all those interested should have thrown themselves into the fight for a real effective reduction. Had they been willing to do so, and had they approached me, I would quite willingly have withdrawn my name from the amendment and allowed it to go forward with other "more respectable" backing.

But instead of that I was assailed from every quarter, including a representative of the Rank Organisation, as one who was going to injure the course of progress in the industry, inasmuch as my amendment, if I had pressed it, might prejudice the amendment that was being put forward on behalf of the industry. I told these people at the time that their amendment was not worth "one continental damn" and that it would be of no help whatever to the film industry.

I would suggest now, what I suggested then, that all sections

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of the industry should be brought together for a conference to work out plans for ensuring the fullest development of production, distribution and exhibition of British films, and to take the necessary measures to ensure that a real cut in the entertainment tax is effected.

I hope you and those associated with the industry will give serious consideration to this proposal.

Yours sincerely,

Wm. Gallacher.

*Reply from J. Arthur Rank, November 17, 1949.*

Dear Mr. Gallacher,

Thank you very much for your letter of November 10, and for reminding me of the view which you put forward with such vigour in 1948. You have no doubt every justification for saying that the industry should have given much more attention than it did to the view which you expressed at that time. But of course, no one then could have foreseen the events which would follow, nor could they accurately have been forecast.

I believe the need for a new approach to all our problems is now widely understood in every section of the industry; and you will like to know that the Cinematograph Exhibitors' Association and the British Film Producers' Association have now formed a joint committee to deal with the most pressing of all our problems—Entertainment Tax. I am sure that nothing but good can come of this co-operation.

Thank you very much for your courtesy in writing to me.

Yours sincerely,

J. Arthur Rank.

*Reply from British Actors' Equity Association,  
November 22, 1949.*

Dear Mr. Gallacher,

Thank you very much for your letter dated November 14 with enclosed copy of the letter you have written to Mr. J. Arthur Rank.

You will be glad to learn that the Film Industry Employees' Council, representing five of the six unions in the industry, is planning a conference to work out plans for ensuring the fullest development of organisation. . . . The proposal by the

F.I.E.C. is at present being submitted to the Executive Committees of the constituent unions and it has already received the support of my own Executive.

Yours sincerely,

Gordon Sandison,

*General Secretary.*

As will be seen from the letter of the British Actors' Equity Association, an effort is being made to get representatives of the industry together. If they don't hurry up they will be too late. Britain can make good films, that has been proved. We have an abundance of good actors and actresses, if only they can develop "screen voices". This applies particularly to the women, although some of the men are terrible. Get rid of affectation, get rid of artificial culture:

"Speak the speech I pray you, as I pronounced it to you, trippingly on the tongue; but if you mouth it, as many of your players do, I had as lief the town crier spoke my lines. . . . Be not too tame neither but let your own discretion be your tutor; suit the action to the word and the word to the action; with special observance that you o'erstep not the modesty of nature."

That advice from Hamlet should be observed by all concerned in film production.

One night as I was passing through the connection corridor between the Members' Lobby and the Public Lobby, I came upon a film actor from Hollywood, who would have delighted the heart of Hamlet. He is, I think, the finest actor on the American screen. I looked at him sitting there, and I exclaimed, "In the name of God it's so and so".

I shall have to call him Mr. X. "Are you waiting for someone?" I asked him.

"Yes", he told me. He had come down to see Air-Commodore Harvey, they had met at a dinner, but he didn't seem to be about.

"I wanted to get into the House", he added.

"I'll get you a ticket", I told him, and off I went and got one.

When I was taking him through to the House, I remarked, "You are a very unlucky fellow. You come down here to meet a very genial, very pleasant and thoroughly respectable and acceptable Tory, and you fall into the hands of a Communist."

"Good God", he exclaimed, "after what we've been through."

Then he smiled, a very warm, engaging smile, as he asked me, "Would it be possible to get me a ticket for tomorrow?"

It was the second day of the three-day debate on devaluation. The following day the Minister of Health had to open and so all tickets were out, with visitors of all kinds clamouring to get in. I said to him, "I'll do my best and will get a message to you in the morning".

He gave me his hotel. The next morning I phoned the hotel and asked for him. The switchboard put me through to his room. A male voice spoke to me, a secretary or manager or something, and asked me who I was. I replied, "This is an attendant at the House of Commons, will you please tell Mr. X that there is a seat reserved for him in the Distinguished Strangers' Gallery".

Had I given my name, the Un-American Committee would probably have got after him on his return to Hollywood. With things as they are in America, under a Generals' and Bankers' Government (they're getting as bad here under a Labour (?) Government) it doesn't do to take any chances.

I was never short of visitors. One afternoon I had two lads from Glasgow. Two old friends. They sat for two hours in the gallery, then I met them down below. One of them gave me a sad, melancholy look as he said, "My Christ, Willie, am soary fur ye. It's a wunner ye doant go crazy in there."

I leant over towards him and half-whispered, "Don't tell anybody, but I'm going crazy".

Which naturally brings me to an incident arising out of a remark I made about Mr. Thurtle. Mr. Thurtle is what might be called an irrational Rationalist. These lads, the Rationalists, are fond of quoting Voltaire: "I hate his opinions but I'll fight to the death for his right to express them", or words to that effect. But that doesn't apply to Communist opinions, not in Mr. Thurtle's case at any rate. Give him a chance, and with a wolfish exhibition of his teeth he gets after the hated Reds.

It was while he was putting one of his typical questions that I made what was meant to be an aside—an off-the-record remark. Next day, however, it appeared in Hansard, with the following consequences:

"PERSONAL STATEMENT

"MR. THURTLIE: I desire to raise with you, Mr. Speaker, as a matter of Order, a question of which I have given you notice. It



happened that yesterday in question time I asked a supplementary, designed I think, to support the authority of the Chair. The Hon. Member for West Fife (Mr. Gallacher) interjected:

"The Hon. Member is "nuts". (Official Report, July 12, 1949.)

"He was referring to me. I heard this language of the gutter at the time, but I regarded it as an aside which would not be reported, and I was prepared to treat it with the contempt it deserved. Now, however, that I find it printed in the *Official Report*, where it stands between a Question by me and a Ruling by you, I must take notice of it. I, therefore, appeal to you to give me redress in one of two ways, either by causing the insulting language to be deleted from the *Official Report* (Hon. Members: 'Oh'), or alternatively by calling upon the Hon. Member for West Fife to apologise. You, sir, are the only one to whom an Hon. Member can appeal for protection from a grossly insulting attack; there is, indeed, no one but you to whom an appeal can be made. I look with confidence to you, Mr. Speaker, to respond to my appeal.

"MR. GALLACHER: As the Hon. Member said, I made that footling aside. I did not myself expect to see it in Hansard. I have the deepest sympathy with the Hon. Member, for while I was at home the other week-end something went wrong and I said to my wife, 'I think I am going nuts', and she, who knows me very well, said, 'Oh, you only think you are'.

"MR. THURTLÉ: I take it that that is something in the nature of an apology and so I am not disposed to use the language that I contemplated using in other circumstances, and say that the Hon. Member is a liar.

"MR. SPEAKER: The Hon. Member may not call another Member a liar. He must not do that.

"MR. THURTLÉ: In so far as the Hon. Member meant that I was unbalanced, he was a liar.

"MR. SPEAKER: I am sorry, but the Hon. Member must not call another Member a liar, however he puts it. He may say that he is mistaken, or that he is in error, or that he is wrong, but he must not call him a liar. If the Hon. Member will say of another Member that he is mistaken or that he is wrong, that will be perfectly all right and quite as clear.

"MR. THURTLÉ: As you know, Mr. Speaker, I have a great respect for the Chair, and I have always shown that respect, but I have a still greater respect for the truth. I will not call the Hon. Member

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a liar if you forbid me to do so, but I will say that what the Hon. Member said was a lie.

"HON. MEMBERS: Oh.

"MR. SPEAKER: I do not want to engender heat over this, but it really is a serious matter. The Hon. Member must not say that another Hon. Member has told a lie, because that means that the other Hon. Member has deliberately told an untruth. Anyone may say that an Hon. Member is in error, or is wrong, or is misinformed—anything which conveys the same meaning—but he must not call him a liar; he must not say that the Hon. Member has told a lie. I must direct the Hon. Member with all the authority I have, although I do not wish to create heat, to withdraw.

"MR. CHURCHILL: If my memory does not mislead me, in the last few years Rulings have been given by the Chair that the word 'lie' or the words 'that is a lie' are not disorderly, although, of course, the expression 'liar' is. I was going to suggest that the introduction of the word 'lie' into our legalised, orderly discussions is quite an innovation, that both 'lie' and 'liar' should be barred from the practice of the House.

"MR. SPEAKER: That is what I said, and what I meant.

"EARL WINTERTON: Further to that point of order. It is just as well for the dignity of the House that we should get this matter straight. As my Right Hon. Friend has pointed out, it has been ruled on more than one occasion—I think by yourself, sir—that the word 'lie' is in order. What we now seek from you is a ruling as to whether the word 'lie' is or is not in order?

"MR. SPEAKER: The noble Lord says I have ruled that the word 'lie' is in order. I have no recollection of that whatever.

"MR. GALLACHER: I want to offer an apology to you, Mr. Speaker, to the Hon. Member for Shoreditch (Mr. Thurtle) and to the House for the use of the expression which has caused so much unnecessary trouble.

"MR. THURTLÉ: I am quite satisfied, Mr. Speaker.

"Several Hon. Members rose.

"MR. SPEAKER: I really think we might end this matter in harmony now, without saying any more.

"MR. CHURCHILL: I hope we may get other advantages of a permanent character out of this discussion. May we take it that your ruling, Mr. Speaker, is that to characterise a statement as a 'lie',

or to insult an Hon. Member by saying that he is a liar, are both entirely out of order in the House of Commons.

"MR. SPEAKER: I thought that had always been the practice of the House. It was certainly my intention that it should be so.

"MR. CHURCHILL: I only wish to know what limits there are to Debate." (Hansard, July 13, 1949, Cols. 438-440.)

Yes, sir, there's quite a lot of useful stuff for British films lying around.

But, joking aside, there is at the present time a great opportunity for British films if those engaged in the industry get together and work out the necessary plans. Hollywood is in decline. It is being destroyed from within and without. From within by pro-fascists, from without by the Un-American Committee. The evil this latter body has done is incalculable. It has tried, backed by heavy fines and prison sentences, to stop all progressive thinking in America. I have already remarked that the Labour leaders pursue a similar role in Britain. They strive by purges, expulsions and intimidation to stop all progressive thinking in the Labour and trade union movement.

Think about dollars, think of nothing else; that represents the Law and the Prophets in America. Well-known people from all walks of life were summoned to appear before this Committee which was composed of ignorance, malice, fear and incipient insanity. It had power given to it by the American Congress, power to murder thought—to kill the souls of men. It hired liars, perjurers, criminals (even its chairman proved to be a criminal), to swear on the Bible whatever was asked or desired of them.

After dealing with Communists, suspected Communists, progressive intellectuals, writers, artists, Government employees and a whole assortment of people, it turned its attention to Hollywood. Never since the world began was there such a spectacle. Farce, crude and blatant, but also sombre tragedy. Directors, script writers, actors, harried and insulted by Robert Taylor and Robert Montgomery, degrading their own profession, by appearing and applauding and approving the foul inquisition that was being directed against their fellow-workers. A dozen of Hollywood's prominent people sentenced to a year in gaol for refusing to debase themselves before the criminal chairman, Thomas, and his half-crazed committee (half-crazed is probably an understatement). The "tough guy", Humphrey Bogart, accused of having left-wing asso-

ciations, was forced to humiliate himself before this sorry lot. Empty-headed Ginger Rogers, complaining that in a film part the director wanted her to use a phrase about something or another in America being undemocratic. This she averred, and the crazy committee agreed with her, was Red propaganda. Then Montgomery and Taylor vowed they would devote their lives to the extermination of the Reds, incapable, both of them, of realising that their, and the committee's conduct, was more likely to exterminate the film industry in Hollywood.

Here before me is a cutting from the *Scottish Daily Express*, 26.5.50. We are asked to read a telegram—but I'd better let the excerpt speak for itself:

"Read this telegram first . . .

". . . It invited the *Express* film critic to review a Clark Gable film a week in advance. . . .

"'Can you please attend press show Ritz tomorrow four-thirty of "Key to the City" starring Clark Gable, Loretta Young, Frank Morgan, Marilyn Maxwell, James Gleason, Lewis Stone, Raymond Walburn (Stop) "Key to the City" will replace "Ambush" at Empire on Sunday but stage show "Showboat Time".'

"It means that Robert Taylor can't fill the cinema now.

"If you were to stand outside one of London's biggest cinemas this afternoon and cock a sensitive ear into the air, you might well hear the strains of Wagner's 'Gotterdammerung' wafted on the breeze.

"For inside the Twilight of the Gods is playing for two of Hollywood's greatest stars—Robert Taylor and Clark Gable.

"Once upon a time Robert Taylor's name would draw in the crowds to see any film. Here was a star to make box-office takings bulge.

"But yesterday, Taylor was in eclipse. His latest picture, 'Ambush', was withdrawn from the Empire after having run only part of its projected playing time of a month.

"His place as the star name to entice the film fans has been taken by Mr. Gable. Can his famous grin succeed in a thin story, where the Taylor profile failed?

#### LOSING THEIR GRIP

"Hollywood is at long last conscious that its great potent, old-time stars are losing their grip on the public. Warner Brothers are

trying to sell out their long-term contracts on Errol Flynn and Humphrey Bogart, and so far there are no takers.

"Gone are the days when names like Joan Crawford, Ginger Rogers, Myrna Loy, Ronald Colman or William Powell could be guaranteed to hold up a film. The old gods of the film world are taking off their toupees, relaxing their chin muscles, and (to change the metaphor) getting ready to go off to grass.

"Who will take their place in lights over the marquees of the world's cinemas? Frankly I cannot think of one, young post-war bred star whose name will start filmgoers queuing. They lack the explosive personality which detonates success. The men are handsome; the girls are lush, and some of them can even act.

"But none of them possesses the star quality upon which the foundations of Hollywood's existence have been based."

The writer then goes on to try and find reasons for the decline. He, like others of his craft, will seek twenty wrong reasons, but fears to mention the right one. The cause of the flop is not the stars—it's the witch-hunt. How is it possible to produce films under the conditions that now exist in Hollywood? Everyone in fear of his neighbour. Who dare express an opinion contrary to the religion of the dollar? Who would dare to introduce a new idea and maybe next day find himself pilloried as a Red?

The greatest box-office draw in recent years in America and Britain was "The Best Years of Our Lives". It was condemned by the Un-American Committee.

This film opens with a demobbed airman trying to book a seat on a plane to get back to his home town. He is told there isn't a plane available and they don't know when there will be one. While he is brooding over his disappointment what is presumably a wealthy capitalist comes up to the counter of the Bureau to pay for his reservation. The girl tells him he has so much to pay for excess luggage. That was too much for the Un-American Committee. It was Communist propaganda. It was a blow at private enterprise and was the sort of thing that must be eradicated from Hollywood.

In the light of such a finding, how can a script-writer or a producer do a job? Every new story must have the "dollar stamp". Every script must be carefully scrutinised, every sentence, every word, must be tested and proved to be free from the "red virus". Thus initiative is shackled with chains of fear, originality is

smothered in an atmosphere of suspicion and the shadow of prison walls.

The "No-Thought" of the Un-American Committee is the limit of all thinking in Yankee land. But all Americans have not submitted to this soul-destroying régime. Brave men and women, in face of organised hooliganism, persecution and prison, battle against this new form of fascism that has spread itself like an ugly monster all over America carrying with it corruption and decay. But Hollywood, with the approval of Taylor and Montgomery, has succumbed and the result is now showing itself in its films. Spurious spectacle, brutal sadism, leering, slaving sex, this is what Hollywood is reduced to as a consequence of the witch-hunt. Rotten films will never attract the people, whoever the star or stars may be.

The lesson for the British film industry is clear and easily learnt. Make good films and avoid as a "plague of mental and moral darkness" the witch-hunt of the Un-American Committee and the British Labour leaders. Initiative, originality, new and ever new ideas, these are the life's blood of the film industry. Choke these off and decay and death will surely follow.

## CHAPTER XVI

### THE DOCKERS ARE MAGNIFICENT

ON APRIL 1, 1949, the Canadian Seamen's Union, in dispute with the shipowners over wages, called a strike. Canadian seamen in this country answered the call. Two Canadian ships were lying at Avonmouth and another two in the London Docks. These were treated as "black" ships by the dockers.

After the ships at Avonmouth had been lying untouched for several days, the dockers were instructed to unload them. This they refused to do with the result that from May 16 to June 15 the docks at Avonmouth were at a standstill. While this was going on the two ships, the *Beaverbrue* and the *Argomont*, lay at the London docks with, it was believed, a tacit understanding that the London dockers would not be called upon to unload them.

During the Avonmouth dispute there was no talk of a Communist conspiracy, or of Communist agitators. The strike committee was, in the main, just about the opposite in character. The Avonmouth dockers tried to get support from the London dockers, but as these latter were not being asked to handle "black" ships, no support was forthcoming. After a hard and bitter struggle, with Labour leaders and trade union leaders keeping up an incessant attack on them, the Avonmouth dockers were forced, through the introduction of Service men, to capitulate.

The Dock Board, having cleared the Canadian ships at Avonmouth, now turned their attention to London.

On June 20 London dockers, when reporting for work, were sent to the *Argomont*. They refused to go. They were then refused work on other ships. Quite a large number of men were soon affected, and others, following a mass meeting, decided to stop work in sympathy. Soon the House of Commons became a babel of voices, furiously shouting about a "Communist conspiracy". The Minister of Labour and the Home Secretary distinguished themselves in this connection. Any fuel they could add to the fire was prodigally poured on.

The dockers, standing solidly by their own and their Canadian comrades, were, according to the Minister of Labour, "dupes" of

the Communists. Appeal after appeal was made to them to return to work. Each day in the House a new statement would be made, but always the Minister had to announce that the numbers of men affected instead of declining was increasing. It was called a strike, but in fact it was a lock-out. Every morning the dockers reported for work.

Had the two ships been taken out of the area and held up till the Canadian scamen's dispute was settled, there would have been no trouble whatever at the London docks. But at the particular dock where these two ships were lying the ultimatum was given, "Work these two ships or you don't work at all".

According to the Dock Board, the Minister of Labour and the Labour Government, it was imperative that these two ships be unloaded before any other ship on the dock could be unloaded. Yet when the Government decided to send Service men to work at the dock, these two ships, instead of being first, were the last to be unloaded. In the House, Sydney Silverman, taking note of this peculiar lack of urgency, got up and asked the Prime Minister why they did not start first with these two ships and thereby end the cause of the trouble at the docks? The Prime Minister side-stepped that, and made the usual appeal to the dockers not to be misled and to bring the dispute to an end.

My colleague, Phil Piratin, jumped up and asked why, if he was so anxious to bring the dispute to an end, he didn't take into consideration the suggestion of Sydney Silverman. Next day, one or two other Labour Members thought that they had a good one on the Communists. They took the opportunity of supplementary questions to suggest that Phil wanted Service men to work "black" ships. So clever they were. All they forgot was that for Service men there are no "black" ships, but for the dockers all the ships, not only the two Canadian ships, but all those affected by the dispute, were "black".

Never were men subjected to such a concentrated barrage of attack as were these London dockers. Never have men stood so firm and undaunted. In my life as a working-class agitator I have often witnessed the fury of the capitalist class and their agents against different sections of workers when an industrial battle was in progress, but the Labour and trade union leaders outdid anything I have known in the past in their campaign against the London dockers.



## THE DOCKERS ARE MAGNIFICENT

Two Labour Members of Parliament, Mr. Mellish and Mr. Daines, the latter a dim, dull, one might say an extinguished light of international co-operation, were particularly active. They went down to the Canadian ships, saw one or two of the crew who had broken away from the strike, got all kinds of "Hollywood" stories on the strength of which they prepared a report on the "Communist conspiracy", which, we were informed, was passed on to M.I.5.

Around about me I could hear Labour Members of Parliament, alleged Socialists, justifying and encouraging the use of M.I.5 for dealing with the London dockers. How easily men can change when, for them, the days of struggle are over. True the Communists in the East End of London, supported by non-Party workers, gave splendid service in raising funds and providing food and lodgings for the striking Canadian seamen. All credit to them. Loyal Party comrades, loyal members of the working class. But when all the reports were collected from the C.I.D., from M.I.5, from Mellish and Daines, the Home Secretary had to announce that there was no evidence to permit of a charge against anyone. Such was the "Great Communist Conspiracy".

But, with Labour Members out-Torying the Tories, the Government had no trouble in putting into operation "Emergency Powers" which give full power of dictatorship to the body set up to operate them. As I have said, each day, despite "exposures" of the conspiracy and appeals to the dockers to return to work, there was a steady rise in the number of dockers "standing by". So, appeals having failed, they were to be forced back.

That was the idea of the "Emergency Powers". They all knew, the Prime Minister, the Minister of Labour and the Home Secretary, that the very intimation that these powers were going to be used, would send the dockers scurrying back to work. How little they knew the London dockers! The day after the signing of the Proclamation, the number of men out jumped from 12,000 to 15,000. The declaration of "Emergency" was a flop, a complete flop. The Proclamation had to come before the House in the form of a message to the King. It was moved by the Prime Minister in these words :

"That an humble Address be presented to His Majesty, thanking His Majesty for His Most Gracious Message, communicating to this House that His Majesty has deemed it proper by

Proclamation, made in pursuance of the Emergency Powers Act, 1920, and dated the eleventh day of July, nineteen hundred and forty-nine, to declare a state of emergency exists." (Hansard, July 13, 1949, Col. 441.)

The Prime Minister gave a rehash of all that we had been getting from the Minister of Labour and the Home Secretary. He was followed and supported by Mr. Eden for the Tories, Mr. Clement Davies for the Liberals, and Mr. Maclay for the National Liberals. Then came my turn. As I consider this fight of the dockers an important phase in the post-war history of the working class, and as I touched on many aspects of the struggle in my speech, I hope I may be forgiven for quoting it at some length. Here it is:

"MR. GALLACHER (Fife, West): I rise to oppose the acceptance of this Message. I am of opinion that the Government and the Dock Board are responsible for the situation that exists and that they could clear up the situation, if they so desired, without bringing His Majesty into the picture at all.

"Before I go on to make my general observations, I want to correct something which was said by the Prime Minister. In a reference to the suggestion that soldiers should clear these two ships, he said that this proposal was being put forward by Communists and 'fellow-travellers'. That is not true. The suggestion was made in this House by the Hon. Member for Nelson and Colne (Mr. S. Silverman), and a little afterwards my Hon. Friend, the Member for Mile End (Mr. Piratin), asked the Minister why, if he was as anxious as he seemed to suggest to end the strike, he did not accept the suggestion of the Hon. Member for Nelson and Colne. To suggest that this was put forward by the Communists and 'fellow-travellers' is obviously stretching things very considerably, though not so far as the Attorney-General did.

"I am certain that four years ago not one of those triumphant Hon. Members on this side of the House who were going to wipe out the Tories, ever dreamt that they would be associated with the Tories in such a business as this. The 'Red Flag' is buried deeper than the forty crypto-Communists to which the Deputy Leader of the Opposition referred on one occasion in this House. Any one of these men could repeat with the poet:

'My head's unbloody,  
Safe, unscarred and whole

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To keep it that way,  
I have sold my soul.'

"It has been said—and many Hon. Members have referred to it here—that the Communists have something to do with this great manifestation of the dockers. (An Hon. Member: 'So they have'.) What happened? When the Bristol men were out, did the London dockers move? . . . There were two boats lying in the docks, but the dockers were given to understand that they did not have to unload them, and were not called upon to unload them. When the Bristol men were out and asked the London dockers to support them, they said, 'It is not our affair'. Will the Minister deny that? And then, when the Bristol men were defeated, pressure was turned on the London dockers. Is that true or is it not?

"The London dockers were faced with the fact that the Dock Board had carried through a cunning policy of 'divide and conquer'. They defeated the Bristol men, then they put pressure on the London dockers in order to force the London dockers into the same position as the Bristol men had been forced into. But the Dock Board reckoned without taking into account the courage and tenacity of the London dockers, and, whatever else may be said, these men have given an admirable demonstration of working-class loyalty and working-class resolution. Now, in the final effort to break them, we get this abominable proposal—a disgrace to any Government composed of men who rose to power out of the struggles and sufferings of the working class. And not all official strikes. It is only since we had the Labour Government that unofficial strikes have been referred to as treason.

"When these Emergency Regulations were first introduced by a coalition of notorious, hard-faced men who flooded into this House after the Coupon Election, the Labour Party opposed them vigorously, and the Leader of the Labour Party then said:

'We cannot put into the hands of this Government or any other Government, whether it be the type of the present one or a Labour Government, permanent legislation of this kind.'

(*Official Report*, October 25, 1920, vol. 133, c. 1407.)

"MR. ELLIS SMITH: It was Willie Adamson.

"MR. GALLACHER: The Labour Members voted against the regulations, yet under the Labour Government of 1924, it was proposed to use them against the dockers, not in London but throughout the

country. At that time the country was struggling to get on its feet, its economy was in a bad way, the strike of the dockers was doing incalculable harm—that was the burden of the Tory song, as it is the burden of the Labour and the Tory song today. But was it Communists who were responsible for the wholesale disruption of the economic life of the nation in 1924? (Hon. Members: 'Yes'.) No, it was a gentleman by the name of Mr. Ernest Bevin who was the leader. The fate of the nation was not his concern; his concern was the dockers and the demands they were making and to which they were fully entitled. I was supporting them, and everybody with any intelligence on this side of the House was supporting them.

"Two things about that strike bear on the present situation, one a cardinal principle. One of the best traditions of the working class has always been a hatred of blacklegging. It is the attempt to force them into blacklegging which has incensed the dockers today. It should be noted that every morning they go to the dock gates ready and willing to work. The call is made at one dock for a crew of men to work the *Beaverbrae*, at another dock for a crew of men to work the *Argomont*. There is no response, so the dock gates are kept locked and the dockers are refused the right to work on the other ships. Every morning that has been going on. Where is the need for emergency legislation when we have a Government and a Dock Board to settle a problem of that kind?

"If the strike of the Canadian seamen is no affair of the dockers, why are they not allowed to work in the other ships while measures are taken to bring about a settlement of the Canadian dispute? Why, if it is no affair of the dockers, are not the ships taken out of the area? Why are not the dockers allowed to go on with their job?

"In the 1924 strike, the strike committee sent out a short message to every dock committee. Brief as that message was, the evil business of blacklegging achieved double mention. One short paragraph—this is important from the point of view of the attitude of the dockers today—contained the words:

'Where safety men have been allowed to remain in, they only may do so as long as blacklegs are not introduced.'

"A second paragraph read:

'The Council places on record its appreciation of the lead given by the Railwaymen's Union in their determination to prevent blacklegging, and welcomes their co-operation.' "

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"That statement, sent out to every dock committee, was signed by Ernest Bevin. If there is one thing that was hammered into the trade union movement of this country more than another, it is opposition to blacklegging. That must be taken into account.

"Here it might be noted that the London members of the then General Council passed a resolution supporting the dockers. That resolution contained a sentence or so which expresses my viewpoint today. It said :

"We also share the natural resentment of the workers directly concerned . . . arising from the stubborn attitude of the employers."

"That applies equally today as it did when that message was issued. But while the strike was going on, Mr. Ramsay MacDonald was not idle. He was making preparations for dealing with the strike in just the same way as preparations are being made today. The fact that it was an official strike in 1924 did not make any difference; preparations were being made all the same. After stating the case to the House as the Prime Minister of the day, Mr. MacDonald said :

' . . . if the need continues, I hope the House will enable us to get what we require as emergency legislation.'

'Sir W. Mitchell-Thomson: Will these proposals come under the Emergency Powers Act . . . ?'

'The Prime Minister: That is a matter which is being explored, and no time is being lost to consider the best way to proceed.'

(*Official Report*, February 20, 1924, vol. 169, c. 1753.)

"That was an official strike in 1924, yet preparations were in hand; but they did not come into operation because the leaders of the strike, very anxious that such an action should not be thrown upon the Labour Movement, made a compromise agreement and brought the strike to an end. But everyone who knew the leader of that strike, Mr. Ernest Bevin, knew his furious rage against the Prime Minister and his principal lieutenant, now the Leader of this House; and in 1925, because of that, Mr. Ernest Bevin got up at the Labour Party Conference to make an out-and-out onslaught on MacDonald, but he was howled down by the delegates. I happened to be a delegate there and I went over and commiserated with him.

"Considering his attitude then, how can he be a party to what is

going on today? True, he served the dockers well, but at the same time it should be remembered that the dockers—these much-defamed dockers—built him up and gave him the opportunity to become one of the foremost men in the trade union movement. (Interruption.) I have already remarked that he served the dockers well—that is always remembered; what is forgotten is that the dockers built up Mr. Bevin and gave him the opportunity to be one of the foremost men in the trade union movement.

“MR. AWBERRY (Bristol Central) rose.

“MR. GALLACHER : What a shameful thing it is that he and others, whose main task it should be to protect the workers, should now be ready to destroy them. (Hon. Members: Nonsense.) I do not know any one of the men affected, not one of them, but as a proletarian I offer them my tribute of praise for their loyalty and determination. While we have men such as these, the cause of the working class, whoever else may betray it, is safe.

“We are told that this is a Communist conspiracy, that the Communists want chaos. Never was there a statement so false or so devoid of even the first element of truth. The Communist Party has a policy. It is the only policy that can take this country out of the dollar trap and free it from the menace of chaos that is now threatening. Surely Hon. Members are able to understand that if we wanted chaos all we have to do is to sit quietly by and let the Chancellor go ahead as he is doing. What the Americans call a ‘smear’ campaign has now become the last ignoble resort of Labour and Tory leaders alike. The latest and most grotesque manifestation of this was the Attorney-General’s utterly incoherent, irresponsible and dangerously neurotic speech. Either he is ready for jumping out of the window or he is qualifying for the mantle of a Hitler or a Goebbels. But I would remind him that this type of lying slander is not new. It is always in evidence when an old system of society is in decay and new forces are seeking to replace it.

“I shall make one or two quotations to show how this type of campaign can be worked and the evil it can do. After the religious revival at Blackpool, I am sure that the Labour leaders will appreciate these quotations. I have already put one of them before the House on an earlier occasion. Paul, writing to the Corinthians, could say :

‘ . . . we are made as the filth of the world and are the scouring of all things unto this day.’

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"The Attorney-General is busy on the job of getting after Paul and the rest of them. And in the Acts of the Apostles. (Interruption.) The New Testament is something the Hon. Member for the Scotland Division of Liverpool (Mr. Logan) will never read. In the Acts of the Apostles we are told that after Stephen, who was endeavouring to serve his people—the propaganda had been there—had testified,

'they gnashed on Him with their teeth . . . cast Him out . . . and stoned Him'.

"It was the Attorney-General of that day—

"MR. LOGAN (Liverpool, Scotland Division): Proper Communist gangs.

"MR. GALLACHER: No. The Hon. Member should remember that it was the High Priests who were responsible for the propaganda then. It was the Attorney-Generals of that day and the like who made it possible for such happenings. The outstanding example of what lying propaganda can do is given in St. John:

'Pilate said unto him: "What is truth?" And when he had said this, he went out again unto the Jews, and saith unto them: "I find in him no fault at all. But ye have a custom, that I should release unto you one at the passover: will ye therefore that I release unto you the King of the Jews?" Then cried they all again, saying: "Not this man, but Barabbas." Now . . . Snyder, I beg pardon. . . . Barabbas was a robber.'

"MR. LOGAN: On a point of order, is it right in the British House of Commons to hold all the religious opinions of the people at naught and that little be made of them by a hooligan like this?

"MR. SPEAKER: I do not think there is any rule which makes it out of order, but I must say it fills me with disgust.

"MR. GALLACHER: I am quoting what is considered to be one of the most classical publications in English literature.

"EARL WINTERTON (Horsham): We cannot make reference to the words of the Saviour of the Christian religion to support a political attack; many of your predecessors, Sir, have made that ruling repeatedly, and I suggest that the Hon. Member for West Fife [Mr. Gallacher] should be ordered to withdraw his references to the Christian religion.

"MR. SPEAKER: I can find no rule, although I must say I am

disgusted about it and I hope the Hon. Member for West Fife [Mr. Gallacher] will not pursue that argument any longer.

"MR. GALLACHER : I am coming near the end and I have only one other quotation to make. This is considered to be the finest literature in the English language, and I do not see why Hon. Members should take exception to me quoting it. I am quoting to show what evil, lying propaganda can do, and did. What I want to say to those gentlemen, to Hon. Members who so readily, nay eagerly, bear false witness and who seek to use this method of terror against the working class, who accuse the people of Eastern Europe of totalitarianism because they put an end to the robbery of the capitalists and the landlords while themselves using the most brutal totalitarianism against the workers is this, and I quote again, this time from St. Matthew: 'Woe unto you, Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye are like unto whited sepulchres, which indeed appear beautiful outward, but are within full of dead men's bones, and of all uncleanness. . . . Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of hell?' That expresses, better than ever I could hope to do it, my opinion of those who would betray their country, those who would betray their class for a handful of lousy, dirty dollars." (Hansard, July 13, 1949, Cols. 456 to 465.)

All I wish to do now is to quote a letter I sent to the Home Secretary. It speaks for itself:

July 28, 1949

Dear Chuter Ede,

I went to the Speaker's Secretary yesterday, and to the Clerks at the Table, in order to get permission to draw attention to a statement of yours made during the debate on the Docks Dispute.

I failed to get permission to raise the matter, but I still think something should be done about it. You said, towards the end of your speech, in language that was reminiscent of Rosenberg, Hitler's racial expert:

"I had the advantage of picking up three gentlemen of alien blood and none of them apparently even of English descent—for *there are some people of alien blood who are of English descent and who generally hold the kind of views*



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*about these matters which are generally shared in the House of Commons."*

It seems from this that those who are of "alien blood", but who have their "alien blood" qualified by what you call English descent may be "generally" acceptable.

We can only take it from that that those of "alien blood" who have not the inestimable advantage of English descent, are beyond the pale. As this applies to me—I have Irish blood on my father's side and have no English descent whatever—and as it applies to several very important Members of the Government who are of "alien blood" and are without English descent, and as it likewise applies to quite a number of Members of Parliament, and, if I may say so, to the present Duke of Edinburgh, I think you ought to take the earliest possible opportunity of making a complete withdrawal and a very humble apology for such a statement.

You ought to understand that these remarks can, and in all likelihood will, be used by Mosley and his associates with truly evil consequences.

I hope you will take this matter under very serious consideration and get for good and all the nonsensical Nazi blood theory out of your system.

Yours sincerely,

WILLIAM GALLACHER

Then, Comrades, come rally,  
And the last fight let us face,  
The International  
Unites the human race.

But not if Mr. Ede can prevent it.

## CHAPTER XVII

### THE COVENANT

ONCE UPON a time (Yes, it's a fairy story; it happened a long, long time ago), Scottish Members of Parliament got an opportunity of looking at a plan for a road-bridge across the Forth between Rosyth and the present railway bridge across what is known as the Macintosh Rock. Then some time later we had another plan submitted to us. This was Lord Elgin's Plan for a road-bridge on the other, or east side, of the railway bridge. Two beautiful plans. Each had its advantages, with their different approaches and their different outlets running away to the north. After thorough examination by engineering experts and land surveyors and what not, the former was chosen as the bridge that would open the way for a great development of Scottish road transport.

That's as far as we've got. What's the matter with Scotland and with Scottish engineers? There's a crisis, we are told. That seems to be an excuse for every failure, for every shortcoming. But the way to overcome a crisis is to advance economy in every direction; and surely a bridge that would open new, great opportunities for Scottish transport would be one of the finest methods of encouraging her economy? Other countries, in what would appear to be a less advantageous position than Scotland, are able to embark on great engineering undertakings. Why are we stuck?

Take Hungary, a small, mostly peasant country. Her one big industrial centre is the capital city, Budapest. This, as is generally known, is a twin city—Buda on one side of the Danube, Pesh on the other. Budapest, or Budapest, as it is commonly known, was occupied by the Germans till the Red Army drove them out in 1945. When they were driven out of Pesh, they crossed over to Buda, destroying all the bridges on the way. Five great bridges, one of them a suspension bridge, blown up and destroyed. The suspension bridge had all its cables cut and was lying at the bottom of the Danube. With the Russian artillery in Pesh firing at the Germans in Buda, and the German artillery returning the fire on Pesh, it can be understood that not much of the city escaped war

damage. Yet when my wife and I were there in 1948, not only had tremendous reconstruction taken place in the buildings throughout the city, though a tremendous amount still remained to be done, but four of the bridges had been completely rebuilt. One of them, St. Margaret's Bridge, has a broad runway leading from the centre down to St. Margaret's Island, a very attractive beauty spot in the middle of the river. Prior to the war there was a toll on the runway, to keep out the "riff-raff" (ordinary working men and women). St. Margaret's Island was a preserve of the well-to-do. There is no toll now, and workers and their families crowd on the island by the thousand. There is a main drive running midway along the island. About fifty yards along, on the right-hand side, there is a luxury hotel, the Casino, with an extensive garden restaurant. On the left there are the baths with medicinal spring waters. Along at the other end of the island there is on one side the Grand Hotel, also with its garden restaurant, while on the other is a children's playground. At one end of the playground is a children's restaurant, at the other end a children's theatre. This playground, I should mention, was opened in 1949.

We were back that year, and were at the opening ceremony. Over the grounds are kiosks of different kinds, supplying a variety of food and refreshments for young and old. Not only was the children's playground opened in 1949, but when we arrived and drove along the Danube, we got a real pleasant surprise to see that the suspension bridge was up from the bottom of the river and was once again in its proper place, with the workers busy preparing it for new cables.

More important still, along at the far end of St. Margaret's Island, at the broadest part of the Danube, a new bridge, a really huge bridge, was well on the way towards construction.

In the library of the House, I happened one day to take a look at an engineering technical magazine. There was a special article on bridge building in Hungary, with a photograph of the partly completed new bridge, as one of the great engineering feats being undertaken in Europe. If a small, mostly peasant country like Hungary can undertake such a task, why not Scotland? What is holding us back?

See. Budapest is surrounded by hills. On the flatlands of one of these ranges they have built a "Children's Railway". I wish Scottish schoolchildren could see it. It is the schoolboy's dream

come true. Every station—there are seven of them—is a place of beauty. Every station has its restaurant, with the surrounding area ideal for picnics. It is the busiest railway in Europe. Families go there on holiday, on Saturdays and Sundays, on picnic parties. Every evening you see them crowding up by tramcar or private cars. The chief station-master and the engine drivers are the only adults, all the others are schoolchildren. The assistant station-master is a girl of fifteen. Ticket clerks, cashiers, train attendants are boys and girls of twelve, thirteen and fourteen years of age. They go on certain days from school, get a period of training, and then take their turn working on the railway. Unlike our nationalised railways, it is a paying proposition. The profits that are made go into improvements or for developing other forms of educational activities for schoolchildren. All the time the children are encouraged to show initiative and to accept responsibility. They feel, like their elders, that they are playing a part in the reconstruction of the country. Juvenile delinquency is unknown.

What they are doing, we in Scotland should be able to do.

Our general industrial development is far ahead of theirs. What we lack is power and social consciousness that only the New People's Democracy can give. Power! Ah, just listen to Mr. Woodburn replying to a speech made by Mr. Niall McPherson in connection with the much-disputed Covenant. You want a Scottish Parliament, says he; be careful, there's a Tory duke among the crowd that's sponsoring the Covenant. You good Labour lads, do you want to get yourselves associated with a Tory duke?

Woodburn ought to have had more sense. He ought to have known that the Labour men—and women—who almost break their legs running to a garden party at Holyrood would be only too happy in the company of a duke, whatever his politics might be. He seemed to realise this, and he hurriedly left the duke alone. There's Communists associated with the Covenant, he told them with fear in his eyes and a tremble in his voice. If you don't want the Communists to get you—keep away from the Covenant.

It reminded one of the jingle with which Scottish mothers at one time tried to soothe their children: "Hush ye, hush he, little pet ye, the 'Red Bogey' (Black Douglas) ne'er will get ye." It was a deplorable speech which ended up with the utterly ridiculous assertion "that no country in the world had the opportunity of expanding its economy as our own little country had".

We have a Secretary of State, we have a Department of Health, a Department of Agriculture and Fishing, and another for Education, but we have no control of any kind over Scottish industries, and no Department of Labour—two vital matters for the expansion of economy. And we have no Budget. How could anyone be so foolish as to make such a claim when our financial affairs are entirely outside of Scottish control?

I myself have had occasion to make one or two assertions that can be substantiated. For instance, Scotland is the only country in the world that has not been able (whatever the cause) to develop its dock accommodation in relation to its capacity for building ships. We build the biggest ships in the world. At high, spring tide they sail down the Clyde, and that's the last Scotland sees of them. They find a berth and a home in the South of England. Yet there could have been, should have been, long years ago berthing accommodation at the estuary of the Clyde. When will we get it?

Scotland is the only country in the world with a long engineering tradition, with the highest engineering skill, that has not got an aircraft industry. Scotland has made a great contribution to sea transport because it built the ships and sailed the ships. It could make a great contribution to the new mode of transport, if it were allowed to make and fly planes. When I raised this, Mr. Woodburn made the almost unbelievable statement that Scotland was too small for an aircraft industry. Apart from the fact that a small country like Holland has one of the finest aircraft factories in Europe, are we to believe that the country that builds the biggest ships in the world is not big enough to build aeroplanes?

We are getting in Scotland a number of light industries, mostly branches of established English industries, but never a suggestion of an automobile industry. On the debate on Trade and Industry in Scotland in July 1948, I made the following points:

"A plan for Scotland is absolutely and urgently necessary, and I say to the Secretary of State for Scotland that in this White Paper there is no sense of urgency but a tendency towards complacency. There is no plan for Britain and obviously no plan for Scotland. We have a whole hotch-potch of committees and a lot of councils—advisory councils, planning councils, economic councils—which are all supposed to be doing something, but are doing nothing. They are giving advice on this, that and the other, but little comes of it.

## RISE LIKE LIONS

"One Hon. Member said in regard to the new meetings of the Scottish Grand Committee that these were valuable innovations. They are not; they are actually a means of preventing an innovation which is long overdue—more power for the Scottish people. There should be much more power for the people of Scotland to determine their own affairs, but that is being held back by recent measures which have been taken. We must get to a situation in which the people of Scotland are brought in. Where in any of these advisory councils are the Scottish people really able to express themselves? There are one or two trade union officials, one or two co-operators and a whole lot of people in Government organisations on them, but nowhere do we get the mass of Scottish people, the engineers, railwaymen, transport workers and the rest, brought into any conception of the development of Scotland on balanced economic lines.

"The Minister makes it clear that he is opposed to anything in the nature of further power to the Scottish people or anything in the nature of independence for Scotland.

"Why have we not an aircraft factory in Scotland, where we have the finest engineering skill in the world? Why is Scotland prohibited from making a contribution to this new mode of transport? I have raised this matter often, but nothing is done about it.

"There have been various efforts in the past. The motor-car industry started in Scotland, in Glasgow, and came down to England where the financiers got a grip on it and made it a profitable industry. They built it up in England and have such power that they make it impossible for any motor-car industry to carry on in Scotland. The same thing applies to the aircraft industry. If we had a plan for Scotland that would be part of the plan. If there had been an independent Scotland, we should have been right ahead with the motor-car industry and the aircraft industry.

"Of course, the aircraft industry, like other industries should be nationalised and organised in such a way as to utilise all the highest skill in the production of aircraft and the development of the air services. Scotland, which has made such a contribution to sea transport by making and sailing the ships, could make the same contribution to air transport if it made and flew the planes.

"While we want new industries, it is also necessary to build up our basic industries. Steel has not been developed to capacity in

## THE COVENANT

Scotland. Steel production in Scotland does not amount to anything like the actual needs of Scotland. A great deal requires to be done in connection with steel. Between the wars the steel industry in Scotland was closed down; it was all taken down to Corby. We want now a big development of the steel industry in Scotland.

"There is danger at the present time, through the cutting down of the steel allocation, of unemployment developing in the Clyde shipbuilding industry. In a striking article in the *Glasgow Herald* this morning on this very question, the opinion is expressed that in the near future there will be considerable unemployment on the Clyde.

"I say to the Minister, let us have a plan for Scotland, a planned economy between good light industries and the heavy industries. While we are trying to balance our economy let us make sure that the bigger industries get the steel required and the amenities which will be so favourable for the encouragement of the workers in these industries. Then we can build up employment and have an economy in Scotland that will ensure in the future full employment and prosperity for the Scottish people." (Hansard, July 21, 1948, cols. 508 to 511.)

There has been no change in the situation since this debate. Scottish economy is still retarded. This is of first importance for the working class. Hardie understood that when he advocated home rule for Scotland. A strong, healthy, progressive Scotland doesn't mean a weakening of the Union. Only people blinded by prejudice can fail to see that the stronger Scotland is, the greater an asset it will be to the Union, the weaker it is the more of a liability.

Because of this I give my support to the Covenant—for a Scottish Parliament which will give the Scottish people power to determine their own economic and social life and progress. What's wrong with that? Keir Hardie, in his day, saw nothing wrong with it. On the contrary, he was all for it. Back in 1888, as I have already remarked, he, Cunningham Grahame and a few others met and formed the Scottish Labour Party. Home rule for Scotland, and for all other countries and territories in the British Empire, was on their first programme, and remained from then onwards as a recognised feature of Scottish Labour policy.

I remember, in 1919, a lad named Henry Sara, well known at

the time among the anarchists of London, came on a visit to Glasgow. At one of his meetings he held up a leaflet signed by a group of Scotland's leading Labour representatives, amongst whom was the name of Willie Gallacher. It was a leaflet demanding a Scottish Parliament. Sara went for me in great style.

"This man Gallacher", he said, "claims to be a revolutionary. But look at the company he is in."

He was sort of nonplussed when someone told him that the Willie Gallacher of the leaflet was an entirely different individual. Yes, there's two Willie Gallachers, and we've often had to bear the burden of one another's shortcomings. The other Willie Gallacher was, until his retirement a few years ago, a very well-known and much-respected director of the Scottish Co-operative Wholesale Society. Many and many a time his friends have reproached him for his wild language and his even wilder behaviour as reported from time to time in the Press. Many a good crack we've had exchanging notes about this never-ending confusion.

That, however, is by the way. The leaflet, as I have remarked, was for a Scottish Parliament and was the product and policy of the leading Labour men in Scotland. It remained so until a Labour Government was formed in 1945; then, like so much else of Labour Party policy, it was dumped overboard. The Tories, sensing what was happening, came out strongly for Scotland, the false champions of Scottish progress. So much so that Malcolm MacMillan sneered at them, with some justification, for having become Scottish Nationalist "since the General Election". Of course he could not be expected to add that from the same period, he and his associates had ceased to be Scottish Nationalists.

Now, having deserted the cause which for sixty years was part of their programme, they try to cover up their shame by talking of the Covenant as a "Tory trick", varying that with a "Communist stunt". Anything rather than face the fact that power in the hands of the Scottish people would mean a great new advance in progress and prosperity for the Scottish people.



## CHAPTER XVIII

### THE PETTY-BOURGEOIS "LEFTS"

1949 was a bad year for the "Lefts". There was an election not far away, and what was going to happen when it came along occupied the most part of their thought. They began to look for cover. Only a few remained steadfast in their opposition to the American war policy being pursued by the Government and loyal to the cause of peace. Emrys Hughes, Tom Braddock and Leah Manning were ordered to appear before the "inquisition" and after a harsh and anything but comradely interrogation, were warned as to what would happen if they didn't modify their attitude. Lester Hutchinson, Leslie Solley and K. Zilliacus were expelled from the Party. In the course of his examination Leslie Solley was accused of referring to the Tories as "war-mongers". "What's wrong with that?" he asked. To which the chief inquisitor sharply replied: "That's Communist language."

That's an indication of how far these fellows have travelled towards the camp of Tory imperialism since the days when "war-mongers" was a commonplace in the mouths of Labour leaders. With the expulsion of these three, that gave us, with D. N. Pritt and John Platts-Mills, five independent Labour M.P.s. On several occasions, acting as a group under the chairmanship of D. N. Pritt, they divided the House and got the support of Phil and I, which meant two tellers and five Members in the division lobby.

But, however hard Pritt and the others tried, they found it more and more difficult to work with Zilliacus. His case, in his opinion, was a very special case. He was the man who was fighting Bevin's foreign policy. Pritt, Platts-Mills, Solley and Lester Hutchinson had on many occasions given a good account of themselves in foreign affairs debates, but only his own speeches counted with Zilliacus. With a long and varied experience on the League of Nations, he knew all about the moves that were made on the international chess board. As a result of this he was able to make a very powerful criticism of Bevin's pro-American and American-dominated foreign policy. Bevin didn't like him, the Labour

leaders didn't like him, and the Tories didn't like him. His only source of support was the Communist Party and the progressive section of the working class. This he was afraid of. It was going to carry him too far along the road of revolutionary struggle. He actually believed that Bevin was on the way out and that when he went there would be a change of policy at the Foreign Office and that he would then be welcomed back to the Labour fold. Rumours of all kinds about Bevin's health were to a certain extent responsible for this. Wherever he went a medical specialist went along with him. Fair shares—one patient, one doctor. So, however critical, even devastating, a particular speech of Zilliacus might be, there was always something dragged in to differ himself from the Communists and leave the way open for working his passage back!

I listened to him one night, with Tories and servile Labour members, keeping up a barrage of interjections, many of the most offensive character. Naturally I supported him. I cheered him on. Then, to my utter astonishment, not to say disgust, he veered right round from attack to a plea for a democratic Council for Western Europe. Landed himself right in the camp of Churchill, Bevin and Crossman. The only occasion on which I felt worse—my stomach actually turned over—was when Jennie Lee, wife of Aneurin Bevan, anxious probably to counteract the bad effects of the "vermin" speech, made the following contribution to the highlights of Parliamentary debate:

"... I would appeal to all Hon. Members to remember that one of our great exports is the knowledge in the rest of the world that Great Britain has always given of her best blood to the House of Commons from all sides. Really, this is not the moment for Hon. Members of this House to denigrate their own status. If they do not think that it is the highest status in this country, then they ought not to stand for election. If they do come to this House, they should come in the knowledge and belief that they are here to give of their very best, and, very often, to lose fortunes instead of making them. That goes for all parts of the House." (Hansard, October 27, 1949, col. 1,600.)

I had to get up and go out to save myself from making a demonstration that would have got me ordered out.

But this effort on the part of Zilliacus to placate his opponents

met with no success. They laughed at him. They saw that his "Achilles heel" was fear of getting too closely associated with the other expelled M.P.s and with the Communist Party. They knew he constituted no danger to their power and privileges.

As for Zilliacus, he had to find something better than a Democratic Council for Western Europe. Over in Eastern Europe he saw Marshal Tito, rejected for a time as he had been, now coming back, and coming back fast, into favour with the British and American imperialists. Off he went to Yugoslavia. A talk with Tito and he had found what Crossman and the "Keep Lefts" had lost—a "middle way". Illusions never die. On that presumption he will try to persuade the workers of this country that Tito has a policy different from Bevin's and different from and in opposition to the Soviet Union and the New Democracies of Eastern Europe.

I don't suppose Zilliacus knows sufficient about Lenin to know that this great genius of revolutionary strategy stated very emphatically in 1920, no qualifications of any kind: "From now on, everyone making a claim to be a Socialist will be tested by his attitude to the Soviet Union." Whoever is a Socialist is for the Soviet Union—not because the people of the Soviet Union are Russian, but because they are the first workers to break and throw off the shackles of capitalism. Whoever is against the Soviet Union, whether it be Churchill, Bevin, Tito or Zilliacus, is not a Socialist. Tito has repudiated Lenin and is now, like the traitors here, selling his country for dollars. If he were a Communist, as I am a Communist, he would think as I think and speak as I speak. But instead he speaks the anti-Soviet language of Bevin and Acheson. They love to hear him or to read what he says. It gives them the very greatest pleasure. They know from what they read that he thinks as they think. They are the enemies of Communism—the enemies of Socialism.

It's a melancholy road that Zilliacus is now travelling. Back into the slough and mire of dollar capitalism. Back into the company, if they will have him, of the sham Lefts. These have always been a useful, in some cases an essential, part of the capitalist method of carrying on the deception of the working class. Where the Labour leaders are likely to experience criticism or difficulty in getting a particularly smelly piece of capitalist policy accepted by the workers, the sham Lefts can be relied upon to provide the demagogic perfume calculated to kill the smell.

In my book *The Rolling of the Thunder* I deal at some length with the classic example of a sham Left, Leon Trotsky. Here I will put once again the issue as it arose in Russia and how it was answered by the respective parties. As a "classic" it cannot be repeated too often. It provides the key to an understanding of how the game is worked. In Russia, the workers had taken power. What were they to do with it? Build Socialism or allow the capitalists to take over?

The Mensheviks said :

"We can't build Socialism in a backward country like Russia. We must wait till capitalism has developed industry."

The Bolsheviks said :

"We can build Socialism in Russia, we have the material resources, we have the people and we have the power."

What of the Trotsky group—the sham Lefts? Read this and ponder over it. When you see the catch in this, you'll never more be taken in by the Trotsky breed :

"We can't build Socialism in a single country, we must wait till the workers in the most advanced countries in Europe have carried through the proletarian revolution."

Ah, he wants world revolution! No, he wanted just what the Mensheviks wanted. The question at issue was "Socialism or capitalism" in Russia. It was for that an answer was immediately necessary. The Mensheviks and the Trotsky group were opposed to the building of Socialism. Both said: "We must wait." The reasons they gave were quite irrelevant, though the Trotsky group were more demagogic than the Mensheviks.

Always get the issue clear—the question that demands an answer; tear aside the guilt covering and the sham Lefts will stand exposed. Thus we can consider the question of Western Union and the part played in pushing it through by Crossman, Foot and company. There was some dispute in the House of Commons as to whether Churchill or Bevin was the first to propose this Union of capitalist states. Churchill claimed it was his child. Bevin said he had given birth to it many years ago and that Churchill had actually kidnapped his infant. Anyhow, there it was presented before us. Western Union, an important phase in American foreign policy, leading up to the Atlantic War Pact and the evil, heavy burden of armaments that is keeping this country in the throes of a crisis. All the countries of Western Europe, whatever the complexion of

their governments, were, and are, capitalist countries. Western Union meant union of a group of capitalist countries for the definite purpose of strengthening capitalism at the expense of the working class. Churchill, backed by the Americans, came out strong for Western Union. Attlee, cautiously, followed his lead. Cautiously, because the workers had to be taken into account.

For or against Western Union? The Communists were against. They, with the *Daily Worker*, exposed the true meaning, the anti-working-class character of this proposal. And the sham Lefts, they were for Western Union, but it must have a socialist foundation. This "socialist foundation", like Trotsky's "revolution in other advanced countries", was quite irrelevant, but it enabled them to line up with Churchill and the Tories, while giving the appearance, a quite sham appearance—hence the term sham Lefts—of being very fervent Socialists. When it came to a show-down, Western Union of capitalist states, no vestige of Socialism anywhere, they were there, a part of the reactionary gang engaged in pushing it through.

But they had done the dirty work of capitalism. They had spread confusion and misunderstanding among the workers. They had popularised Western Union under the false cover of an advance towards Socialism and had thereby stifled the opposition of the working class to this new advance of American imperialism.

Then the easy way they talk of revolution. Like strolling through a pleasant, sunlit garden. Yet revolution is the terrifying climax to the struggle for power of a new class. Terrifying for the old order. It strips them of all their pomp, their privileges, and their ill-used power. They will use any and every means, immoral, brutal, destructive, to prevent its realisation.

History, we are often told, is a great teacher. But it has no lessons for those who are taken in by the sham Lefts. In every country in Western Europe dollars are poured out like water in a vain effort to turn back the clock. As a last desperate attempt to stem the tide of proletarian advance—the tide of revolution—resources so much needed for the welfare of the people are being spent on an unbearable burden of armaments with the threat of a third world war an ever-present danger to human progress.

Yet in the light of all that's going on in the world, we had Mr. Crossman airily chatting about "our social revolution". Here it is, read it :

"If the Government wants to retain full employment, if they want to retain the structure of Socialism, they cannot possibly repeat what the Chancellor of the Exchequer said, that there can be no question of a defence cut. . . . I say in terms of . . . social interest that these commitments must be weighed objectively if we are to take advantage of devaluation and the time it has gained to make the building we have begun to construct during the last four years the beginning of a permanent democratic, socialist system." (Hansard, September 28, 1949, col. 271.)

Armament expenditure soaring, profits higher than ever they were, prices up, rents up, wages kept down. There is the issue—peace and wages. Increased wages for the lower-paid miners, for engineers, for railwaymen, for school teachers, for all kinds and conditions of workers. But the sham Lefts walk away from this and seek to lead the workers into a realm of shadows where reality is unknown. Bold words, "our social revolution"; but utterly meaningless, utterly without value when divorced from, and used as a means of avoiding, the practical questions that call for immediate action.

That must ever be the test. What are the practical questions and how are they answered? It matters not how "socialist" their words may be if they cannot give a straight, clear answer. For peace against the warmakers, for wages against profits. These are the issues. If they cannot take sides in the struggle, they are sham Socialists, and as such should receive short shrift from the working class.

## CHAPTER XIX

### BY WAY OF THANKS

MOST OF the visitors to the House of Commons like to see and talk with "Big Ben". "Big Ben" was popular with all. What am I talking about? No, I'm not talking of the clock but of the policeman on duty on the corridor leading out to the terrace, Ben Stebbings. He was a great admirer of the pawky Scottish comedian Will Fyffe. That fine old troupier used to look in on us occasionally, and many a pleasant crack we had with him. Ben liked to tell Scotch stories and to twist his tongue round Scottish words. In the First World War he was in the London Scottish and he always claimed that the watchword of the regiment was "Blimey the noo". He was big and hefty and he took real pleasure, when I had visitors on the terrace, in letting them know that he was "the big 'un" and I was the "wee 'un".

Yes, we were great friends, Ben and I, and the same can be said about my relations with the general body of officers and attendants. During the war Ben had a serious illness. I wrote him a cheery, encouraging letter. I was the only Member to do so and "Big Ben" valued it out of all proportion to the effort. But all these lads talked to me as one of themselves. They had no reservations and no fear of their confidence ever being abused. Always courteous and serviceable, they had occasionally to submit to treatment of a somewhat supercilious character from arrogant Members or visitors. On such occasions, actually rare, they would unburden themselves to me and the things they said about the offenders must have made their ears tingle.

We had for a time an officer in charge who was respected, very highly respected, by his men, as by the Members. How could it be otherwise?—he was a Scotsman. This officer got promotion to a London district. A good man, he deserved it. I came down to the House one morning and was immediately pounced on by a young policeman, who had a habit of trying to subvert me. Always putting across revolutionary propaganda and inciting me to all kinds of wild and unseemly behaviour. We had some good laughs.

But this morning he was deadly serious. I had got to do a job and do it without delay. The officer referred to, now away from the House of Commons, had committed some small technical offence and a small clique of "pundits" up in Whitehall, with a complete lack of consideration of his case, had quite arbitrarily decided to reduce his rank, leaving him no other course but to accept the demotion or resign from the force. I soon found that the feeling of injustice was general among the police who had served under him. The officer himself had got in touch with a Scottish Tory, but he didn't feel like interfering. The police at the House didn't know about this, so they came to me.

"You can do the job", they said. "You've got to make these bureaucrats in Whitehall sit up." I got on the job all right and within a week the officer's rank was restored. The bureaucrats had taken notice.

But talking of police, and particularly of "Big Ben", reminded me that Sir A. P. Herbert wrote a play of that name. I didn't see it but I heard that it was very good. Sir A. P. and I got along very well for two such opposites in politics. A funny incident occurred one night in the House while I was speaking. It was a long time ago and I had completely forgotten it until A. P. started telling it to some visitors who were having a look around the House. I was having trouble with my dental plate. It was my first experience with this feeble substitute for one of nature's most precious gifts. I stopped in the middle of my speech, I said to the Speaker, "Excuse me", I then turned my back on him, took out my handkerchief, removed the dental encumbrance, faced round once more and went on with my speech. He has had, he says, many a good laugh over that one.

But I also remember when I was in New York, Quentin Reynolds reminded me of an incident when he was over in London and came down to the House for a visit. He was very much in need of a drink and he suggested we go down to the bar. I looked at him with consternation—the bar—*me!* Then remembering that he was a visitor from a far land, I crushed down my natural repugnance to entering such a place and such an atmosphere and I took him down. A. P. was there with some friends, having a quiet refreshment. When he saw us enter, he stared as though he could not believe his eyes, then he came over, slapped my companion on the back: "Quentin", he shouted, "you've performed a miracle,



getting Willie to come in here." The miracle was very temporary as, realising that Quentin was in friendly hands, I hurriedly vacated the area of the Public House and got back to the safety of the Public Lobby.

When visitors came to the House, I took a delight in directing their attention to the statue of Charles James Fox which stands on the left of the entrance to St. Stephen's Hall. He is pictured, or postured, giving the "clenched-fist" salute—a challenge to the tyrants of Europe and a welcome to the revolutionary upsurge in the American colonies. He was a true friend of the young American Republic. But if he were to return to earth and make the mistake of landing in America, he would find himself held up at Ellis Island for deportation back to the "unknown bourne" from whence he had come, as a fellow-traveller of well-known French and American revolutionaries. In fact, it's questionable if he would be safe in his own England, with a Labour Government dancing to a raucous dollar tune. Better, maybe, that he should remain where he is.

With the clerks of the House, as with the police and the attendants, my relations were of the best. The clerks of the House—there are three of them at the table—are a very important factor in the conduct of affairs. When difficulties arise the Speaker can be seen consulting them on the course of action that should be taken. All questions put down by Members pass through this office and get their imprimatur before they go on the Order Paper.

It is a common thing for Members to get a card inviting them to see a particular clerk at the table about a particular question they may have submitted. I had many such invitations. Sometimes my questions were quite unacceptable. At other times certain parts only were unacceptable and the clerk advised me what should be taken out and what should be retained.

Here I may mention that I never worried myself very much about the rules and regulations that governed a Member's conduct in the House. I remember when Sir William Darling first came in as the victor in an Edinburgh bye-election. He approached me for advice on such matters.

"You're an old hand here", he said, "so you should be able to advise me on the rules of the House."

"Not me", I told him, "I don't know anything about them. What do you want to know the rules for?" I asked him, "Do you

want to tie yourself up? It's the Speaker's business to know the rules. It's your business to say what you feel ought to be said. Get up and say it. If you're out of order the Speaker will tell you, but you'll already have said what you wanted to say."

Sir William thought that that was very good advice, and I think on occasion he acted on it. But the clerks had an almost constant job sorting out my questions and getting them fitted up in proper language.

Thus it came about, that when I had written some verses about one or other of the Members, the request came from the clerks at the table, "Why not write something about us?" With my own experience in mind, I presented them with these verses:

Oh, Star of Hope, that keeps me on my feet,  
 With desperate urge to catch the Speaker's eye,  
 Let fire of heaven destroy who would compete,  
 And leave me there, the Victor, standing high,  
 E'en tho' with all my arts I'm only able  
 To hold enthralled the Guardians of the Table,

Of whom I'll say, and these my words are true,  
 Without them and their guidance wise and smooth,  
 We'd prove ourselves a woeful, sorry crew  
 At framing questions all designed to soothe  
 Throughout our land the throb of discontent;  
 They are the Saviours of our Parliament.

With their good grace I now propose to ask  
 The lad who steers the Scottish Ship of State  
 (Wee Joe, oh may he prosper in his task)  
 To tell the House how long we'll have to wait,  
 To satisfy the never-ending grouses,  
 And get Auld Scotia all she wants of houses.

When the late Lord Baldwin died, the Prime Minister, the Leader of the Opposition, the leader of the Liberal Party and the leader of the National Liberals, all followed in turn with the formal tributes to one of their number who had passed away. Then, as was usual, they all looked at me, the leader of the Communist Party. It was one of those difficult moments, when it was easy to say the wrong thing, when it might have been considered wiser to

say nothing at all. But before he went to the Lords, and while he was still in the House, he used to talk to me once in a while. He was attracted by my Scottish voice. His mother, he told me, was Scottish. He and I got quite sentimental on that, as my mother was also Scottish while my father was Irish. So I said a few words about the one common bond that existed between us. The following day I received this letter from one of the clerks:

Dear Willie Gallacher,

I believe that Stanley Baldwin must rejoice in your tribute to him. It was perhaps the finest of all the speeches made yesterday and perhaps of all that I have ever heard.

When my time comes I should be happy if a person so human as yourself would think or speak an epitaph and a prayer for me so beautiful as your last three sentences.

I am glad to have something of your friendship,

Yours very sincerely,

. . .

In reply to this I sent him a letter with a proposed epitaph, which I thought would be applicable to his case. A few days later he sent me a book descriptive of the House of Commons, liberally supplied with photographs, and the following letter:

Dear Willie Gallacher,

To wish you many happy returns of your birthday, may I send you a copy of this excellent little book? It has a grand collection of pictures of our House, but I wish the camera wasn't always so truthful as on page 39. No one ever told me how to look sensible in a photograph.

I wonder if all your life you've suffered from people who only gave you one present on Xmas Day and none on your birthday. I used to begrudge being even within three weeks of Xmas!

Again I thank you for your lovely letter to me, which warms my heart with happiness. I wish my memory was stored with poems or thoughts to quote to my friends and give them even one-tenth of the pleasure your letter gives me. I must try and deserve it better.

Every good wish, and all my blessings on you.

Always sincerely yours,

. . .

More than a year later I sent him a copy of *Relaxation*, a collection of verses, which my secretary, Margot Parish, with great patience and amazing skill, gathered together and bound into a very presentable cyclostyled volume. In acceptance of that he sent me a further letter in which he refers to, and quotes, the epitaph I had sent him in December 1947:

Dear Wullie Gallacher,

At last I find a minute to write my warmest thanks for the honour you did me in giving me a copy of your collected poems, and for the charming inscription you've written. They have given me great pleasure to read and certainly no less relaxation for me in the reading than you find in the writing.

I greatly envy you the gift of writing and rhyming so easily. It is a precious possession and you can give so much pleasure to other people by it.

The poems I enjoyed frankly most are William Rust and Joseph Westwood (both of which are lovely and moving tributes), Bonnie Prince Charles, and Phil's Bill. Calvinism I admired, too, and Mammon, although it rather frightened me, as you sometimes do when your mood is savage! The Map-room Murder is good fun.

I still prize most highly of all the lines you sent me one morning:

'In service true, ne'er failing and ne'er grudged,  
He lived his life—on that he will be judged;  
And if his merits, as we know them here,  
Are counted—he has nought to fear.

and you wrote, 'With all good wishes for Xmas and the New Year'.

That poem gave me a deeper comfort, at a moment when I happened to be down in the mouth and overwrought, than you could possibly imagine. Thank you always for that. I shall keep it all my life.

Yours ever,

...

I have some good memories of the House of Commons, and not the least of the generous spirit that prompted this correspondence. May his years be long and may his heart be always happy.

I cannot close this short story of the House and its officials with-

out a word about the Serjeant-at-Arms and his Deputies. They have charge of the tickets for the special galleries. What a life I gave them. I was always after tickets. There was a legend that had gained currency that I could get tickets when no one else could. That wasn't exactly true, but a whole lot of people believed it. I was continually on the hunt. If I didn't get a special consideration from the Serjeant and his Deputies, I certainly got my full share. Time and again they helped me out when I was almost ashamed to ask them—almost, but never quite. What goes for them also goes for Black Rod who has charge of the tickets in the House of Lords. Any time I went to him, and I went often, he made me feel that he experienced real pleasure in being able to oblige me. He was truly a friendly soul. So I can say of all of them, Officers of the House, Police, Attendants, my hearty thanks and good wishes to all of them.

## CHAPTER XX

### ORDERS

ONE DAY I got a letter from a business man in Fife, regarding a small bit of a job he wanted one of the Government Departments to undertake. I immediately contacted the Minister responsible and in the shortest possible time had the wheels in motion. He wrote to me again expressing surprise at the rapidity with which things had begun to happen, and invited me to look in and see him if I happened to be passing his way. I did look in on him with my old friend and colleague Abe Moffat, and he told me quite a story.

For three months he had been writing to all sorts of people and all sorts of Committees in a worthy endeavour to get the job in hand, but at last he gave up. In the Conservative Club in Dunfermline one morning he was letting himself go about Red Tape and bureaucrats and the time and effort he had wasted trying to cut his way through. Now he was finished. It was a hopeless business trying to move Government departments.

He nearly lost a year's growth when another prominent Conservative turned to him and quite casually asked, "Have you written to Willie Gallacher?"

When he recovered from the shock, he exclaimed, "Write to Gallacher, me!"

"Yes, why not?" said the other, "you want the job started. You write to Willie Gallacher and you'll get things going."

But he was obdurate. "Not me", he answered, "if I never get it started I'll never write and ask a Communist to help me."

"Suit yourself", commented the other, "but I thought that after three months taking the wrong way, you might now take the right way."

He went home that evening very disturbed in his mind, but quite determined he would not write to Willie Gallacher. So the next morning, after sleeping on it, he wrote to me, and a few days later he saw the men started on the job. On several occasions after that he wrote to me about local and personal difficulties and expressed great satisfaction with the result.

Then, later on, as a member of the Dunfermline Burgh Council, he opposed, in a somewhat violent speech, the letting of St. Margaret's Hall for a Communist Party meeting at which I was to be the speaker. The main ground of his arguments was the moth-eaten assertion that we took orders from abroad. We got the use of the hall, and I spoke.

In the course of my speech I said, and said truly, that during all the time I had been a Member of Parliament, the only orders I had ever received were from my constituents. Of course they came in the form of requests. But a request from a constituent was tantamount to an order.

"This particular councillor", I said, "has given me 'orders' from time to time and he can have no possible complaint at how they were carried out. But I challenge him, or anyone else, to show where I have ever received, let alone accepted, an 'order' from anyone outside of this country."

That finished him with "Willie Gallacher".

People from all over the country wrote to me about their complaints and their problems. In my home town they were continually at my door. I used to try and persuade them to go to their own M.P., but it didn't do any good. "We'd rather come to you", they would say, "we can talk to you."

Very many Catholics wrote to me or came to see me. I don't know if it was the Irish name that proved the attraction, or that as workers, whatever their religious beliefs, I was much the same as themselves. I recall one case (it was before America had dragged this country into the anti-Communist campaign) where a priest had advised a poor Catholic with a bitter grievance to "see Willie Gallacher about it".

One of the most distressing cases I had ever to take up was about a bonnie little lad in Cowdenbeath—the little fellow who lost his legs on the railway line. John Fernie, my agent in Fife, mentioned the matter to me when I was through in my constituency. I understood, wrongly, that the accident had been in Bowhill, a village in West Fife. It was six months after the accident when I first heard of it and was informed at the same time that the Railway Executive was absolved from all legal responsibility by an Act of 1883 or some such date as that. I took the matter up with the Minister of Transport and was told that it was the responsibility of the Railway Executive. I wrote to the Railway Executive and drew

attention to the fact that while they claimed to have no legal responsibility, they had a human and moral responsibility. I kept at it for a time, and then gave notice I'd raise it in the House at the earliest opportunity. I put the case as follows :

"I have to raise the question of a railway accident of a somewhat tragic and heartbreaking character. It is one to which I want the Minister of Transport to give some consideration. The accident occurred on April 1 last year to a bonny little boy, five years old. Across from the house where he lived there was a fence, guarding the railway, which was made of upright sleepers. One of the sleepers was lying on the ground, leaving a gap leading directly on to the railway lines. It was lying there for close on three weeks, and nothing was done to repair the break in the fence. A boy of five crawled through, and lost both his legs above the knee. The morning after the accident, at eight o'clock, the sleeper was back in place. I do not want to take up too much time at this late hour, and I think that Hon. Members and the Ministry of Transport representative will get a better understanding if I read one or two letters in connection with the case. This little lad and his parents are not entitled to compensation of any kind. The mother writes :

'It was appalling to think that the gap in the fence, which was only three feet six inches from the first doorstep, and in the centre of the only playground the children had in this particular vicinity (the street) was left open for three weeks before the accident and was then replaced about 8 a.m. the morning following the accident.'

"The parents who are ordinary working-class people with very little means, got a solicitor to take up their case with an advocate in Edinburgh. The advocate gave his advice to the solicitor, who in turn advised the parents of the boy. The name of the advocate is Mr. Hunter, and in a letter to the parents, the solicitor states :

'Mr. Hunter says that in law, Alexander'—that is the name of the boy, Alexander Whyte—'was clearly a trespasser, and the Railway Company's duty towards him was to avoid wilful injury. He says it is settled law that a Railway Company is not under a duty to construct an impenetrable, unclimbable or childproof fence. This was decided as far back as 1883 in a case where the gap in the fence had been in existence for several months as compared with approximately two weeks in the present case.'



## ORDERS

"That is the advice given to the solicitor, and the solicitor advised the parents that there was no use in trying to take a case to law. That means, that arising out of a decision given some sixty years ago, this lad is denied any opportunity of taking a case for compensation. I wrote a letter to the Minister of Transport arising out of the case being brought to my notice, and I said:

'I am enclosing a letter from my agent in Fife, with an accompanying letter from a firm of solicitors and a photograph relating to the case with which the letter deals.

'This story is a terrible one. An infant of five years of age, with both legs amputated above the knees, and no compensation of any kind from the Nationalised Railways. The photograph shows the sleeper-fence which guarded the railway, but there was a gap where a sleeper was missing. The sleeper in the photograph with the cross above it was put in the day following the accident to close the gap.

'In the Debate which took place yesterday on the Coal Industry Bill, Mr. Sylvester, M.P. for Normanton, in the course of his speech was anxious to impress the House with the fact that there was a greater measure of humanity in the Coal Industry since nationalisation than there had ever been before. In this connection he said:

'I was walking down the street in my home town and met a man who in September last had lost an arm just below the elbow. Being an old colleague of his, I naturally asked him how he was getting on. He first of all told me how well he had been treated in hospital and then said that to his great surprise one of the under-managers had come to see him. Two days after that visit two deputies also came to see him. I asked what was remarkable about that. His reply was that in the old days they would never have dreamed of going to see injured miners.'

'He had more to say on this line in regard to compensation treatment. While he was speaking I thought of the infant Alexander Whyte of whom I had heard when I was in Fife at the week-end. I appeal to you to take this matter up with the Railway Commission, and ask them to review it not from the point of view of the legal decision in 1883, but with the humanity that should go with a great nationalised industry.'

"I received the following letter from the Minister of Transport:

'Thank you for sending me, on November 30, correspondence from the West Fife Constituency Committee, Fernie's Buildings, Oakfield Street, Kelty, about the accident to Alexander Whyte of 9 East Park Street, Cowdenbeath. I was very sorry to hear about this. As the question is now a matter for the Transport Commission to consider, I have today passed your letter on to them direct. Should you wish to get in touch with them, you should communicate with Sir Cyril Hurcomb, the Chairman of the Transport Commission at 55, Broadway, S.W.1.'

"I got in touch with the Transport Commission, but the Minister had already passed the correspondence on to them. I got the following letter from the Transport Commission on December 15:

'I write with reference to the enclosed correspondence which you sent to Mr. Barnes. I have had this case carefully looked into, and feel sorry for this child who was so grievously injured. I am advised that no liability of any kind lies against the Railway Executive, as, indeed, the advocate consulted on behalf of Mr. Joseph Whyte has confirmed. That being so, I regret that there is no step which the Railway Commission can take in regard to compensation.'

"That is what comes from the Railway Executive. I want to make a couple of suggestions to the Minister that should have been considered by the Railway Executive. In the first place, I want to draw his attention to a photograph that appeared in the press. The boy had to go to Newcastle to get artificial legs and training. His mother took him there, and at Newcastle there was another mother with a boy of the same age who had also lost both his legs. He had already had his training and was able to run about on his artificial legs, and so he was given the job of teaching little Alexander Whyte how to use his artificial legs. If the Parliamentary Secretary will look at this photograph, he will see this bonny little lad, Alexander Whyte, being given his training by the other little boy. The other little boy, David Johnson, lost both his legs as a result of an accident with a bus. He was awarded £1,500 damages. Mrs. Whyte and the boy are staying at Newcastle with Mrs. Johnson, but Mrs. Whyte's little boy gets nothing from the Railway Commission.

"It seems to me that the letter from the Railway Executive is utterly heartless. Surely it was possible for them to consider the

question of this boy and the tragic accident he suffered with the terrible handicap that now faces him. Surely it was possible for the Railway Executive to consider an *ex-gratia* payment. At the moment, friends are organising concerts and socials to help the boy and his parents. Surely the Railway Executive could have considered the possibility of an *ex-gratia* payment even though they were relieved of responsibility for compensation by a decision in 1883. Along with an *ex-gratia* payment surely the Railway Executive might have said they felt so deeply for this boy and his parents and recognised the terrible handicap this means to him in his future life, that they would guarantee, as the lad grows up into manhood, to find suitable employment for him, so that neither his parents nor he need have any fear for what the future may hold.

"I ask the Parliamentary Secretary to the Ministry of Transport to get his right hon. friend to take up this case. I wrote to the Railway Executive after I received their letter that I understood when I wrote to them that they had no legal responsibility after the decision of 1883, but they had a human and moral responsibility. I say to the Parliamentary Secretary that the Minister of Transport has a human and moral responsibility towards this little lad. I hope he will take the matter up with the Railway Executive and see whether an *ex-gratia* payment can be made and that something is guaranteed by the Railway Executive to ensure the future of this unfortunate lad who met with such a terrible accident."

In his reply, the Minister was careful to avoid accepting legal responsibility either for his department or for the Railway Executive, but he gave great satisfaction to all interested members when he said :

"I think this is certainly the sort of case which, in the light of the facts that have been recited, is one that I ought to ask the railway authorities to look at again. Clearly they are free from all legal entanglements, and no one disputes that, and if they consider the matter again it must be on that understanding. I shall ask them to see what they can do on an *ex-gratia* basis to help this wee laddie to make his path through life easier. The hon. gentleman said it was a matter of moral responsibility. I do not think it is a matter of responsibility at all. This is as I see it a matter of common humanity. My right hon. friend, the Minister of Health has said that bigness is the enemy of humanity. To me it seems that what he meant

was that big institutions tend to be impersonal and judicial in their dealings with individuals and that is something we ought to fight. I hope very soon that the railway authorities will be able to demonstrate to my right hon. friend that a big institution can have not only a hard head, but a kind heart, and I hope the hon. gentleman will accept that assurance." (Hansard, March 24, 1949, Cols. 705-712.)

But for all the time I was on the case, right up almost to the finish, I was labouring under the misconception that the little fellow belonged to Bowhill, within my constituency. It was the Minister who informed me that the accident hadn't happened in Bowhill but in Cowdenbeath. Of course had I known from the beginning, I'd have fought just the same, but I would have insisted that the Labour Member for Dunfermline Burgh should also have shown some interest in it.

But we had a deadly paralysis creeping over the Labour Movement and affecting most of the Labour Members. The microbe responsible for this was known as "Don't embarrass the Labour Government". Everywhere you heard it. Don't ask for increased subsidies to keep down rents. Don't ask for increased pensions for the old folks. Don't do anything! Don't ask for anything! "Don't embarrass the Labour Government." That paralysis is the only explanation that can be given for the Member responsible failing to take up such an urgent and important question as compensation for a child of five years of age who lost both legs on the railway line, as a consequence of a defective fencing.

"Don't embarrass the Labour Government." It stopped all activity in the Labour Movement, it paralysed Labour Members of Parliament, but it stimulated and encouraged the Tories. The more the Labour Members were forced to lie back, the more aggressive the Tories became. The Labour Movement should understand that activity means life, lack of activity represents decay and death.

For instance, when I was speaking in Markinch one night a lady, a regular attender at my meetings, took exception to the Communists always talking about "fighting", and said that this was not in accord with Christian teaching. I told her that she was mistaken. That the Scriptures were in many places very violent in the denunciation of evil. As violent as any Communist could ever hope to be. She was, in a small way, a landowner, and because of that she knew I would be against her. She liked me, she said, to the

amusement of the audience, much more than I liked her. But she was a Christian, and as such opposed to Communism.

Well, I told her, it depends on what you consider to be Christian teaching. If we take the parable of the sheep and the goats, there's certainly nothing can be said for capitalism and the capitalists, and I gave her several verses from the Gospel of St. Matthew, xxv. 33-45:

"And he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left. Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world;

"For I was an hungered, and ye gave me meat; I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink; I was a stranger, and ye took me in; naked, and ye clothed me; I was sick, and ye visited me; I was in prison, and ye came unto me.

"Then shall the righteous answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungered, and fed thee? or thirsty, and gave thee drink? When saw we thee a stranger, and took thee in? or naked, and clothed thee? Or when saw we thee sick, or in prison, and came unto thee?

"And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily, I say unto you, inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me.

"Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels: For I was an hungered, and ye gave me no meat; I was thirsty and ye gave me no drink; I was a stranger, and ye took me not in; naked, and ye clothed me not; sick, and in prison, and ye visited me not.

"Then shall they also answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungered, or athirst, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not minister unto thee?

"Then shall he answer them, saying, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye did it not to one of the least of these, ye did it not to me."

People are sick today, sick and in prison—imprisoned in the evil slums of our towns and cities, and housing is cut to keep up armaments—"Depart from me, ye cursed." It's certainly not the Communists to whom that applies.

## CHAPTER XXI

### IS IT A REICHSTAG?

NOW LET us have a look at the House of Commons itself to see if we can find anything of passing interest there, or maybe something that should seriously concern the working class.

There is a chair there at the top end of the House, a canopied chair, in which sits Mr. Speaker or his deputy when the House is in session. Every Member entering or leaving the House is supposed to bow to the chair—not to the occupant, for the chair may be empty; yet still they must bow. In front of the chair is a long table loaded with books at which sit the three clerks of the House. At the opposite end of the table from the clerks there is on top of the table a couple of brackets, beneath these, on the legs of the table, duplicate brackets. When the House is sitting the chair is occupied by the Speaker or his deputy, and the mace is on the upper brackets. When the House goes into committee, the chair is vacated, one of the clerks gives up his seat at the table, which is occupied by the Chairman of Ways and Means or one of his deputies, and the mace is taken down from the top bracket and placed on the lower set.

Quite a performance. But there we are, in committee with the chair vacant, but the bowing still goes on. Some Members make quite a ceremony of it. Quite slowly they plod along the floor of the House from the bottom end, where the bar is, get to their place, turn towards the empty chair, straighten up, then from the waist ostentatiously bend themselves over. When they're going out they reverse the process, they walk slowly from their place to the bar of the House, a strip of yellow linoleum that stretches across the floor, turn there and repeat the performance. When other Members, or, as sometimes happened, visitors asked me why I never bowed on entering the Chamber, I always answered "I've got a sore back".

The books on the table are a series of volumes, I don't know how many there are, containing findings, decisions and precedents. In short, an answer to every question relating to conduct of debates,

procedure and behaviour in the House of Commons. Erskine May is the name of the compiler, and when any difficulty arises, any tricky point of procedure or behaviour, Erskine May is brought in and what he has written is the final word. If Erskine May is quoted against you—you may as well surrender. I had never heard of the gentleman until I became a Member of Parliament, and my acquaintance with him never got any further than hearing just a quotation from the Speaker once in a while, or from a particularly studious Member who would come in with a volume from the library and try to startle the House by claiming to have discovered a precedent for something or other. I saw these volumes at a distance and never made any attempt to “close the gap” that divided us.

Frankly, I think most of the procedure and precedents should be scrapped. It was eminently suited to “gentlemen” who had differences to settle but who were agreed in keeping the masses under, but it’s far from suitable for these same masses who want to get from under to the top.

Dickens in *Little Dorritt* makes great play with the circumlocution office where the practice of “how not to do it” had become a fine art. He was for a considerable time a Gallery reporter in the House of Commons, and it was there he must have got the idea. It is the ideal institution for “not getting things done”. Six hundred chosen men and women, wasting away their lives, most of the time doing little or nothing, now and again making a speech if they happen to “catch the Speaker’s eye”, or for the most part waiting about in the smoke room or the tea room for the Division Bell, when they run in and register a vote.

Time and again Members have complained of this, and when the new great crowd of Labour men came in following the 1945 election, eager to get ahead with the task for which they had been elected, the Labour leaders had the job of kidding them along with the idea that they were going to be kept busy. A whole series of committees was formed, according to areas or in relation to certain phases of policy. A Committee of Scottish Labour Members, Lancashire Members, and so on, then a Finance Committee, a Foreign Affairs Committee, etc. But it soon became evident that these committees meant nothing at all so far as any influence on Government policy went. On the contrary, instead of the Committees being of value to the members as a means of enabling them to bring

influence to bear on the Government, the Government used them to quieten and suppress any particular individual member who had strong opinions and desired to express them. It was easy to get a majority on any of these Committees to take the line that Morrison and company wanted them to take, and having taken a decision the malcontents, if there were any, were told they would have to accept the decision of the majority. Thus the Committees, instead of encouraging members to get things done, became a new and further means of ensuring that the old game of "not getting things done" would go on as usual.

It is interesting to note that as far back as 1887 Keir Hardie published a monthly journal entitled *The Miner*. In one of his articles, dealing with Lib-Labs, he made these observations:

"If the truth be told the working man representative has not hitherto been much of a success in Parliament. As a rule he is afraid of offending the proprieties by being considered extreme. He thinks more of his own reputation in the eyes of the House than of the interests of his suffering brethren in mill and mine. He desires to be reckoned a gentleman, fit to take his place as a member of the 'finest club in the world'."

I wonder what Hardie would say to what is going on now, or what he would have said about a somewhat, to me, repulsive fellow by the name of Nally, who got up one night and quite gratuitously informed the Tories and the world at large that "we are the new middle class".

There's more of the same kind there, many more. Their conceit is beyond human understanding. It was of such people Hardie was thinking when he wrote: "There is something even more desirable than the return of working men to Parliament, and that is to give working men a definite programme to fight for when they get there, and to warn them that if they haven't courage to stand up in the House of Commons and say what they would say in a miners' meeting, they must make room for someone else who will."

A "miners' meeting"! There's nothing middle class about that. And here's one for Morrison, Deakin and the rest of them. "I have contempt for the men who, knowing what should be done, are yet afraid to proclaim it from the house-tops if need be. It is the half-heartedness of the present leaders which keeps our cause from progressing." It is our "present leaders" who are destroying



our cause, making our cause a plaything of the Yankee capitalists. In the Mid-Lanark election, where Keir Hardie stood as the first independent working-class candidate, he had this to say in his address to the electors:

“Herein lies the chief distinction between myself and other gentlemen whose names are now before you. They would follow their leaders, right or wrong. I, on the other hand, would press upon Parliament the claims of the people.”

That was a desirable course of action when Keir Hardie wrote it. It is equally desirable now, and if Labour Members would take it to heart and carry it out there would soon be a change in the character of Parliament. In the meantime they “follow their leaders, right or wrong”, supplementing this with an occasional effort to “catch the Speaker’s eye”.

This is often quite a job. It can wear the nerve and the sap out of the unfortunate Members. Just consider. There is an important debate, say, on Foreign Affairs or some other equally important subject. Two days may be given for it. The House opens at 2.30 p.m., there’s an hour for questions, after which the debate is opened by a front-bench speaker. He is never less than an hour and he is followed by a front-bench speaker from the other side, who also likes to take an hour. It has become such a common practice during the past few years for Ministers to read their speeches, every word of them, that a general feeling has been created that these speeches should be circulated to Members and thus save the time taken to deliver them. As things are, two hours are taken up by front-benchers, which carries the House forward to 5.30 p.m. Then back-benchers have from then till 8.30 or 8.45, when the front-benchers come on again for what is called the “winding up”.

The second day of the debate it is the same process—which leaves, in the two days, about seven or eight hours for the back-benchers. At an average of twenty minutes for speakers, that would allow twenty-one to twenty-four members an opportunity of speaking, and there are probably 100 or more actually trying to get into the debate. From the first announcement of the debate Members approach the Speaker and inform him that they are anxious to participate and offer for his consideration what they consider good reasons why they should be “called”. Their names go down on a list: so many go down, “so few are chosen”. The whips are also

approached, and occasionally throw in a little weight on behalf of particular Members. The more fortunate ones can rely on "catching the Speaker's eye" at a particular time, but in general they have just got to keep on getting up hoping, often against hope, that they will be among the chosen.

Just try to imagine what it means. The front-benchers have finished. The second of them resumes his seat. Up jump a whole horde of anxious orators. One is called, the others all sit down and wait with what patience they may till he finishes. Then—all up again. One is called, down they go. This one finishes, up again, down again, and so it goes on for two days, sometimes for three days, as in the devaluation debate, without the slightest chance of getting called.

Exasperation, anger, frustration, every kind of emotion is called into play as you think of all the weary, wasted hours, never listening to the other speakers, only waiting for their finish so that you may have another try.

On one occasion I considered Phil and I had had a raw deal. I broke into the debate while a front-bench speaker was winding up in order to express a candid opinion of certain people, who must here be nameless, and before the "Chair" got the chance of ordering me to withdraw I walked out. But even after I was out of the House the "Chair" decided to order me to leave the House. I didn't know of this until the officer in charge came to me and told me he would have to see me off the premises.

It wasn't the first time I had been shown off, but I thought I had actually dodged it by going out of the House on my own.

That was shortly before the Summer Recess in 1947, and from that night I never exchanged a word, good, bad or indifferent with Mr. Speaker. That by the way.

The question that arises is, what can be done to make the House of Commons a more workable institution, where Members go to get things done, instead of as at present, in all too many cases, to waste away the years in a woeful condition of pernicious political anaemia.

The first thing is to end the monopoly of the two big Parties. This calls for a change in the electoral system.

When the Speaker's Conference was set up to consider electoral reform, I submitted a statement which demonstrated through a whole series of election results the fantastic misrepresentation that

could arise as a consequence of the present method of election. It is possible for one or other of the two main Parties to have a minority of the votes cast throughout the country at a general election, yet to find itself with a substantial and even overwhelming majority in the House of Commons. Apart from this, the present system gives all the advantages to the big, established Parties, and all the disadvantages to those who are fighting for what at the moment may be unpopular opinion.

Here it should be noted that this applied for long enough to the Liberals and Tories, the former Party only sinking into obscurity when its foundation, the independent free-trade industrialists, were swallowed up by the big monopolists. With this decline, a new Party came forward pledged in the early days to the emancipation of the working class from the exploitation of the capitalists, but under petty-bourgeois leadership became more and more a re-incarnation of nineteenth-century Liberalism. Thus although the coming of a presumably working-class Party was scheduled to produce an entire change in what had hitherto been the relations between the Parties, we see exactly the same sort of thing going on today as in the old days of Liberal and Tory.

As I have already pointed out, the two-Party system can only be carried on if there is agreement between the Parties on all basic, fundamental issues. Given that agreement, they can go on indefinitely playing at "ins and outs" with an occasional splash of fireworks on this, that or the other issue which they will oppose with the utmost fervour if they're "out" and support with equal tenacity if they're "in".

In the early days of the Labour Movement, our speakers always drew attention to this game as it was played between Liberals and Tories. "See", they would say, "how they fight, the language they use, you would think they were irreconcilable enemies. But let a question come up that affects profits and privileges and see how solidly they unite against the working class. Then you get the real fight and the real enemies—the rest is only sham."

So take the situation in these later days. Tories and Labour may rage at one another, "tear a passion to tatters" over this or the other particular form of tax or subsidy. But let the dockers go on strike—threaten the stability of the capitalist system—and see how they come together. Tory leaders, Labour leaders, Tory back-benchers, Labour back-benchers, where is the enmity?—not these against

each other, but these united against the workers—the dockers were the enemy.

Two Communists and a small group of Independents—Pritt, Platts-Mills, Leslie Solley and Lester Hutchinson—tried hard to battle against the combined forces. But now, as I write, they are no longer there, so not a voice is raised against the united forces of the Labour and Tory Parties.

In the statement I sent to the Speaker's Conference I put forward the proposal for the Single Transferable Vote:

"That the system of the Single Transferable Vote form of proportional representation be used in all future Parliamentary elections.

"This proposal is the keystone to any future development of the basic machinery of British democracy.

"The principle on which representation in the House of Commons is based is twofold: that each Member of the House should have an 'equal representative status'—i.e. he should represent more or less an equal number of the population and/or electorate; and that 'each vote recorded shall, as far as possible, command an equal share of representation in the House of Commons'."

That meant doing away with the present single-Member constituency and the grouping of several constituencies with the right of the elector to give a vote for one candidate and a transferable vote for another. This would produce a much fairer type of representation and would almost certainly ensure representation for those who were outside of the two main Parties. For instance, while certain Labour supporters might give their transferable vote to the Tory, a large body of workers, no longer obsessed with the fear of "letting the Tory in" would give their transferable vote to the Communists or to left-wing Independents.

But, as it is, the 1950 election resulted in a House of Commons with not a representative of the Communist Party or of the left-wing Independents, in spite of the fact that the standpoint they represented is gaining increasing support among the people. In fact a House of Commons that is more and more reflecting the coalition tendencies of the Labour leaders and the Tory leaders, and more and more taking on the character of a Reichstag.

Whatever the Yankees do—that is right, it must not be questioned. So long as this is understood—no criticism, no opposition

on things that matter—then Members will be allowed an occasional fling in order to keep up the illusion that their Parties represent something different.

Yes, there is need for a change in the electoral system and a change in the character of debates that take place in the Commons. (The House of Lords should be abolished.) Instead of Attlee or Bevin getting up and making a speech to be followed by Churchill or Eden making the same speech, one should be called who is really going to oppose, and each Party or group should put forward one or more names, but in each case state whether they are supporting or opposing the particular motion that is being discussed. What a wearisome business it is when one after another, Labour, Tory and Liberal, a procession of them gets up, all supporting, all saying the same thing, with only the slightest variation, representing not a difference in opinion but only a difference of emphasis or temperament.

I was one of the Members who spent a lot of time in the House and had my share of suffering from this. It's time it was ended. A new kind of Commons is essential, where sham fighting will be known no more and Members will go to get things done for those who produce the wealth of the country and the all-too-long tolerated parasites with all their pomp and privilege will vanish like an evil dream.

But in spite of the "discipline" exercised by the right-wing Labour leaders over the Labour Members, and the threats of expulsions for any attempt to fight for a working-class policy, the anti-working-class character of the policy that is being pursued at home and abroad has grown so obvious that even in this House of Commons there are a few Labour Members who are attempting to make a fight. They can do nothing without the active help of the organisations of the Labour Movement which alone in the long run can determine whether the Government itself is to serve the capitalists or the working class.

## PALESTINE

JUST AS the Irish people believed that with a Labour Government partition would be ended and Ireland after all the centuries of suffering become free and united from shore to shore, so the Zionists amongst the Jewish people were firm in their belief that the advent of a Labour Government would bring to them the realisation of their hopes—the establishment of a Jewish State in Palestine.

The experiences of the Irish people in the matter of the Labour Government's handling of the partition question should serve as a lesson to all people striving to achieve unity and independence. The passage of the Ireland Bill in June 1949 removed all doubts as to where the Labour Government stood on this question by making Ireland's dismemberment permanent.

The Labour Party, in opposition, had evinced great sympathy for the Irish people's struggle towards a united Ireland. Yet the case made in favour of continued partition by Morrison and Ede on behalf of the Government during the debate on the Ireland Bill recalled the violently imperialistic offensive of Carson and Birkenhead in presenting the Unionist case in the stormiest days of the Home Rule controversies.

The complete character of the Labour Party's turnabout on this important question was made clear by Morrison, who affirmed that it was the Government's resolve to hold Northern Ireland inside the United Kingdom. "I hope nobody is bursting to dismember this United Kingdom", he declared. He went on to emphasise that if the Dublin and Belfast Parliaments did ever "freely come to an agreement, that would receive the consideration of the British Government. . . ." What did this mean? As I pointed out later during the debate:

"... it means that the Labour Government abdicate their responsibility to handle and decide upon this matter, and hand over the power to a Tory junta in the North of Ireland to decide the fate and future of Ireland and then we are told—

Labour Members of Parliament are told—that it will be their duty to support the Tory junta in the North of Ireland against the people of the South of Ireland.”

But to get back to Palestine. I had for many years been in opposition to the Zionists, for the “Jewish Question” had been brought to my attention from my earliest days in the socialist movement. After my first few efforts at speaking to a Paisley audience nearly fifty years ago, I was invited to speak at a meeting in Glasgow. When I got to the meeting place, I found myself for the first time in the Gorbals. The comrades who were responsible for the meeting were all young, very keen, very enthusiastic, and all of them Jewish. They got very fond of me, as I of them. I was with them often. In their homes I met the older people, refugees from Tsarism mostly, and heard their stories. The tales of terror and suffering—suffering almost beyond human endurance—made a terrific impression on me.

Therefore I was deeply concerned about the propaganda of the Zionists, many of whom were trying to advance their cause by assuring the British imperialists that a Jewish Palestine would be a loyal and dependable outpost for Britain in the Middle East.

I spoke at numerous Jewish meetings and debated with several leading Zionists, but I made little headway. I did have an interesting experience when I debated with the late Mr. Horowitz at the Anglo-Palestinian Club in Piccadilly. The hall was packed, mostly with very fine young Jewish men and women. At the close of the debate, which was occasionally somewhat hectic, I was taken into a side room by the Secretary for a cup of tea. “You know, Mr. Gallacher”, he remarked, “that was an eye-opener to me. If there had been a vote I believe you’d have got a majority.”

I hardly think so myself, for in the early twenties the Zionists were still relying on the Balfour declaration. During this time Labour leaders were excelling one another in their zeal for the Zionist cause. Not only at public meetings, organised by the Zionists, but at Labour Party Conferences, inspired by the late Harold Laski, Labour went all out on this particular issue. Time and again at Zionist meetings I was jeered at by one speaker after another.

“What do you people matter anyhow?” they would say. “You can do nothing for us, we have the backing of the Labour Party and that’s what counts.”

To this I answered, "Yes, you had the backing of the 'Balfour Declaration' but where did that get you? Now you say you have the backing of the Labour Party. But tell me, have you ever got the slightest indication that the Foreign Office will not betray you?"

"Oh", they mumbled, "when there's a Labour Government, with a Labour Foreign Secretary, things will be different."

This was the general feeling amongst Zionists in Britain, amongst, it may be said, large sections of the Jewish community. For this the Labour leaders, particularly Laski, were responsible.

Then with the end of the Second World War came the general election and an overwhelming Labour victory. The hopes of the Zionists went soaring up towards the clouds. After all the long years of waiting, after all the horrors of Hitler Europe, with millions of Jews tortured and starved to death, at last the dawn of a fairer day was rising and the Jewish people from out of the graveyard of Europe would emerge to a new life, to a nationhood that would free them forever from the woes and tribulations of more than a thousand years, they claimed. Open up your gates, oh, Zion! Eager eyes look towards you; hungry hearts are panting for love of you; marching feet, tired and weary with age-long suffering but resolute and determined, are on the roads that lead to your desired shore. Nothing can stop us, for have we not now got a Labour Government, pledged by its leaders, pledged by its Party Conferences, to make our way easy and our path straight?

That's how it looked when the Attlee Government was formed. But what a shock awaited them.

Mr. Bevin, as Foreign Secretary, lost no time in making clear that he stood for continuity of Tory foreign policy. No change of any kind in the Foreign Office. A new crowd on the front bench in Parliament, but the "old gang" firmly entrenched in the Foreign Office. Were they interested in the Zionists? No sir, they were interested in oil. They completely ignored their pledge contained in a resolution moved by Dr. Hugh Dalton and passed by the Labour Party Conference just before the 1945 election. This resolution called for the setting up of a Jewish State in Israel and the transfer of the Arab population to other Arabian territory.

Here it should be noted that as a result of the war over 200,000 Jews were in the various camps in Germany, Austria and Italy. Many of them were people whose families had been exterminated



and who had hardly a relative left. As can be understood, after such appalling suffering they wanted to live, and they could only feel safe among other Jews. Not only so, but the doors of other countries were closed to them. Naturally, there was a public demand for the admission of these homeless, uprooted Jews into Palestine. The Zionists turned confidently to the Labour Government to put its pledge to them into force. But alas for them, Mr. Bevin stated on behalf of his Government that the White Paper of 1939, which limited the number of new Jewish immigrants to be admitted into Palestine to 75,000, was to remain in force.

The Foreign Office was playing up to the growing movement of Arab National Liberation in the Middle East, trying to direct it along lines favourable to British interests—interests in oil. 1945-46 had witnessed a tremendous rise in the mass movement in the Middle East. Large-scale demonstrations took place in Cairo and Alexandria in March 1946. The Syrians and the Lebanese were daily demonstrating, demanding the evacuation of all troops from their countries. Mr. Bevin and the Foreign Office thought exactly as did Mr. Chamberlain and Mr. Malcolm MacDonald. The Labour Government cynically scrapped its promises to the Zionist Movement. Labour Party Conference resolutions were drowned in a sea of oil politics.

But the demand for immigration continued to rise both in Europe and in the U.S.A. In November 1945 the British Government made what amounted to an avowal of its political bankruptcy in the Middle East. It decided, for the first time in the history of British imperialism, to bring another power in on its preserves. This led to the setting up of a joint Anglo-American Committee of Enquiry on Palestine. A new stage in the decline of British imperialism, an open declaration that it was prepared to become a satellite of the U.S.A. At the same time, the ever-bumptious Mr. Bevin rashly informed us in the House of Commons that "I will stake my political future on solving this problem".

The Eighteenth Communist Party Congress meeting in November 1945 passed the following resolution:

"Congress believes that a just and democratic settlement of the problem of Palestine can only be achieved by the abolition of the Mandate and the recognition of the national independence of Palestine under a democratic régime which assures freedom and equal rights to Arabs and Jews."

When the Anglo-American enquiry opened in London, the Communist Party decided to submit evidence and expose the régime of oppression existing in Palestine. My comrades, Phil Piratin and Jack Gaster, gave evidence on behalf of the Communist Party, and raised again in public the demand for the ending of the mandate and the granting of independence to the country. This statement was easily the most realistic and politically sound that was put before the Commission. However, nothing of any value came from the Commission and the situation in Palestine steadily degenerated.

The British Government increased the oppression in Palestine. A small minority of Zionist extremists in Palestine replied with terrorism. In July 1946 the King David Hotel in Jerusalem was blown up, causing the death of ninety-one people and injuring forty-five. The British administration used this as the pretext for the wholesale arrest of Jewish citizens in Palestine, utterly regardless of their innocence or guilt. Thousands of Jews were arrested. Curfew was declared and military searches, carried out with great brutality, were made in the peaceful settlements. In addition, General Barker, commander of the British troops in Palestine, issued an order of the day to the troops which smacked very strongly of Nazi language. Here, from a pamphlet written at the time by my colleague, Phil Piratin, is an excerpt that gives some idea of what took place :

“On Saturday, June 29, and during the following days, nearly 3,000 leading Jewish citizens were arrested and put behind barbed wire. They arrested not only the members of the Jewish Agency, but also leading trade unionists, co-operators and town councillors. No charges have been made against them. After about a week the authorities began to release them, and several hundred have now been released.

“Reports from Palestine indicate no, or very little, resistance on the part of the Jews. Three Jews were killed and over eighty wounded. No British soldiers were killed in action by the Jews. Nevertheless, in many cases the soldiers went about their business in a manner not conforming with the standards of army conduct. Wrecking in some cases was deliberate. In many cases looting took place. A number of buildings were marked with the swastika.

“This attack on the Jewish community was carried through on the orders of the British Government, decided on at the

highest level. Such methods in the face of colonial resistance are not new in British imperialist history. It is, however, a strange action to be taken by a Government which on the one hand has stated its preparedness to hand over mandated territories such as Palestine to U.N.O. trusteeship, and on the other hand calls itself Socialist."

A "strange action" to be taken by those who had made such promises and raised such hopes! So strange that I sent the following letter to the Prime Minister :

*House of Commons.*

*July 3, 1946.*

The Rt. Hon. C. R. Attlee, C.H., M.P.,  
10 Downing Street, S.W.1.

Dear Prime Minister,

I am sending three telegrams and a letter I received yesterday protesting against the happenings in Palestine. I feel constrained to write to you on this matter and to express the point of view I would have put had it been possible for me to speak in the debate.

Regarding the terror campaign that was made the pretext for the raid. These young men and women have been driven to this course as a result of bitter frustration, frustration arising from the fact that they were encouraged by political leaders in this country to pursue a policy and to seek a goal that could never be realised.

In the discussions in the House of Commons in 1938, I took occasion to point this out. I have spoken at Zionist meetings in many parts of the country and endeavoured to get them to change their policy. But always they boasted of the support they had from political leaders in this country on whom they placed their faith for the realisation of their illusory aim.

It is tragic that these young people, their whole thought and being centred on this goal of Palestine as a "National Home for the Jews", with no other thought allowed to enter their minds, should reach a stage where it seemed to them their goal was so near to realisation and then to find heavy blocks placed in their path. However much it is to be deplored, it is not to be wondered at that the thought should enter the heads of some of them that by a last desperate effort they might blast aside these blocks and open the way to the realisation of their life's desire. Had there been an alternative policy to that of the National Home for the Jews put

## RISE LIKE LIONS

forward by the influential political leaders of this country, all this terror and suffering might have been avoided.

But those who encouraged these young men and women to travel a path that has led them to an impasse cannot have the right to condemn them.

Another factor that must be taken into account is the allegation that has been made time and again that the administration in Palestine has continually discriminated against Jews and has on many occasions shown very strong anti-Jewish bias. Insistent demands have been made for an inquiry into the conduct of the administration, but never any enquiry has taken place. Allegations of deliberate provocation have been made, and credence must be given to this in view of the fact that the culminating act of the administration, the raid last weekend, was of a deliberately provocative character, taking place as it did on the Sabbath day.

Sooner or later and, I hope, sooner than later, we shall see justice done and the age-long desire of the Jewish people for peace and freedom from the danger of the criminal canker of anti-Semitism will be realised.

I say to you as Prime Minister, and to the Government through you, that those who misled these young Zionists through pledges that never could be kept, let them stand in all humility before the long-suffering Jewish people. Let the Government retreat from the dangerous and discreditable course it is pursuing. Free the Jewish Agency leaders, the Socialists and the trade unionists, and put before Jew and Arab alike the only solution for the Palestine problem, an independent Palestine from which British troops and British interference will be completely withdrawn; where Jew and Arab must co-operate to build prosperity and progress. I know it will be a hard task getting such a policy accepted, but the easy road has led to the verge of destruction. Let us retrace our steps and let us face the hard road with hope of better things.

Yours sincerely,

(Signed) WILLIAM GALLACHER

No heed was taken of this. The Foreign Office was dominant, and Bevin was its willing tool. The disastrous policy of playing off Arab against Jew, and Jew against Arab, was continued until the situation was bedevilled beyond repair. Worse and ever worse

became the relations between Jew and Arab, while feeling against Britain on the part of the Zionists became ever more bitter.

Many Labour M.P.s became restive at the policy pursued by the Government. In the debates that took place on July 31 and in August 1946 many Labour M.P.s expressed strong disapproval of the Government policy in Palestine. It was the first major dissent within the Government ranks against Mr. Bevin's policy.

The growing wave of protest in Palestine, and world public opinion, forced the British Government to take the Palestine problem to the United Nations.

The Soviet Government strongly supported a fully independent Palestine. Andrei Gromyko, chief Soviet representative to the General Assembly of the United Nations, stated the Soviet policy with regard to the solution to the Palestine problem very clearly. He said:

"All this leads the Soviet delegation to draw the conclusion that the legitimate interests of both the Jewish and Arab peoples in Palestine can be properly protected only by the creation of an independent democratic Arab-Jewish State."

He then went on to give the reasons why Jews wished to go back to Palestine:

"The Second World War has shown that no single State in Western Europe proved capable of rendering the Jewish people the necessary assistance in defending its rights and its very existence against violation on the part of the Hitlerites and their allies. This is a grave fact, but it should be admitted, as all facts should.

"The fact that no single Western European State proved capable of ensuring the defence of the elementary rights of the Jewish people, and of protecting it against violence on the part of fascist hangmen, provides an explanation of the Jewish aspiration to create their own State."

He went on to say that there could be two solutions to the Palestine problem—either an Arab-Jewish State or partition.

Mr. Bevin and the Labour Government fought a strong rear-guard action to prevent any decision being reached by the United Nations. Because of the contradictions between the various imperialist powers, the U.S. Government supported the Soviet proposals in November 1947 at the General Assembly of the United Nations, when the United Nations General Assembly decided on

the creation of a Jewish State and an Arab State in Palestine.

Mr. Bevin continued his "gucrilla" tactics to prevent the implementation of this decision. In March 1948 he got the Americans to withdraw their previous support for partition and they supported trusteeship in Palestine. The Soviet Government, however, asked for the original decision of November 1947, namely the formation of two States, a Jewish and an Arab, to be put into effect.

In the meantime the Jews of Palestine developed a strong liberation movement which exposed the bankruptcy of Bevin and the Labour Government. In May 1948, when the Labour Party Conference was meeting in Scarborough, the late Harold Laski, ex-Chairman of the Labour Party, wrote an article in the Glasgow *Forward* describing Bevin's policy in Palestine, in which he said:

"This week brings us to the final phase in Ernest Bevin's disastrous Palestine policy. . . . It is a dreadful failure. He has stained the great name of Britain all over the world by mean acts and utterances. He has been rough and brutal in negotiation. He has sought to club his critics into silence. He has been unable to produce a single argument for his attitude which has not dismayed the friends of the Attlee Government and made the world wonder whether the traditional state-wisdom of Britain is not exhausted." (May 15, 1948.)

But the situation in Palestine got too hot for the British Government, and a sudden evacuation was decided upon. An ignominious withdrawal. Even as they withdrew they left the utmost disorder and chaos, and thus made things as difficult as possible for the setting up of the Arab and Jewish States.

The struggle of the Jewish people in Palestine created the greatest interest and sympathy amongst all sections of Jewry, particularly in America, for American imperialism was deeply involved in the battle for oil against Britain. The American Zionists were particularly active.

When my wife and I were in New York, we dropped into a theatre adjacent to Fifth Avenue to see a Jewish play, *A Flag is Born*. It was written by Ben Hecht and produced by Luther Adler, who was also playing the leading role. Although full of the most violent Zionist propaganda, it moved me deeply because I know so well the deep yearnings of the Jewish people. An elderly Jew and his wife are tramping through Europe trying to find their way to Palestine. They are resting, when the curtain goes up, in a

graveyard. She dies and he is left alone. A young lad appears who is also on his way to Palestine. The older man's mind goes back to Jewish history, and the back-stage lights up and he sees the ancient glory of Palestine, followed by a further scene which depicts the last heroic struggle of Bar Kochba. Then later on the back-stage lights up and we get a view of the United Nations discussing the Jewish problem. This scene was violently anti-British and raised a storm in this country, particularly against Ben Hecht, the author, and Quentin Reynolds, who was a commentator in the play. It meant, of course, that no theatre in Britain would produce it.

Shortly after, I wrote the following lines, as an expression of my feeling :

### A FLAG IS BORN

I had a dream, a strange sad dream,  
A dream of savage hate—and dread,  
An ancient Jew, his eyes a gleam,  
Was resting there amidst the dead,  
And with him, dearer far than life,  
His worn, his weary, gentle wife.

Homeless—harried by their foes,  
Inhuman beasts who scourged the land,  
Their bodies scarred by many blows,  
And none to lend a helping hand.  
Oh, Father Abraham, he cried,  
Where is there one our steps to guide?

Where, oh where, can peace be found,  
Where may we seek an open door?  
See, 'tis a friend beneath this mound,  
Said she, far, far away on Jordan's shore,  
Throughout the world we're doomed to roam,  
But only there we'll find a home.

The night was cold and strangely dark,  
She laid her head upon his breast,  
She sighed—then fled the vital spark,  
The weary soul had gone to rest.  
Then in that graveyard, lost, forlorn,  
Within his heart "A Flag Was Born".

## RISE LIKE LIONS

Now far away on Jordan's banks,  
In challenge to the mighty great,  
They march in ever-swelling ranks,  
The Guardians of the Jewish State.  
"A Flag is Born", oh ancient Jew!  
There—Eretz Israel lives for you.

Mr. Bevin didn't solve the Palestine problem, but he succeeded in producing a situation in Palestine that left no alternative to partition.



## FROZEN WAGES

TWENTY-FIVE YEARS ago (around 1925), a lad named Brailsford, a petty-bourgeois intellectual, at that time a leader of the I.L.P. and Labour Party apologist, made a startling and what might be called a breath-taking discovery. Henry Ford, the First, had disproved and disposed of Marxism and the class struggle for good and all. Such discoveries, it may be noted, are common to all types of Social Democrat. Always they produce some specious form of quackery that makes the class struggle unnecessary and that proves Marx to have been wrong in his deep analysis of capitalist society. So they go from one "cure" to another, while all the time the course of history gives the lie to their shabby pretensions.

These petty-bourgeois intellectuals use the working class to enhance their own value with the capitalists—with the ruling class. "You've got to accept us", they say in effect, "we're the only people who can keep the workers quiet, who can curb the extremists, and if necessary isolate and cripple them."

Before the First World War, R. H. Tawney wrote a book entitled *Acquisitive Society*, in which he presented what was presumably a theoretical justification for such an attitude. Roughly put, the capitalists, according to Tawney, were unscrupulous and greedy. There was no curb of any kind on their ruthless exploitation of the workers. These latter, on the other hand, were ignorant of social science and in their desperate efforts to keep their end up might quite easily bring the system down in wreck and ruin. The only force that could prevent calamity was the petty-bourgeois intellectuals. They weren't out for profits, they weren't earning wages, they could act without bias and hold a balance between the competing classes. They could say to the workers: "Take it easy. Don't adopt desperate measures, we'll talk to the capitalists and force them to disgorge." To the capitalists they could say: "You see what you are up against. If you don't make concessions, the workers will tear down 'the pillars of the temple' and you'll go down with them in the general destruction." But Mr. Tawney

adds in his bland manner that it may be necessary to let the workers loose now and again just to let the capitalists see what they would be up against if the petty-bourgeois intellectuals weren't there to protect them.

That's their role; they are the protectors of capitalism from the wrath of the working class.

But there in 1925 was Brailsford, with Henry Ford. No need for Marxism, no need for Socialism, no need even for trade unionism, for at that time Ford's was an open shop and an army of thugs and gunmen were retained to deal with trade union agitators. But the conveyor belt, high production and high wages had solved the social problem in Detroit and its environs, and what was happening in Detroit would spread throughout capitalism as a whole until a wealthy, contented working class would replace the exploited proletarians and all would go as happy as a noon-day song. From America the new golden era would make its way across the wild Atlantic, to find a ready welcome on the shores of Britain.

Now see where we've got to after twenty-five years. The conveyor belt, high production, high prices and frozen wages. Oh Mr. Brailsford, Mr. Brailsford, how are you chirping now? The noon-day song has become a moan of austerity.

I remember standing in the Public Lobby of the House in March 1948. A well-known trade union leader, who was also a Member of Parliament, came in with his brows drawn and a sour look on his face. He came over to me and said:

"Willie, the trade union movement is without leadership."

I laughed as I said: "I won't argue with you about that."

He went on: "I've just come over from that special Congress in Westminster Hall. I've never in all my long experience known anything like it. The platform is absolutely incapable. The delegates are bored stiff. It's the deadest gathering I've ever attended."

That was his estimate of the special Trade Union Congress called to discuss Sir Stafford Cripps' proposals for "restraint in personal incomes"—restraint in workers' wages. No restraint on profits—no restraint on prices. Hold the workers back, provide protection for the capitalists and for the capitalist system. That was the task of the special meeting.

While we spoke we were joined by another just over.

"Well, Tom", I remarked, "were you over at the burial?"

"What do you mean?" He looked from one to the other of us.

"The burial of the trade union movement", I said. "Jack here tells me that the platform party is hopeless and that the Congress is cold and dead."

"Oh, it's not just as bad as that", he offered, "the resolution from the platform was carried. That's the important thing."

"Maybe it is", Jack replied, "but I doubt if it would have been carried if Tewson hadn't made the statement that prices were coming down. Where did he get that? We've never heard anything from Cripps that would justify such an assumption."

"It was good tactics", said the other. "Cripps will have to do something about prices now."

Two or three other Labour Members were attracted by what was obviously a "public argument", but when they came over Jack and Tom eased off. They didn't want too much of an audience. The others asked me what the row was about and I told them. At the same time I explained my thorough condemnation of the "wage-freeze". One of them tried to justify it and served up what has become the stock justification for every cut directed against the working class. "It's necessary if we are to maintain the Welfare State."

"For God's sake", I exclaimed, "you've not been taken in with that claptrap?"

"It's not claptrap", he averred, "it's a fact."

Yes, that's what he said, "it's a fact". The workers, according to Tawney, are ignorant of social science. The petty-bourgeois intellectuals are highly educated and know all there is to be known. They know Latin, some of them know Greek, and now they know that here in Britain we have a "Welfare State". But not only in Britain, but if we are to believe them, the Welfare State is crossing the wild Atlantic. ("Hey, you said that already." Right, brother, I did, but it was coming this way, now it is going the other way and finding a welcome with the bankers' and generals' government of America.) Never mind about the gang murders, the torturing and lynching of Negro citizens, the sadism and sex which stinks in its films and literature, the Welfare State will also flourish in the semi-madhouse that is American capitalism. So our petty-bourgeois intellectuals strive to get us to believe. Away with Marxism, away with the class struggle. Accept what God and

Cripps (maybe I should change the order) ordain to be your lot and lo, the "Welfare State" will be your sure and fitting reward.

Well, there we were in the Lobby talking about the wage-freeze and the Welfare State. "You're a Socialist?" I put this to the Labour Member in the form of a question.

"Yes, I'm a Socialist", he replied, "but I'm not a Communist."

"Well", I told him, "I'm a Communist and a Socialist. I've read of a slave State, a feudal State, I've lived all my life right here in a capitalist State; in the Soviet Union and in the countries of Eastern Europe I have seen workers' States. In each case the class which gave or gives its name to the State represent the ruling class—slave owners, feudal lords, capitalists or workers. But what sort of hybrid is the 'Welfare State'? Profits go up, wages are kept down. Who is at the top, who is at the bottom? Are the slum-dwellers of London, of Birmingham, Liverpool or the Gorbals, are they in the 'Welfare State' or out of it?

"Brother", I added, "there ain't no sich thing. It's a fake and a fraud, and I would remind you, if you've never heard or read it before, of what Marx said: 'Socialism is the only hope of the workers; all else is illusion.' That word illusion adequately describes the so-called 'Welfare State'."

For a time such impromptu discussions were a commonplace, but then the Labour Members started shying off. The Labour leaders put a ban on discussion. Stop talking, stop thinking. Political thought has reached finality. There can be no further advance. All the power and influence of the Labour Party up and down the country, all the power and influence of leading trade union officials, and in many cases district officials, was used to get the workers to fall in line. But, despite their misplaced loyalty to the Labour Party and the petty-bourgeois Labour leaders, founded on their hatred of the Tories, many of the workers were beginning to realise their class interests and refusing to submit to the policy of wage-freezing.

Today the old tale of Brailsford is told in a new language. Instead of open advocacy of Ford's capitalism, they try and cloak the same motives by calling on "patriotism" and talk of "our country's danger"; instead of wage reductions, they talk of "wage restraint"; instead of a small off-shoot of the Labour Movement they draw in the whole leadership of the workers' mass organisation, the T.U.C., buying off these leaders, by knighthoods and titles, into deluding the whole working class to lie down and accept starvation wages.

The story of this latest attempt and its failure is a lesson in applying Marxism to our modern problem. We got as a result an amazing situation. In 1947 the N.U.R. put in a demand for an increase of £1 per week. A Special Committee was set up by the Minister of Labour to consider this claim. While its decision was being awaited, the 1947 Trades Union Congress was discussing the "wage-freeze". A rumour had got out and about that the decision of the Wages Committee was likely to be favourable to the railwaymen. So the N.U.R. delegates, mostly members of the Labour Party, decided by a majority vote that their National Secretary, Jim Figgins, should, instead of opposing the "wage-freeze", support it. In view of this decision he did so. A couple of hours later the report came out. The Special Committee produced a unanimous report: there was no need for an increase on £4 12s. 6d. One of those appointed to this Committee was the former Secretary of the Scottish Trade Union Congress, Mr. Charles Murdoch. He was a notorious anti-Communist. Almost as bad as his successor, a one-time official of the Communist Party, who has now gone the whole hog the other way.

Charles Murdoch was also a "wage-freezer"—for the workers. While drawing £15 per week as Secretary of the Scottish T.U.C., he took a spare-time job on the Scottish Gas Board, which netted him another £6 per week. This did not prevent him attacking Abe Moffat and the representatives of the miners for their temerity in demanding increased wages for the miners and for the workers generally. Then he got a further promotion as a full-time member of the Gas Board, with £3,000 a year. And this gent was one of those who signed the unanimous report against an increase for the railway workers. He stands out as a fine example of the wage-freeze advocate. All of them, without exception, in the £20 per week and upwards brackets. For colossal impudence they are unbeatable.

True, in one or other of the delegations at the Trades Union Congress, workers from the factories or mines would take part, although in some delegations the officials dominated. These workers, at least some of them, being members of the Labour Party, allowed themselves to be persuaded that their first loyalty was to Cripps, Morrison and company, and not to the members of their union. They were "kidded on" by fear of the Tories, with whom the Labour leaders were daily fraternising, to "save the

Labour Government by voting for the wage-freeze"; but not one of them could be persuaded to get up and speak for it. The "big-money boys" did all the talking.

The miners' Executive took a decision to support the "wage-freeze", despite the strong opposition of Abe Moffat and one or two others. This was followed by a delegate conference, where, in face of the most insistent opposition of the Scottish delegates, the decision of the Executive was endorsed. Then it had to go to the branches. In Scotland every branch voted against it. This was the first time in the history of the Scottish miners where a vote of the branches was absolutely unanimous. The fact that Scotland and South Wales had voted against was to have been expected. But that Yorkshire, by an overwhelming majority, and Durham and Northumberland by majority votes, had gone against the wage-freeze came as the greatest shock the right-wing leadership had yet experienced, and without any doubt whatsoever bears out Arthur Horner's statement on the vote of the Miners' Union (referred to later) and led the way forward to the ultimate defeat of this policy at the Trades Union Congress at Brighton in the same year, 1950. This policy was defeated by a majority of 222,000 on a card vote, the figures being 3,949,000 in favour of the resolution and 3,727,000 against. The resolution said that in the present circumstances of increases in profits and prices "there can be no basis for a restraint on wage applications".

The engineers had put in their demand for an increase of £1 per week. The N.U.R. was also pressing its claim for an advance, particularly for the lower-paid railway workers. The electricians, the moulders, all the really democratic unions, were in opposition. The main forces of the heavy block that sought to hold back the movement were the Transport and General Workers' Union, and the General and Municipal Workers' Union. These unions, with a horde of officials, not elected, as is the case in other unions, but appointed, have all along been the main dead weight holding the workers down. But even in these unions, if the branches had got the opportunity of voting, it's almost certain the decision would have gone against the leaders. Though what would have happened in such an eventuality in the General and Municipal Workers' Union is somewhat problematical. For, as I mentioned in *The Rolling of the Thunder*, following the introduction of the Black Circular in 1928, Mr. Sherwood, an official of this union, was sent

to America as a fraternal delegate to the American Federation of Labour Convention. In his fraternal address he delivered himself of the following :

“Branches of our organisation in London, over 15,000 strong, refused to comply with the instructions of the General Council. Well, Mr. President, we smashed the branches.”

That’s their conception of democracy. “Smash the branches.” In my own home town, Paisley, there was a branch of this union 600 strong. The branch passed a resolution that the General Council didn’t like. The branch was closed down. No discussion. No anything. It’s out of step—“smash it”.

But, despite all the efforts of the protagonists of the “wage-freeze”, the opposition continued to grow. With the coming of devaluation and the consequent rise in prices, a new impetus was given to the campaign for increased wages. The General Council of the Trades Union Congress felt the ground slipping. A new effort had to be made to “save the Labour Government” and to save British and American capitalism.

So a special meeting of Trade Union Executives was called for January 12, 1950. At this the case for Cripps and working-class paralysis was entrusted to Mr. Vincent Tewson. Sir William Lawther occupied the chair. Mr. Tewson is now Sir Vincent. Like Lawther, he has had the reward of well-doing, but don’t ask me what for. Mr. Tewson started off with this inspiring burst of oratory :

“It is said that there is no peace for the wicked, but being trade unionists and believing that trade unionists are all very good, and having regard to the period through which you have passed individually for the past two years, you will probably agree that there is no peace for the good either. That is what the General Council thought when, within a few days of the close of our Congress, they were called at a few hours’ notice to learn of the serious position which, in view of the Government, necessitated the announcement of devaluation.”

Having, as he hoped, got everyone in a receptive mood by this enchanting introduction, he buckled down to his task. Just run your eye over this :

“It would be a reflection upon Congress if they had appointed

## RISE LIKE LIONS

a General Council as the executive body so dumb as not to realise that the welfare of our folk is bound up with the economic stability of this country. Right through these discussions, as is emphasised in this document, the General Council have sought to act in the interests of the people they represent. Whatever party allegiance we may have—and this has a bearing on the discussion which has preceded my remarks—this question has to be tackled if we are to be fair to our own people, as an economic and an industrial problem; and that is how the General Council have dealt with it. It has not been easy. I will be perfectly frank and say there were occasions when the Special Economic Committee wondered whether there were any recommendations which could be made to affiliated unions. 'But what', they said, 'is the alternative?' If there is no positive policy which we can pursue, if nothing can be done to stabilise the position, then we had better think in terms of what we are going to do if devaluation fails, if the position becomes chaotic. We had better start thinking how we are going to meet the effect of what would happen if the Trade Union Movement can make no contribution to the stabilisation of the position."

I must say that after reading that I am definitely of the opinion that there are sufficient grounds for a "reflection upon Congress". Consider the phrase "if the position becomes chaotic". What position? What is it he's talking about? He's actually telling his hearers that their job is to advance the interests of their members, but if they do so there's every possibility that the capitalist system will collapse. So to prevent such an untoward occurrence they must refrain from representing the interests of their members.

As a matter of fact there can never be anything other than chaos while we suffer under decaying capitalism. We have "chaos" now. It was "chaos" that led to devaluation. Certainly not even the bumptious, irresponsible Morrison would claim it to be the outcome of "intelligent planning". Yes, "chaos" now, and leading up to, if the workers aren't strong enough to stop it, the final chaos of a third atomic world war. Only resolute, planned action on the part of the organised workers can end the "chaos" of capitalism and bring about an orderly progressive form of society firmly based on a foundation of Socialism. The way forward to that goal is



the fight against the war policy and the sell-out to America, the fight for peace and for wages.

Mr. Tewson, having gone through all that had already been said by Cripps and many others in the House of Commons, ended up just about as brilliantly as he started :

"In conclusion, I would only say this. There are two roads. We are living in a free country and you can take just which road you like. One of those roads is unpleasant and it will need some courage to travel it. We do see some hope if we take that course, but, believe me, it is a long road. There is the other road. It is pleasant; it is easy; it does not require any courage to follow it. But whereas the first is long, the pleasant road is short, very short, and what lies at the end everybody in this hall knows. All I ask is that what you know you should now have the courage to admit."

There are two roads all right. A pleasant one and an unpleasant. It is a "pleasant road" that Sir Vincent and Sir William, the "big-money" boys want to travel, if they can get away with it. No "class struggle", no fight for wages. They can meet Labour leaders, Tory leaders, as well as big financiers at all kinds of social functions. They will be received and initiated as part of the "upper strata". A truly "pleasant road" while it lasts.

Permit me, Sir Vincent and Sir William, to tell you it isn't going to last very long. For the railway workers on £4 12s. 6d. a week and the miner at the pit-head on £5 per week, less offtake—these and the other workers and their wives aren't travelling any "pleasant road". Quite the contrary. It is a hard and bitter struggle to make ends meet in face of rising prices and increased rents.

Yet there is one pleasure I have. It is to leave this pathetic, inconsequential apology for a trade union leader and turn for a moment to one who has given over many long years an outstanding account of his service to the working class. A trade union leader who is not afraid to lead, Arthur Horner. Here is just a sample of what he had to say :

"I want to emphasise that the National Union of Mine-workers has on this occasion sought consultation not only with the National Executive and with a National Conference but has referred this issue to the districts. I would add this, too, that we have had the advantage in all the discussions leading up to

this Conference of having two of our representatives on the Special Economic Committee of the T.U.C. in the persons of Sir William Lawther and Mr. James Bowman. So that nothing which has been said here this morning by the General Secretary of the T.U.C. was unknown to the miners of this country when they took their recent vote. It is now well known that the miners by an overwhelming majority have rejected the wages policy of the Trades Union Congress, even though it was recommended for acceptance by the National Executive Committee and by a National Conference. We are faced, then, with the fact that *Demos* has spoken, and spoken in no uncertain terms. For after all it is not in the main the persons who are present in this Conference this morning who are going to be affected by the acceptance of this wages policy: it is, in the main, the workers in industry who will feel the draught of any decision at which we might arrive. Every influence has been used in the discussions in the minefields to persuade the miners to a different point of view. Discussions have taken place in the atmosphere of an imminent General Election, and no one can accuse the miners of being lacking in political consciousness. Nowhere in this country is there such a terrible hatred of the Tories and all that the Tories stand for. Nowhere is there such a unanimous determination to instal another Labour Government at the General Election on February 23. So it will be a waste of time, and a waste of breath, to argue these temporary factors as reasons why the miners should change their point of view. Time and time again the miners have saved this Labour Movement when all has seemed to be lost. In spite of all this the miners have, as I say, replied in definite terms that they are opposing this carefully thought out policy of the Trades Union Congress."

You are right, Arthur, "*Demos* has spoken", and *Demos* will continue speaking with an ever-stronger voice, until the degenerate leadership of the Labour Movement is replaced and the dawn of a new day will lighten the way of the long-exploited toilers.

Following fine opposition speeches from J. B. Figgins (N.U.R.) and Ivor Montagu (Association of Cinematograph and Allied Technicians), and a supporting speech from Mr. A. Naesmith (Amalgamated Weavers' Association), there were loud cries of "vote". But the Chairman appealed for an opportunity to be given to

Tewson for a final word. This was a tactical error. Just typical of their inability to understand the feeling that was growing up within the movement. Tewson got started again and ended up with this desperate appeal to the delegates:

"I do want to say this before the result is determined: these votes are to be cast at what I believe is the most serious Conference that has ever taken place in the history of the Trades Union Congress, and I ask you to pause before opposing a policy which is advocated by the General Council with a full appreciation of all the difficulties."

He was in effect pleading for a vote of confidence in the General Council. He didn't get it. Certainly they got a majority vote, but a very indecisive majority, with the most important unions voting against. Here is what a card vote revealed:

In favour of the General Council Report	...	4,263,000
Against	... ..	3,606,000
Majority in favour	... ..	657,000

That was, in essence, in view of all the circumstances, a vote of no confidence.

Following this meeting the Communist Party issued a leaflet, from which I take the following excerpts:

"At the meeting of Trade Union Executives on January 12, 3,606,000 votes were cast against the wage-freeze policy.

"Engineers, miners, railwaymen, builders and many more—the very heart of the trade union movement—have given a smack in the eye to the employers and the Tories. Their wage claims will be pressed.

"The vote is also a blow to the right-wing leaders in the T.U.C. General Council and the Government, who have been pushing this shameful policy.

"The miners were the only union that consulted their membership. Result: 518,000 against the wage-freeze, only 147,000 for. *The Times* says:

"'It may well be that if all the unions had entrusted the decision to the rank and file the policy would have been defeated.'

## WHY THE WORKERS STAND FIRM

"BECAUSE prices have risen since their last increase in wages, and their money buys less now.

"BECAUSE devaluation means prices will go still higher.

"BECAUSE the employers are making the biggest profits they have ever made.

"BECAUSE the wage-freeze, along with rising prices, will give the employers even bigger profits. *More and more workers* now see that the Deakins, Lawthers and Crippses are leading them up the garden. Telling the workers to work harder and get less for it, crawling to the British and American employers leads to poverty, slump and dole queues."

Already in France and Western Germany "poverty, slump and dole queues" are affecting masses of workers. The new proposals for a union of German and French steel and coal will spread the disease to this country. But, despite the set-back represented by the large opposition vote, the General Council decided to carry on with its policy. But several union conferences at the subsequent Easter made it clear that large bodies of the working class were prepared to repudiate the General Council and to go ahead with wage demands.

It is worth noting, however, that the President of the Railway Clerks Association, by name Mr. Morris, M.P., in his presidential address, supported the "wage-freeze", but went on to say that they would press their demands, when "the proper time comes". That's a good one, "the proper time". When was there ever a better time than now, when the workers are strong and sure to win?

This is the latest and supreme treachery of the Social Democrats. At the very time when the working class could bring down and finish for good and all the capitalist system, they hold them back, deliberately, of calculated policy, hold them back and hold them down. In the early days of the movement, socialist agitators continually upbraided the workers, who voted either Liberal or Tory. "As trade unionists", they declared, "you fight your employers, then when an election comes round you vote for them. You can never win that way. It's a hard and bitter fight and you've got to use both hands, the parliamentary as well as the industrial, if you are going to defeat your well-entrenched enemies." Quite a good argument. The doyen of the prize-ring at that time was Jack Johnson. "Think of Jack Johnson", the speaker would go on. "How would he get on in the ring if he went in with one hand tied behind his back?"

I heard that on many occasions. That was supposed to apply to the workers. They were fighting with one hand, the parliamentary, tied up with Liberal and Tory bonds. "Break loose", was the constant cry, "use not only your industrial power, but your parliamentary power along with it." Now it is the industrial arm that is strapped up and rendered helpless, while the parliamentary power is sold to America by craven cowards and traitors.

But getting back to Mr. Morris, M.P., he reminds me of an incident after the First World War. In the early twenties the A.E.U. put in a demand for an increase of 6d. per hour—24s. per week. At a meeting with the employers, the independent chairman made what we, the members, were told was an "unanswerable" speech. But the employers' representatives found an answer—no increase—a reduction of wages or—.

In the Paisley District we had an organiser, John Storie, who was very earnest and very conscientious, but—well, we'll let it go at that. He, like others, was called to London to hear a statement on behalf of the Executive Council. Following his return to Paisley, a mass meeting was called in the Central Hall to hear his report. It was a melancholy affair. The hall was packed with angry members to whom John had to recommend acceptance of the employers' demand for a reduction of wages. He was very unhappy. In the midst of considerable barracking Willie Fergusson, now Chairman of the Paisley Co-operative Manufacturing Society, got up and asked a very pertinent question.

"Brother Chairman", he said, "I would like to ask Bro. Storie what has happened to our demand for an increase of 6d. per hour?"

Like a flash John was on his feet. "It still stands", he exclaimed with the utmost fervour, "it still stands, and will be fought for at the first opportunity."

I have never heard such an outburst of spontaneous laughter.

Morris is in the same class as Storie. "When the time comes." Unfortunately, the delegates at the conference were lacking in a sense of humour. However, Mr. Morris may find that "the time has come" sooner than he expected, for the General Council, unable to hold on to its rigid policy of wage-freezing, has been forced to do a bit of wriggling. On June 28, 1950, a new statement was issued modifying the January policy. The General Council recognises the undesirability of rigidity and the justification of the claims

being made for lower-paid workers. That is as far as the General Council has got. And what a mess it's going to get into.

The lower-paid workers have a case, no doubt about that, a very strong case; but so have the skilled workers. While there may be piecework and bonus systems in the engineering shops, there are always a large number of highly skilled men who are on work that doesn't allow of piecework or bonus, non-repeat work, or a class of work that is of a particular and not a mass-production character.

I remember in 1917 I was working on such a job and drawing a time-rate of wages amounting to £2 18s. A near neighbour who had never been inside an engineering shop till the war started (the First World War) got a job at a machine on easy repeat work and was earning £5 a week. The same thing applies to many skilled workers today. Not only low-paid workers, but skilled men, civil servants, shop assistants, teachers. In fact in every range of employment there is a demand and a thorough justification for an increase of wages and salaries.

If the General Council tries to limit the right to an increase to one particular type of worker, the General Council will find itself in an utterly hopeless and untenable position. The "wage-freeze" is dead. Let it have a decent, or indecent, burial.

## THE COLONIES

FROM DALTON'S pronouncement of the "Dollar Crisis" at Easter 1947, the slogan of the Labour Government, covered with phrases about "development", "care of the colonial people", etc., was in effect "Rob the Colonies". Decrepit capitalism, staggering on its feet, would get a rich blood transfusion through the ruthless exploitation of the colonial people.

So investments in the colonies became the order of the day. But never with ulterior motives. Oh no, not anything like that. Always we were told of what we were putting in, never of what we were taking out. British capitalism, if we were to believe Attlee, Cripps and Co., had become philanthropic. But it hadn't a monopoly of philanthropy. Far from it. Truman and the Yankee capitalists declared their intentions of helping to develop backward areas. They staked their claim for a "cut in" on the colonies, and they were too strong to be resisted.

Yankee capitalism, which has shown an utter disregard for the life, the well-being or the human dignity of its own coloured citizens, will now join with British capitalism in "caring" for the unfortunate coloured people of the colonies. A few instances of how this "care" expresses itself will be given a little later on. In the meantime it may be as well to point out that, while the spokesmen of Labour, Tory and Liberal Parties in the House of Commons were reticent about the scale of robbery that is carried on, the press, using its columns to encourage gamblers on the stock exchange, was never so modest. Here are a few selections taken from the *Financial Times* and quoted by *World News and Views*, April 2, 1949:

"Malaya Consolidated has raised its dividend from 5 per cent to 10 per cent. . . . Pagna River Tin Concessions has increased its profits three-fold. . . . Kamuntin Tin Dredging has raised its dividend from 5 per cent to 15 per cent and increased its profits by £200,000."

That's not bad—for the robbers, but it is very bad for the robbed,

How is it obtained? Here is the President of the Association of Chambers of Commerce of Northern Rhodesia, letting us into the secret, as reported in *New Africa* of February 1947:

"Africans must learn that an improved standard of living can be achieved and maintained only by a greater effort on their own part and that if they are to receive 20s. in wages they must produce 25s. worth of work."

But although they may give 25s. worth of work, it does not follow that they get 20s. in wages. As a matter of fact in Nigeria, the Gold Coast and Kenya, prices have been soaring since the end of the war and wages have been lagging far, very far, behind. Naturally the workers wanted more wages and sought, through their trade union organisations, to achieve this desirable object, but the most ruthless measures have been taken to break strikes, to break the unions, and when that failed to ban the unions altogether.

In Malaya, for instance, the Pan-Malayan Federation of Trade Unions, which represented 91 per cent of the organised workers, was banned as part of the campaign for restoring, unrestricted, the power of the tin and rubber monopolists. Here is how G. W. Simms, Chairman, Ayer Hitam Tin Mining Company of Malaya, put it at the Annual General Meeting on December 9, 1948:

"Trouble was experienced due to interference by the local branch of the Miners' Union, which dominated and intimidated our workers. Immediately the Union ceased to function, the labour force returned to work and operations have since been carried on without interruption. . . . It was only after the Emergency Orders came into operation and the majority of trade unions as such as a result ceased to function that the workers were allowed to settle down free from intimidation."

There had been strikes in Malaya as elsewhere in the colonial world for increased wages to meet the increased cost of living, but the demands of the workers and their efforts to realise them met with ruthless opposition from their exploiters, with the insistent demand for suppression of their organisations. Thus Mr. Simms could quote and commend the words of Mr. Ashworth Hope, Chairman of the Malayan Tin Dredging Ltd., spoken at the A.G.M. of that Company in December 1946, and reported in *The Times* on the 22nd of that month:

"Your company's interests in Malaya will undoubtedly be



seriously harmed unless firm and immediate action is taken by the Malayan Government to put an end to similar stoppages and strikes arising out of fantastic and impossible demands."

That was tantamount to an order to the Government. A short time later, in answer to a question in the House of Commons, Bevin informed us that 185 Trade Union officials had been arrested and 7,000 people "detained". The tin and rubber barons, backed by the power of the State, with a Labour Government in charge, the power of the military, the police and the courts, were prepared to go any length whatever to intimidate the workers and to suppress all working-class activity. Very brave they had become, with planes, guns and tanks operating on their behalf. Very brave in a war against the workers, but not so brave in the war against the Japanese. For they were the first to scuttle out of Malaya when the Japanese made their attack. There was a small British force there, but the story of the rapid retreat it had to make is a sorry one indeed.

In all the events leading up to the Japanese invasion, the planters opposed any proposition for arming the native population. Yet only such were capable of carrying on jungle fighting and of being able to distinguish the Japanese from the Malayan population. For this, it should be noted, was one of the handicaps of the British forces. The Japanese often appeared as Malayan peasants and were able as a consequence to create the utmost confusion amongst the British soldiers. It was difficult for them to tell the difference between friends and enemies until the guns started going off. Consider the *Daily Express* for January 15, 1942:

"Here is the great tragedy of Malaya. . . . We could have had a native defence force in Malaya. . . . But a pack of whisky-swilling planters and military birds of passage have forgotten this side of the population. They have handed it over to the Japanese, together with the radio station and stores. . . ."

It is on behalf of these same "whisky-swilling" planters that Strachey and Jim Griffiths paid a visit to Malaya. Think of these men, to what a stage of degeneracy they have sunk. The one, only a few years ago, boasting of his belief in Marxism and Communism, now creeping behind some conscript soldiers presumably "stalking" and ready to kill any Communist he might find in the way; the other a one-time miner, promising the British owners of Malayan mines and rubber plantations the full support of all the

weapons of war for the suppression of those who sought to free their country and their class from the vicious grip of the foreign (British) imperialists. Jim Griffiths, from South Wales, where miners have fought so hard and suffered so much. To what vile use can a servile nature bring a man!

Reading between the lines in the press it could be seen that the planters on whom he was fawning had nothing but contempt for him. Had he still preserved a vestige of proletarian spirit he would have "spat in their eye", returned home and packed up his job. For they are very superior people, these planters. They live an entirely artificial life where the white planter is a god, and the coloured people only exist to make them profits and do them service. Here is what David Raymond had to say on this in *Reynolds News* of January 18, 1942:

"The white clique that made money out of Malaya's rubber and tin, while paying Chinese and Malayan labourers five cents a day, looked upon the yellow-skinned people of the Far East as worse than dirt."

While Strachey as a Public School man, despite his past record, was generally accepted, Griffiths was treated more or less as "dirt". "Who'll do the dirty work under capitalism?" Deserters from the camp of Socialism, and they do it for "deserters" who scuttled at the first breath of war.

They couldn't get out of Malaya quick enough, these "whisky-swilling planters". They left the Malaysians to carry on the fighting against the Japanese. And heroically the Malaysians faced up to this task. The Malaysian guerillas deserved and won the highest praise for their great courage during the savage period of the Japanese occupation. Little did they think that they would have to face an even more savage and sustained attack when the planters returned following the defeat of the Japanese.

When the Victory Parade took place in London, representative guerilla fighters from Malaya were invited to participate. They marched through the streets of London, honoured and cheered by the crowds that lined the streets. The *Straits Times* could say of them:

"They represented thousands of their comrades who suffered incredible privation and tortures. Many of their members made the supreme sacrifice so that Malaya might be free."

Take note of that. They "made the supreme sacrifice that

## THE COLONIES

Malaya might be free". But the planters had other ideas. The Liberation forces of Malaya, once the Japanese were driven out of their country, took over control and maintained control until the British troops landed several weeks later. Several of them were decorated by Lord Mountbatten who declared :

"I know how proud you are of these men and of the resistance movement which they led. We of the United Nations are thankful."

But now in 1950 not a word from Mountbatten, from the *Daily Express*, and (since it was forced to toe the Foreign Office line) not a word from the paper that now seeks to live on its past, *Reynolds News*. For the Liberation forces wanted a new deal for Malaya. Higher wages, better living conditions and democratically elected institutions. That was what they asked for—what they actually expected to get after all that had been said in the British press and by British representatives. But the planters said, "No change, back to where you were".

Representatives of the Liberation forces tried to get an interview with MacDonald to discuss their and his policy with a view to coming to an understanding. In the meantime the planters put on the pressure and strikes took place. The police were called in. The military were called in, the Governor was called in. The Unions were banned, the leaders and thousands of others, as Bevin admitted, were arrested. The utmost brutality was used against all and sundry, until they were forced, forced by the planters and the administration, to fight to defend themselves. Then we got lurid stories about "terrorists", about a "Communist conspiracy" directed against men and women whose sole desire was the freedom and the welfare of their country.

Consider now what is going on, oh ye apostles of "Freedom and Democracy". Here is a story that should shock to the soul every decent-minded man and woman in Britain. But they don't get to hear about it. The *Daily Express* is silent, *Reynolds News* and Mountbatten are silent, or rather they are shouting loudly on the other side. They follow the lead of our renegade socialists and describe the Malayan Liberation forces as "terrorists". Not the planters, not the administration. Read this and then say, "Who are the 'terrorists'?"

The British Empire Medal was awarded to Tong Kin Nyan,

headman of the town of Pulai, for the bravery of his town in the war. The official citation says :

“Despite continued and violent enemy reprisals he and the people of his town showed great courage and loyalty during the Japanese occupation by aiding and supporting British officers who lived in the jungle.”

In August 1949, Pulai was raided by Spitfires, the entire town razed to the ground and 1,000 men, women and children fled to the jungle pursued by troops and machined-gunned from the air. American magazines publish some horrifying pictures of dead and dying lying on the ground battered and broken, with merciless enemies apparently enjoying the spectacle. Take these two samples from the magazine *Life*:

“Brutal beating with a carbine butt fails to force a captured Red, once a sergeant in a Malayan regiment, to reveal hiding places of other Communists.”

Who used the carbine butt? Was it you, Mr. Shinwell, or was it your friend Mr. Strachey?

Take another look at *Life*—and what a mockery in the title. Page after page represents death—death for the colonial people at the hands of their imperialist masters. Here it is :

“Dead Communist leader Liew Yau lies in the bush, spattered with blood, while grinning policemen identify his body.”

And who was Liew Yau? He was the leader of the Malayan guerillas who marched through the streets of London, acclaimed, and rightly acclaimed, as a hero by the London populace. He was one of the men of whom Mountbatten spoke, and of whom the *Daily Express* wrote. But the planters decreed his death and the administration carried out the execution.

Shinwell had a part in it, Attlee and the rest of them were parties to it. They save the profits of the planters and provide a Roman holiday for the vile press of America over the “blood-spattered” bodies of the working class.

On December 1, 1948, Ellis Smith, M.P., a typical workers’ representative who had such an unfortunate experience as a subordinate to the haughty Sir Stafford Cripps, said in the course of a speech in the House :

“Our boys may be sent to Malaya. I want to ask what for? The conditions of the people in Malaya are simply terrible.

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The death rate and the maternal mortality rate are far higher than in other parts of the world."

And here, before Ellis Smith made his speech, is what Patrick O'Donovan reported in the Sunday *Observer* on October 10, 1948:

"Several times I have been shown with pride coolie lines on plantations that a kennelman in England would not tolerate for his hounds. There is little or no personal relationship between employer and employee, and a profound contempt (by the employers) for the trade union movement. . . . One continually hears counter-violence being advocated: 'It's all those beggars understand.' There is little consciousness of the poverty and illiteracy that exists in the country. And, too often, it is a foul, degrading, urine-tainted poverty, a thing of old grey rags and scraps of rice, made tolerable only by the sun."

Before the war got started in Malaya, and it is a full-scale war that is now being waged against the Liberation forces, the Colonial Secretary read out in the House of Commons (July 23, 1948) a report from Mr. Malcolm MacDonald, a worthless son of a worthless father. This report introduced the "Communist Conspiracy" and prepared the way for the shocking events that have since taken place. The report informed us that the Communist Party had been banned and then went on to recite various acts of violence with which the Communist Party of Malaya had no association whatever. Nor was there any attempt made to prove such an association. It was the old game. Played so often by the bourgeoisie against the workers. The two things are mentioned together so that the uncritical may assume that they are connected. When the Minister finished, I made this declaration:

"I am absolutely positive of what I say when I repudiate as a foul slander this attack on the Malayan working class. May I ask whether it is not the case that there are more murders of peaceful citizens in this country than there are in Malaya; and is it not a fact that there is no plot, but that there has been quite openly on the part of the Malayan Communist Party and other organisations a quite legitimate demand for Malayan independence and for the industries such as tin and rubber being taken out of the hands of the imperialists who have control of them and who exploit the people of Malaya? Has the

Minister read the statement made on behalf of the Labour Party by Professor Laski. It says:

'This savage invective is intended to strip the veil from these bourgeois foundations of the existing order, the concealment of which is one of the ways in which capitalist civilisation hides its real purpose from the workers whom it makes its slaves.'

"Will the Minister take note of that, in connection with this report which has come from one who deserted the working class and went over to the Tories, as palpable and obvious evidence of the treachery with which the bourgeoisie treat the working class of this country and of colonial countries? I repudiate the lies that appear in this report."

(Hansard, July 23, 1948, Cols. 790-791.)

But who are these Malayan Communists? Below is an extract from page 118 of *Malaya Upside Down*, a book described by Colonel Victor Purcell, British Government Adviser on Chinese Affairs in 1946, as "a most complete and illuminating account of Malaya under the Japanese":

"The Communists in Malaya were a hidden force of moral power. The public looked up to them as their Invisible Army which held in check the oppressors of the people. It is openly admitted that but for the Communists the police would have made life impossible and the informers and blackmailers would have turned life into a nightmare. Wicked informers who had condemned innocent people to death or to the M.P.'s (Military Police) torture chambers; detectives who had given false evidence; police sergeants or inspectors who had oppressed the people; government servants who had extorted unreasonably from merchants and traders—all these feared the vengeance of the Communists.

"So complete was Japanese hatred for Communists, that anyone who had the slightest pro-Allied sentiment, anyone who made the slightest criticism against the Axis powers . . . anyone who complained of the shortages of the necessities of life, anyone who complained of the high cost of living . . . must be a Communist."

That is what the Japanese said yesterday. It is what Attlee's Government is saying today. This Labour Government, so called, is serving the monied interests of a handful of very wealthy

Britishers who own about £100 million worth of property in Malaya, mostly in rubber and tin concerns. Here are some of these men :

*Sir Clive Baillieu*: He was President of the Federation of British Industries, biggest big-business organisation. He is one of the Government's advisors on the National Production Advisory Council for Industry in Britain. He is a director of Dunlop Rubber concerns, various tin companies and a number of financial concerns.

*Sir W. Peter Rylands*: He was President of the Federation of British Industries and of the British Iron and Steel Federation. He is a director of an Australian company with big possessions in Malaya and of iron and steel banking and insurance concerns in Britain.

*Sir Arnold Gridley*: He is President of the Association of British Chambers of Commerce and is a director of Malayan Tin Ltd. and other firms.

Ellis Smith asked a question to which he got no answer from the Labour Minister. I offer him this :

*The Malayan war is not being fought by the British Government in the interests of the British people—nor of the Malayan people. It is being fought for profits—for the rubber planters and tin-mine owners—and to provide America with cheap supplies of rubber and tin.*

But not only in Malaya were the police and military used against the people. Repression of the most violent character was directed against the colonial people wherever they sought to improve their wretched conditions. And their conditions were, and are, truly bad—as bad as bad can be. According to the *Quarterly Review* of the Nigerian Labour Department, the average monthly earnings of hewers in the Enugu collieries in the first half of 1948 were £4 3s. 7d. per month, or 3s. 4d. per day (on a reckoning of twenty-five days per month): for surface workers £3 1s. per month or 2s. 5d. a day. In some cases wages may be slightly higher, but it is a well-recognised fact that owing to malnutrition miners are unable to perform their strenuous work every day.

Naturally the miners maintained the struggle for higher wages. They asked for bread, and the Labour Government gave them bullets. Before dealing further with this aspect of colonial life, let us have a look at the Gold Coast.

There, added to low wages and high, very high prices, was mass unemployment. The Ex-Service Men's Union, which represented the great majority of ex-Service men in the Gold Coast as against the Government-sponsored Gold Coast Legion, a body organised and kept by the Administration officials, organised a petition demanding employment, and then made a demonstration to the Governor's castle to present it. The demonstration was attacked by the police and when they offered resistance the police opened fire. Later on the military were called in. This took place on February 28, 1948, and on March 1 the Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies, Mr. Rees Williams, a Welshman who has heard or read many reports of alleged rioting in South Wales, read out a report he had received from the "men on the spot". Not the men who suffered from the bludgeons and the bullets. No, a report from those who were responsible for the deplorable and shameful attack on unarmed people. Just as reports were made about Featherstone and Tonypandy. But for Mr. Williams and the Labour leaders, as distinct from the days when they were in opposition, the word of a colonial governor was as the word of God. Listen to Mr. Williams as he obeys his masters and reads out their version of the happenings, with several questions that followed the reading :

"MR. REES WILLIAMS : Rioting occurred in Accra on the afternoon of February 28. A parade organised by the Ex-Service Men's Union, which is not recognised by the Gold Coast Legion, got out of hand while it was proceeding to present a petition to senior officers of the Secretariat and Labour Department. The procession was to follow a route agreed with the Commissioner of Police and was then to disperse. But in contravention of the agreed arrangements the procession, reinforced by other elements, attempted to march on Christiansberg Castle, the residence of the Governor. No request had been made by the Union to see the Governor and the procession was in a very ugly temper, many taking part being drunk.

"Two attempts by the police to divert or stop them failed, and after two police officers had been injured shots had to be fired. One rioter was killed and one wounded. Simultaneously, rioting took place on a large scale in the town and considerable damage to business premises in the town was caused, one main shopping street being looted and gutted. Military forces were called in to assist and



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at one stage it was necessary to use firearms. By midnight the town was under control. Further rioting started in the town at dawn and two volleys were fired by the military with no casualties. The Governor has imposed a curfew in certain parts of Accra and has made regulations to control traffic and close roads. Military reinforcements have now arrived and all necessary steps taken to safeguard the population. The latest report received indicates that the town is much quieter.

"MR. REID: May I ask my hon. friend if he will explain whether there were any political implications in all this?

"MR. REES WILLIAMS: Yes. There certainly were political implications, but I have not yet had a full report on them from the colony.

"MR. GALLACHER: Would the Minister consider sending a deputation of responsible trade union officials from this country to investigate this shameful affair on the Gold Coast? Is he aware that we had shooting in South Wales, on one occasion, and every member of the Labour Party protested against it, and the same answer was given by the official responsible, that it was the miners of Wales who were responsible; and I ask him, will he send a deputation of responsible trade union officials to investigate this affair on the Gold Coast?

"MR. REES WILLIAMS: We will not send such a deputation. A full investigation will be carried out—a formal inquiry by the Government—and then the facts will come to light, and I guarantee when they do come to light the Hon. Member for West Fife (Mr. Gallacher) will not like them.

"EARL WINTERTON: Are we to understand that when a full investigation has been made into the political causes, the Minister will place a statement in the Library so that we may know whether or not it is due to the Communist dupes of the Third International, including the Communist Party in this country?

"MR. REES WILLIAMS: There was almost certainly Communist incitement in this case. I will place a full statement in the Library when it arrives."

(Hansard, March 1, 1948, Cols. 37-39.)

In *Revolt on the Clyde*, I tell the story of the "riot" in George Square, Glasgow, on January 31, 1919. Here I will summarise it. I was standing on the plinth of the Gladstone statue, facing the City Chambers, addressing a great demonstration of strikers. Lined

up in front of the City Chambers and at the rear of the demonstration was a large body of nervous policemen. Shinwell, Kirkwood, Neil McLean and others were inside the chamber as a deputation, waiting to interview the Lord Provost. An order was given and the police, drawing truncheons, made a savage onslaught on the rear of the demonstration. The strikers, attacked from behind, were helpless, they were driven right across the square. The deputation, hearing the sound of turmoil, came running out. Kirkwood got to the middle of the roadway in front of the Chambers when a sergeant of police struck him a heavy blow on the nape of the neck which dropped him unconscious on the roadway. A newspaper man on the job got a real good photograph of the incident. Shortly after the Sheriff of Lanarkshire, accompanied by the Lord Provost and others, came out on to the roadway. More photographs. Eleven strike leaders were arrested and put on trial.

There had been a battle between the strikers and the police with many casualties on either side. Who started it? The police and the city officials gave evidence on oath that the workers started throwing stones, bottles, pieces of iron and what not. "The air was black with missiles." That was an actual statement from the witness box. The front of the City Chambers is a long series of windows. Right out before the main entrance there are four lamp standards, each with a cluster of large arc lamps. Not a window or a lamp was cracked or broken, yet according to the police a regular hail of missiles were thrown at them where they stood, innocent spectators, in front of the buildings.

But even more decisive were the photographs. Kirkwood on the ground. The Sheriff and the others standing on the roadway. There it was, plain to be seen by anyone. The roadway was as clean as a whistle, not a sign of a stone, a bottle, or a piece of iron to be seen.

I got three months for assaulting the Chief Constable. But that occurred after the trouble started. Shinwell got five months—only God and the jury know what for. He certainly didn't start the trouble, for he was inside the Chambers when it started. The other nine were found Not Guilty.

So here was a case where the workers were accused of starting a riot. The same allegations as are made by Creech Jones and Rees Williams about the ex-Service men in the Gold Coast. But in the High Court, Edinburgh, it was proved beyond the shadow of

doubt that the workers had not started the trouble. Somebody did. We were proved innocent: who was guilty and why were the guilty ones never brought to trial? Labour leaders at the time complimented me for the stand I made in the court. But what now about my working-class comrades on the Gold Coast? Do they get a chance to defend themselves? No chance. A formal enquiry by men appointed by the Governor can never do justice to oppressed and exploited workers.

You will see from these questions and answers that Mr Williams is not only servile to the Governor, he is even more servile to the Tories. Not a word about the terrible poverty and hunger afflicting the ex-Service men and the people generally—it's the Communists! Lord Winterton throws the ball to Williams, who catches it and plays it back. A bonnie pair. Up with the Tories, down with the Communists. This Williams, like his superior Creech Jones, is the sort of fellow you read about, he could wear a tall hat and crawl under the belly of a snake without disturbing it. Think of the smugness of this fake Socialist as he tells the Tories, "*We* have ample troops either in the Gold Coast or in neighbouring colonies". For what purpose, Mr. Williams? Socialism? You are not a Socialist, neither you nor your colleagues.

Servitors of capitalism—that should be your title, and your condemnation. And, for such as these, honest well-meaning trade unionists have to pay the political levy. Well, we who are Communists also pay. We believe in the political levy, we are for the trade unionists participating in political activity. But we want men who will fight the capitalists instead of, as at present, men who fight against the victims of capitalism.

Before leaving the Gold Coast I must mention the pen-friend I have over there. Here is an air-mail letter I received shortly after the events described above:

Dear Mr. Gallacher,

I am very happy to inform you this lines that I want to take you as my best friend living in Commons. I am four feet tall and ten years of age. My class is Standard 2. Please if you receive this letter try to write me your occupation. The weather of my country is too hot indeed.

My father is a farmer and my mother too. Please what about yours? My next letter I will send you my photograph. I have three brothers and six sisters. My father has own room, and I

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have my own room, so I can do what I like.

I got your address from John Bull. Please if you receive this letter try to send me your photograph and your brother's name and your sister's too.

Well, William, I must close now. Don't forget to write me soon.

Yours sincerely,  
(signed) E. K. Boateng.

In reply to this I sent him some particulars about myself with a bit of advice about his schooling, and a book, one of several boys' books which I have since sent to him. A short time later I got this one :

Dear William,

Thank you very much for your letter and your *Aladdin* which you gave it to me. I am well Sir thank you for your advice. I told you that I will send you tigernuts, but I went to Accra to get Export Licence but they said they haven't, so I am sending you my photograph and the *Gold Coast Bulletin*.

This time we have Convention College at Mpraeso so that I want to learn hard to go in. Gallacher I love you. I shall send you what like I am putting my pen down.

Yours sincerely,  
(signed) E. K. Boateng.

From then on we have continued to correspond, until now he has adopted me as "Father" and invited me to send him on the names of two friends of mine to correspond with two friends of his. These were duly provided. Let us hope that by the time Ernest reaches manhood the evil days of imperialist exploitation will be ended and the people of the Gold Coast, as all other colonies, will enjoy the right and the freedom to live their own lives and direct their own affairs. For this most desirable end we want real Socialists in this country. Socialists, not ashamed but proud of the Red Flag, who will fight the good fight—for the overthrow of capitalism and the establishment of workers' power.

Regarding the events in Enugu, Nigeria, in November 1949, I cannot do better than quote from a letter from a Nigerian friend, dated November 24, 1949 :

"You no doubt have heard of the incidents at Enugu. A few weeks before the 12th the miners had demanded better conditions of service and more pay. On the 14th, after their demands were

turned down, they decided to stage a sit-down strike. Prior to this they had been on 'go-slow' tactics, and on that day a sit-down strike was staged.

"The wives acted in sympathy on the 16th, going to the Authorities to show the sort of food they could buy for the wages paid to their husbands. The Manager of the colliery, who was visited, and his wife, became panicky at the sight of hundreds of wives who only came to show the sort of non-nutritious food they eat. The Manager and his wife ran to the Secretary, Eastern Provinces, and demanded police protection. The police were brought out that day, but there were no incidents.

"On the 16th, police reinforcements were brought from Lagos by air and marched on to the pits, where not one of them obeyed the order to shoot. On the 17th the Authorities were becoming panicky, so they sent for reinforcements from Northern Nigeria. They arrived on the 18th and were marched to the pits, and as the miners were still bent on their claims and refused to move, they were ordered to be fired upon, the first shot being fired by the European Superintendent of Police in charge. Eighteen people were killed immediately and over forty were injured. Of these some more have died in hospital.

"The men were absolutely unarmed and so were their wives. All the wives did was to show to the manager and his wife the difference between the food they eat and the sort of food the wife of the manager eats, because of the difference in the pay of their husbands and that of the manager.

"They contended, quite rightly, that it is because they are black and the manager is white. Quite a few of them have been in the mines since long before the manager left school, but they have not progressed past 3s. a day for a forty-five-hour week. There have been incidents at Aba, about 120 miles from Enugu, with about three or four casualties but no deaths. Port Harcourt and Onitsha have also had incidents. There is now a State of Emergency all over Eastern Nigeria and a curfew has been imposed at Enugu.

"Now the whole of Nigeria sees what it is to be colonial subjects. The rumour that European women and children are under guard is false. The people have not so much as lifted a finger against any European woman or child. Out of it all we are all glad the following facts have emerged:

(1) No Southerner fired a shot when ordered to do so. This

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shows that although the Ibos and Yorubas might have their petty quarrels they will not obey the order to shoot each other down.

(2) The quarrelling leaders in Lagos have now formed a united front to fight the issue to its logical conclusion.

(3) The Authorities will lie at any time to justify their inhuman actions. It is a lie that anyone ever molested European women and children. It is the usual official excuse in a non-European country to justify mass murders.

(4) In the whole incident neither the miners nor their wives could have been armed with anything more than sticks and stones, whereas the police had the advantage of all modern weapons, including aeroplanes for moving reinforcements about. Wherein, then, lies the self-defence on the part of the police?

(5) Not a policeman was killed whereas at least twenty miners have been shot dead."

What democracy! "Nigeria is having her baptism." That is how a trustworthy Nigerian saw it. Here is how the Governor reported to Williams, and Williams to the House of Commons:

"A 'go-slow' movement recently began at the colliery, and on November 16 a 'stay-in' strike developed and one act of sabotage was reported. Two days later the mine authorities decided, in the interests of public safety, to bring away the explosives from the mines. While a detachment of police were evacuating explosives from the Iva Valley mine they were surrounded by a large number of miners armed with crowbars, picks, matchets and spears, who rushed the police and attempted to disarm them and obtain possession of the explosives store.

"The officer in charge of the police endeavoured to reason with the miners without success. Despite repeated warnings, the situation became so dangerous that the police were compelled to open fire in self-defence. I greatly regret to say that the casualties are eighteen persons killed and thirty-one injured, and I am sure the House will share this feeling."

You will see from this, according to Williams, that the miners were armed with "crowbars, picks, matchets and spears". Now read this from the same Hansard:

"MR. WARBY: How many of the police were killed or wounded?"

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**"MR. REES WILLIAMS : None."**

Think of that. Not one policeman, nor, may I say, a mine official injured. Yet the utmost efforts were made to create the impression that a riot had broken out and that desperate men were destroying all around them. As usual in these things, a "Commission of Inquiry" was set up. Who appoints the Commission? The Governor. Give them a bucket of whitewash and let them get ahead with the job. Take care that no one with a tar barrel comes along and dirties things up. See, I ask the following question :

**"MR. GALLACHER** asked the Secretary of State for the Colonies the composition of the Commission appointed by Sir John MacPherson to inquire into the shooting of the strikers at the Iva Valley Mine, Enugu, Nigeria; and how many of the miners' representatives are on the commission?

**"MR. REES WILLIAMS :** The composition of the commission is not yet decided, but the Governor will appoint it at the earliest possible date in consultation with my right hon. friend the Secretary of State.

**"MR. GALLACHER :** In view of this shocking affair of the shooting down of forty miners, will the Under-Secretary insist that a British working miner and a Nigerian miner be taken on to the commission, as otherwise it will just be a whitewashing commission? Will he consider that?

**"MR. REES WILLIAMS :** I cannot add anything to the answer I have already given. The whole matter is now being considered.

**"MR GALLACHER :** But is it not of the greatest importance in a situation of this kind, when there has been such a shocking business, that the utmost confidence should rest in the commission; and would it not create the greatest confidence to have a British working miner and a Nigerian miner on the commission? Why should they not be on the commission?"

(Hansard, November 23, 1949, Cols. 359-361.)

After the third question Williams sat silent. Phil Piratin, my colleague, shouted "Answer", but no further answer was forthcoming. Neither a British miner nor a Nigerian miner was appointed to the commission. Yet even with this hand-picked commission, the Government failed to get a report to its liking. The

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brutal killing of Nigerian miners could not be covered up. To quote from the report of the commission itself :

“We feel bound to state that the report made by the police to the Chief Commissioner and later published, that the police were attacked by a lot of armed miners was not substantiated by the evidence.”

In plain English, the statement broadcast by the B.B.C. on November 20, 1949, two days after the event, and through which the world first learned of the Enugu shooting, was a lie deliberately concocted to cover up the foul handiwork of the imperialist police and deceive world public opinion.

Twenty-one miners killed and many injured, under a Labour Government, for striking for a wage of 5s. 10d. a day. Could betrayal of the working class go further?

Our Party Congress, meeting a few days later, passed this resolution :

“Congress expresses the horror and indignation felt by British workers at the brutal murder of coal-miners striking for a living wage in Enugu, Nigeria. Such acts of terror are a denial of all the principles for which the British Labour Movement stands. Congress calls on the Colonial Secretary to dismiss immediately the Governor and the Chief of Police, to instruct the Nigerian Government, who own the mines, to grant the wage claim for 5s. 10d. a day at once as a preliminary to further increases, to reinstate all men dismissed during the strike or the events which led up to it, and to pay adequate compensation without delay to the wounded and the dependents of the killed.

“Congress further affirms that the future peace and prosperity of both Britain and Nigeria demand that the Nigerian people should control their own economy through their own independent and democratically elected Government. It calls for the removal of all British troops, the repeal of all anti-democratic and anti-working-class legislation and the holding of elections based on universal suffrage to elect a Nigerian constituent assembly which shall take full control of all internal and external affairs within a stated number of months.

“Congress reaffirms its solidarity with the Nigerian people



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living under British imperialist oppression, and pledges its full support for every struggle by the people of Nigeria to improve their conditions and to win their freedom and independence."

These, I need hardly say, are my sentiments and should be the sentiments of every honest British worker.

Down with imperialism—Tory or Labour!

Long live the liberation fight of all colonial people!

## THE MINISTERING ANGEL

FOR A twelve-month before the General Election of 1950, it became obvious that the Labour leaders were working for a stalemate. No attempt was made to formulate a forward programme. The policy statement "Labour Believes in Britain" would have been better named as "Labour Doesn't Believe in Socialism". It represented a new low stage in the deliberate and treacherous policy of capitulation. No attempt was made to rouse the workers against the capitalist class, nor against the Tory representatives of capitalism. On the contrary, the most vicious, slanderous and mendacious propaganda was turned against the Soviet Union and the Communists.

In 1945 there was a strong leftward swing throughout the country. After five years of a Labour Government there was a distinct swing to the right. The Tories had recovered from the 1945 defeat and were steadily improving their position. There was a feeling in many parts of the country when the election came around that the Tories were going to "pull it off". To the general body of workers in the factories and trade unions this was a menace that had to be beaten back at all costs. "We don't want the Tories in, that would mean the finish of everything." Such expressions were common in working-class circles and they represented deep and bitter feeling on the part of those who used them. They had experienced, or had heard the experiences of others, what life under a Tory Government meant to the mass of the people. They wanted no more of it.

So the election became a struggle "for a Tory Government or against a Tory Government". This put the masses once again behind the Labour leaders as the only means of making sure that the Tories were kept out.

In such circumstances it became an extremely difficult matter for Communist candidates to win support and votes. We had decided to put up 100 candidates at this (1950) election. We knew all the difficulties—we knew what we were up against, but we realised the importance of demonstrating before the workers, regardless of how many votes we got, that there was an alternative policy and

leadership to that of the treacherous petty-bourgeois leaders of the Labour Party. Of course we did all we could to win the workers and get votes, but always our comrades were faced with a sort of sullen declaration of faith, "We've got to vote Labour, it's the only way to keep the Tories out". All of our comrades had the experience of friendly conversation on the streets or at the doors, in some cases donations to the election fund, with and from those who were voting for the Labour candidate. But we did expect to get one or two returned. We had hopes of Rhondda East and there was a general feeling of security regarding West Fife. Of the Independents it was felt that Pritt was fairly safe in Hammersmith North and that Platts-Mills would succeed against the pathetic atavist Thurtle.

Before the election I was disturbed about the situation in West Fife. In the county elections, held several months before the general election, we got quite a set-back. From five county councillors we were reduced to two. We lost our representatives in Bowhill and Lumphinnans. These villages had always been reckoned as "strongholds" for the Party. They were certainly strongholds for the parliamentary representative and their loss in the County Council elections was somewhat foreboding. It is true that the village of Lumphinnans itself, in all probability, gave a majority of its votes for our County Council candidate, Rab Smith, who had been the sitting member, one of the best, for several years. But the representation included another village, Ballingry, adjacent to Lochore, and here it was believed the damage was done. The two seats retained were Thornton, with George Sharp, a keen, active young railwayman comrade, and Methilhill by one of the grandest comrades in our Party, a loyal, sterling, fighting comrade, Mrs. Maria Stewart.

When the election campaign got started, our local comrades were energetic and enthusiastic, but it soon became evident that we had not attracted to our election committee the number of non-Party people as in earlier elections. Still, the comrades believed, as most people outside the constituency believed, that my personal standing would outweigh the effect of the anti-Communist and Catholic propaganda. But as the campaign developed I began to have serious doubts. With long experience of the working class I have become sensitive to the changing moods of the workers. I could feel the change in Fife. On several occasions I tried to prepare my

comrades for what was likely to happen. This was very difficult. It would never do for the candidate himself to start sowing the seeds of despondency. I had to hint in a cheery way at the possibilities, but it did not have much effect.

On the night of the poll, in the Lumphinnans Welfare, I spoke of the possibility of being out. They wouldn't have it. Then in a short conversation with Abe Moffat I frankly expressed what I felt and found that Abe agreed with me. It was no shock to me, therefore, next day, when I appeared at the Dunfermline Co-operative Hall where the votes were being counted, and my agent, John Fernie, informed me that the tide was going against me. But I certainly did not expect it to reach such a height.

What were the reasons for our comparatively low vote? I think they were summed up in Harry Pollitt's report to the Executive Committee of the Communist Party in July 1950. Our Party was not yet sufficiently deeply rooted amongst the masses of the workers, especially in the factories and trade unions, to be able to overcome the illusions and anti-Communist and anti-Soviet prejudices created by the propaganda of the right-wing Labour and Tory leaders. Their minds poisoned by press and radio, workers went to the polls and voted for the Atlantic War Pact, for submission to the "Dollar God", for devaluation and frozen wages. The fear of the Tories influenced many to vote Labour instead of Communist. They also felt that the Labour Government was responsible for a number of measures which had benefited the workers.

But our greatest mistake and weakness in the General Election campaign was our failure to arouse the masses in defence of peace and against American control of Britain and of British policy.

As subsequent events have shown, this should have been the central issue in our election fight.

A day or two after the elections, a friend of mine sent me a note (I got letters from all sorts of people from all parts of the country) in which he said that when the result of West Fife came over the radio, his father, who is an old-age pensioner, exclaimed, "There's nobody left to fight for us now".

My old colleague, Tom Brown, M.P. for Ince, will, I am sure, keep the fight of the old folks going. Nevertheless, it is permissible to say that from the earliest days I was a spokesman, propagandist and fighter for the old-age pensioners. During all the years of

campaigning before and during the war, the Labour Party gave no assistance whatever to the old folks. Whilst they could not openly put it in the category of a "proscribed organisation", the Labour leaders discouraged members of the Labour Party, as well as local Labour Parties, from giving any support to the Old-Age Pensioners' Association in Scotland, and the Federation of Old-Age Pensioners in England.

Recently, however, Labour Members of Parliament have been ingratiating themselves with the old folks' organisations in order to weaken their fight by "explaining" (?) the difficulties of the financial situation, and how anxious and willing they all are to help the old folks if only conditions would permit of it. Mrs. Braddock, M.P., a one-time Communist and up until "the crisis" a supporter of the old folks and their demands for a pension of £2 per week per person, brought on herself a barrage of interruptions at the National Conference of Old-Age Pensioners in the Central Hall, Westminster, on October 31, 1949, when she put forward the line of Cripps and the Labour leaders.

But amongst the old folks, as with others, they played upon the fear of the Tories, and hinted at the terrible things that were going to happen if Labour was defeated. Then there was the utterly fantastic story that it was the Soviet Union that was responsible for our heavy armaments expenditure. Not the big monopoly capitalists of America who are plotting war to drive back the advancing working class and to re-establish capitalism in the countries of Socialism. No, not these madmen, and similar madmen in Britain, but the Soviet Union, because it steadily and rightly refuses to bow before the Dollar God of America.

Heavy expenditure on armaments makes an increase in pensions impossible, so it is the Soviet Union that is keeping the old folks from getting their increased pensions. What a story! Yet it is typical of what is going on all over the country on all phases of policy. The American monopoly capitalists are the new saviours of humanity. It has now been declared blasphemy by the Labour leaders to offer any criticism of their conduct.

But while some of the old folks, particularly Catholics, were taken in by this pitiful, but dangerous and treacherous balderdash, the fight of the old-age pensioners will go on and will expose the shoddy character of those apologists for the Labour leaders and the American capitalists. With prices as they are today it is impossible for the

old folk to live on what they are getting. The demand for £2 per week for each pensioner is a modest demand, very modest, when we consider what those who are less worthy are getting. The fight goes on and I and my Party will be with the old folk till they get what their long and valuable service to the community entitles them to receive.

When the result of the poll was declared I made a short speech to the crowd in front of the Sheriff's office. The *Daily Express*, the great unreliable, gave a short report of the proceedings, and said I was dejected and nearly crying, and that I had not shaken hands with the victor. The latter statement is correct, the other just rubbish. I knew from early on that I was well down. You could see it as the votes were being laid out on the table. Then, before leaving the Co-op Hall to go over to the Sheriff's Court, the actual result was whispered to the candidates. So that any shock, if there was one, was sustained some time before the result was read out in public by the Sheriff. It was then no news to me.

As for the new Member, he is of the Nally type. What that worthy proclaimed in the House to be "the new middle class". He and those who put him forward got down to the lowest depths of slander and abuse of me and my Party. I never was a hypocrite. I cannot fake a geniality and respect I do not feel. There is, however, so much hypocrisy and cant in British politics, it naturally strikes a strange note when someone refuses to indulge in it. But the election was over and I was no longer a Member of Parliament.

Not only my Party comrades, but many other people felt sorry that I was out. Many Members of the Labour Party who knew me personally expressed their regret and several of them, at different times and places, said, "Willie, why don't you join the Labour Party, you'd have no difficulty in getting a seat?"

Then a lad in *Reynolds* newspaper took up this theme. Ian Moore is the name he writes under. He's a lad whose political development stopped about thirty or forty years ago. A simple "chiel" that wants to be friends with everybody, and for everybody to be friends with everybody else. Not only for the "lion and young lamb" to lie down together, but for the wolf of Wall Street and the tiger of capitalism to mosey along and join in the frolic. The decay of capitalism, two world wars, the rise of Socialism—no longer propaganda but an actual economic and social challenge to capitalism, with all the bitter hostility and sharp-

ening of the class struggle it has brought in its train—has passed him by as if these events had never taken place. Or if he noticed them they had no political lessons for him. He fills his column with Scottish gossip but always with sufficient cunning to keep to the prescribed Foreign Office line, when politics obtrude. He laments the fact that I and others should be outside of Parliament, outside of the Labour Party. All that is wanted is compromise. He works on this until he transforms compromise into a principle—the only principle worth considering in politics.

Of course I could have had a "seat" in Parliament, if that had been my ambition and desire, in 1922. But a "seat" in Parliament never was and is not now a bait that could tempt me to give up the fight for peace and Socialism.

"Compromise", says Ian Moore. All I'd have to do would be to line up with the American and British capitalists against the Soviet Union and the working class of Europe, which means also the workers of Britain. Accept and support the Atlantic War Pact, support the war against Malayan independence, the exploitation of colonial people generally and frozen wages for the workers here at home, with rising profits, rising prices and increased rents. But why should I stop at having a seat in Parliament? Why shouldn't I get a job like Shinwell and become spokesman for the brasshats?

Can anyone who knows me imagine me doing work of that kind? Compromise on certain issues is always possible and in some cases may be desirable. But compromise of principle is never permissible.

For the working class against the capitalist class—for Socialism, that has been the fundamental guiding principle of my active life. That I'll never compromise—not for all the seats or jobs at the disposal of those who are so busily engaged in finding new formulae for capitalism.

For let it be understood, a seat in Parliament can have no meaning for a genuine Socialist other than as a means of advancing the interest of the working class at the expense of the capitalist class—in other words to intensify and develop the class struggle.

But to get a seat in Parliament and just waste the years of my life as so many of them are doing, while the leaders who claim their uncritical subservience betray the cause—never that for me nor for anyone who values the cause and his own integrity. Fancy having to listen to and applaud such a one as Morrison while he grovels

before the capitalists of this country and America. "Grovels", that's the right word, when he offers on the Altar of Mammon what he hopes will be the dead body of Socialism, as it would be were it not for the Communist Party.

While we live, he and those he serves cannot kill the intended victim. Hatred of the Communist Party expresses hatred of Socialism. But the Labour leaders do not express their hatred of Socialism openly. They cloak it with what they hope will be obscure and confusing words. But the intention is clear—destroy it from the face of the earth, eliminate it from the thoughts of men. That's the job the Labour leaders have to do for their capitalist masters. That's what some of my well-meaning but very foolish friends would have me assist in.

Socialism means "the common ownership of the land and the machinery of production, distribution and exchange". That has always been the accepted definition. The old order, not without a hard struggle, goes, a new order opens up the way to a new and better life for all. For that the pioneers laboured, for that tens of thousands of obscure men and women gave their time and their coppers, organising street-corner meetings, giving out leaflets, marching in all kinds of weather, always with a great hope in their heart and a vision fair of the Red Dawn that would herald "the coming day". But the Yankee task-masters, and their well-paid agents in the American Federation of Labour, have let it be known, in no uncertain manner, that capitalism has to be kept going at all costs in Britain and Western Europe. No further talk of or propaganda about Socialism can be tolerated.

Morrison, who aspires to be chief butcher, takes on the job of slitting the throat of the victim. "Socialism", he says, "means the assertion of social responsibility for matters which are properly of social concern". That's a slash across the jugular vein—the life's blood gushes out—Socialism is dead—to Morrison and his kind. Morrison and Attlee are no more Socialist than Eden and Churchill, yet we make the mistake of referring to them as "right-wing Socialists". They are not "right-wing Socialists" nor any other kind of Socialist, they are the enemies of Socialism.

Let us for a moment consider what Butcher Morrison is up to. According to the legend, he and his associates are "socialist", Churchill, Eden and Co. are "capitalist". Morrison supplies "ten aspects of social concern". We will take two of them, but if the



ten are examined they will all work out the same. His first, public ownership of certain industries such as postal and communications services, electricity, gas, broadcasting, coal-mining, inland transport and steel. His sixth point to assist private enterprise "to be enterprising and expansive".

Electricity, gas and broadcasting, matters of social concern, were taken under public control by the Tories, so the Tories are socialist; the Labour leaders are going to expand capitalism, so the Socialists are Tories. That's the sort of impasse into which the Labour Movement, including the trade unions and co-operatives, has been led.

Along with this attempted butchery, this Toryfication of Socialism, we are served up with Labour's new line on American capitalism. This monstrous, evil thing is now presented in the garb of a ministering angel. It is progressive! For a couple of decades, we are told, the American Government has been more progressive than most countries in Europe. Harken unto Morgan Phillips, National Secretary of the Labour Party: "For two decades the United States has been the most progressive country in the world outside Britain and Scandinavia."

Heard ye ever the like? For these two decades, with a limited break, Britain was living under exceptionally reactionary Tory and National Governments. Mass unemployment, cuts in Service pay, cuts in unemployment benefit. Labour leaders and ordinary Members of Parliament have shouted themselves hoarse about the awful conditions that prevailed in this country between the wars under Tory rule. Yet "progressive" America now specially presented for our acceptance was not, according to Phillips, as "progressive" as Britain under the reactionary Tories. Phillips had better try again.

Of course it is true that Roosevelt's policy was progressive, not necessarily in relation to Europe, but in relation to accepted conditions in America. His schemes for dealing with the mass unemployment that was shaking the fabric of Yankee economy, and his favourable attitude to trade unionism as against the open shop, brought him into conflict with many of the big employers even while it won him the sustained support of the people. But it must also be remembered that when Truman took over, following the death of Roosevelt, every progressive was turned out of the Government and replaced with bankers and generals. From being a progressive administration under Roosevelt it became what it is now, a bankers' and generals' Government.

Roosevelt was a strong independent-minded man. Truman is a typical American "small man" who was propelled into politics in his own state of Missouri by the notorious gangster political boss Pendergast. This Pendergast, so long as he kept his corrupt practices to Missouri, was quite safe. But he pulled off a deal, a real big deal, to sell certain concessions in Missouri to a syndicate for \$750,000. Three-quarters of a million. Not bad! Unfortunately for him, he had to go to Chicago, outside of his State, to settle and sign for it. As he was evading taxation this brought him under Federal Law and he landed in gaol with a two-years' sentence. He died shortly after he came out of gaol, but his son, Jim, carried on where he left off. I don't know, but maybe he was the lad who originated the song, "Hi, hi, the gang's all here".

At any rate this was the crowd that put Truman into politics—as a stooge. With his advent as President, reaction became rampant, the war campaign and the witch-hunt got going with the consequence that just a few weeks before the publication of Labour's new line, the President of the American National Lawyers' Guild declared in his speech opening a Lawyers' Convention:

"Our secret police are given surveillance over our beliefs and associations—agents and informers are sent forth to take down our words and make note of our comings and goings; neighbours are encouraged to spy upon neighbours and tattlers and gossips are officially raised to a new level of dignity and power."

He goes on with this:

"Men are being punished for the mere 'teaching' and 'advocacy' of ideas unaccompanied by illegal acts, and lawyers are sent to prison for vigour in defence of their clients."

This no doubt has reference to the fact that the lawyers appearing for the twelve Communists were sentenced to a term of imprisonment for too passionately defending their clients.

Then there is the case of Harry Bridges in San Francisco. He is the militant leader of a militant Longshoreman's (Dockers') Union, which the employers and the American Federation of Labour have been for long trying to break. During the past two years the Congress of Industrial Organisations (C.I.O.), to which Bridges' Union is affiliated, has been brought into the struggle—against him. Yet this was set in motion as a progressive organisation as compared to the A.F. of L. But with the "terror" condi-

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tions prevailing in America, the leaders of the C.I.O., with Philip Murray at their head, rather than be hunted joined the hunters, and are now as closely lined up in policy with the A.F. of L. as the Labour Government is with the Tories.

During these fifteen years the most fantastic charges have been brought against Bridges. All kinds of crooks, perjurers and known criminals have been used to testify against him. When one charge collapsed another was faked. And now at last they have succeeded in an obvious "frame-up" and he has been sentenced to five years' imprisonment. In the course of his trial his leading lawyer was sentenced to six months and the assistant lawyer to three months. Such is "progressive" America.

Even as Morrison and Phillips utter their banalities, ten prominent people from Hollywood, producers, script writers and others, go to prison to serve a sentence of a year's imprisonment for refusing to answer personal questions when brought before the Un-American Committee. Before going into prison they issued the following statement :

"It began with ten men. Only ten. Now the Motion Picture Alliance For the Preservation . . . of the ideals of Martin Dies, J. Parnell Thomas and Louis Budenz . . . announces a forthcoming investigation of 'Communism' in Hollywood.

"We believe that the M.P.A.—the Big Finger of the first investigation—may know what it is talking about. This time, says the M.P.A., it will only be 10 x 10 who will be blacklisted. Only another hundred. They 'promise' this.

"Will it end there? Will everyone else—less a hundred—be safe? The current inquisition in Washington, featuring Professor Owen Lattimore, supplies the answer :

"Swore Lattimore under oath : I am not now, nor have I ever been, a Communist.

"Said McCarthy's Louis Budenz : A Communist manoeuvre.

"Pleaded Lattimore : But my published writings prove my disagreement with Communist policies.

"Replied Budenz : Top Communists grant permission to other Communists to attack Communists in order to disguise the fact that they are Communists.

"Intoned McCarthy : Guilty!

"Does anyone believe this nightmare witch-hunt will end with 100 more blacklisted out of the film industry? No, it is not

intended to end there! There will be a third and a fourth investigation. And it will end in this way only: *No one* will work in Hollywood who is not willing to bow down politically before the M.P.A. It will end in the word 'Ja'—or blacklist. The issue is not Communism, it is—'Ja'.

"This method of achieving political submission is not original. In 1934, the film workers of U.F.A. studios in Berlin were commanded to sign oaths, stating they were not Communists, sympathisers or liberal dupes, as proof of their 100 per cent Germanism.

"Within one year that oath was not enough; every studio job depended upon full support of the Nazis' programme. And did it end there? We all know where and how it ended in Germany! What we don't know yet is how it will end here.

"The answer to that has to come from the back lots, from the stages, from the offices of writers, directors, producers. In June, 1944, nineteen guilds and unions—representing 22,000 people working in the film industry—denounced the M.P.A.

"By unanimous vote resolutions were passed characterising the M.P.A. as . . . 'a partisan, political group of anti-Labour union wreckers' . . . 'an organisation with Fascist tendencies and aims'.

"It is the same M.P.A. today. It is merely bolder and more contemptuous because it believes that fear and cold war have immobilised the members of the film industry.

"Has it? We do not believe so. We do not believe that 22,000 people in the film industry will allow the Big Finger to determine how they will live, think, speak and make films.

ALVAH BESSIE, HERBERT BIBERMAN, LESTER COLE, EDWARD DMYTRYK, JOHN HOWARD LAWSON, RING LARDER, JNR., ALBERT MALTZ, SAMUEL ORNITZ, ADRIAN SCOTT, DALTON TRUMBO."

The Big Finger—the Big Finger of Big Business, points everywhere in America. In schools and universities, in churches and in hospitals, in the arts and in science, and wherever there is a progressive thought, all the power of the terror drive is directed against it. Stop thinking or go to gaol. That, and not the Statue of Liberty, should be exhibited across the Hudson, as a warning to all or any who would dare to carry the germ of a new idea into that fear-ridden and gangster-ruled country.

I recall the story of an Englishman travelling to America, who, on reaching the Hudson remarked to an American acquaintance, "I see you have customs similar to those in the Old Country."

"What do you mean?" queried the Yankee.

"Oh", explained the other, pointing to the Statue of Liberty, "I see you believe in raising statues to your dead".

And if liberty isn't dead in America, the Big Finger certainly has it lying in a critical condition.

The great Soviet poet, Mayakovsky, visited America in 1935, and on his return wrote: "The American wench Liberty concealing the prison of the Isle of Tears [Ellis Island] with her backside, brandishes a torch in her fist". He pictures the European "seeker of dollars and cents grovelling before dollar the god, dollar the father, dollar the holy ghost" and then goes on to say that "the little beggars in Havre, hurling themselves on American coppers, are a symbol of the future Europe if it does not cease grovelling before America".

Fifteen years ago that was written. Now, in 1950, Morrison and Phillips have become "Havre beggars". But ten years before this visit to America, Mayakovsky went to Havana and had a look at the cigar and sugar industries. What he saw roused him to a furious pitch of anger. He wrote bitingly about the big planters and particularly about Henry Clay, millionaire cigar king, and the brutal exploitation on which his fortune was built. Years later General Lucius Clay, son of the cigar king, became military chief in Berlin. He not only hates the Soviet Union with the general hate of the robber barons of America, but has, and expresses, a particular personal hatred for the scathing attack on how his own family fortune was established. With a vicious, bitter, jaundiced enemy of the Soviet Union representing the Big Finger in Berlin, how could there be other than continued provocations?

I have just had a letter from an old friend of mine in Chicago, a friend of forty years ago. For all of that time he has held meetings in front of Newberry Library (Marble Arch on a smaller scale). In his letter he tells me that he has been mobbed by a gang of toughs—the Big Finger had pointed. It points not only in America, it points in Britain. Consider the lamentable case of Mr. Priestley, a British writer who led us to believe that his life was devoted to peace and progress. But he's "too tired" to participate in the Peace Campaign. Priestley is a man of many words, but it appears the word "intimidated" has fallen out of his vocabulary. Anyhow he is "too tired", while over in America the well-known writer Howard Fast goes to gaol.

But obviously the greatest potential danger to capitalism in America, apart from the Communist Party, is the trade union movement. The "Big Finger" pointed and the Taft-Hartley Act was the result. The Labour Government in this country made the repeal of the Trades Disputes Act one of its first tasks after the 1945 election. Yet this Act was a friendly gesture compared to the Taft-Hartley Act. So vile was this reactionary piece of legislation that even the leaders of the American Federation of Labour, notorious reactionaries, were forced to make a protest against it. The American Federation of Labour (A.F. of L.) was and is a federation of craft unions. Most of its affiliated organisations held a strong position in their own particular industries, and showed little concern for those in a less fortunate position. Millions of workers in America, semi-skilled and unskilled, were without organisation of any kind. The A.F. of L. was not interested in them. The C.I.O. (Congress of Industrial Organisations) which came into existence as a progressive counter to the reactionary A.F. of L. gave special attention to this important mass of workers. In this the Communists played the most active part. Now they have been forced out of official positions and there is nothing to choose between the C.I.O. and the organisation it was formed to combat.

The guiding figure in the formation of the A.F. of L. was a sly little gentleman, by name Sam Gompers. Sam hated socialists red or pink. He dearly loved the capitalists. Private enterprise and the dollars that went with it were sacred to Sam. Shortly after the formation of the Federation Sam made a great discovery. It worried him, so he unloaded it on to a Federation Convention. Here it may be remarked that nowhere in the world can you find such gullibility as in America. Miraculous cures, fancy religious fakes of all kinds find ready credence. It was of his own people Barnum spoke when he gave vent to the well-known expression "there's a sucker born every minute". Ilya Ehrenburg, after lecturing at one of the universities, said that he got a very vivid impression of a "mass of puppets".

Well, here's old Sam talking to the boys. His only concern is their welfare, how to get them improved conditions. To achieve this, he and his colleagues have to sit down and discuss with the employers. What happens? Listen carefully to Sam or you might miss something.

They go, say, to Washington. The employers take up accom-

modation in the Astorbilt (if that's the name of the most luxurious hotel). Sam and his pals are in some fifth-rate joint. The employers have booked a conference room in the Astorbilt, and Sam and the boys have to crawl out of their cheap joint and go along to meet the employers on the latter's own ground. They, the employers, could not be expected to come to Sam's "flea-barracks". Then, when they get to the Astorbilt, feeling mean and shabby, the employers pass around a box of the best Havana Cigars. Sam and the lads with him have only got cheap stogies and you can't hand out a stogie to a gent accustomed to Havanas. So they sit down at the conference table feeling to a marked degree their inferiority compared to the affluence of the gentlemen opposite them.

Under such conditions it should be obvious, so Sam tells them, that the best results cannot be achieved. But if we had salaries and expenses, he goes on, that would enable us to book accommodation at the Astorbilt and hand around Havanas, then there would be no inferiority, we would be the equals of those with whom we have to deal, and this would all be to the advantage of our members.

That, roughly, is the sort of story Sam told, and he got it across with no trouble at all. Thus the top trade union leaders moved into the "higher brackets", cronies of the big dollar boys and as keen, or keener, than these to keep things going as they were and at all costs to keep the workers away from independent political activity.

Old Sam for this good many years has been asleep with his forefathers, but he left a couple of worthy successors in Matthew Woll and "By-Golly" Green. This latter was over in London in the latter part of 1949, and a meeting of Members of Parliament was called in the Empire Room of the House of Commons, to hear him talk on America. George Isaacs, Minister of Labour, took the chair. I went along and found about a dozen Labour M.P.s gathered to hear him. I never heard such pitiful twaddle coming from a grown man. But he certainly damned the Taft-Hartley Act. It was steel chains fastened on the limbs of the trade union movement. Yes, Sir, it was a bad, bad business. So they decided to fight it. To go all out in the election campaign of 1948 and force its withdrawal. "By-Golly", we decided to go into politics in earnest. Every member of the Federation contributed so many dollars, making a fighting fund of several million dollars. "By-Golly" it was a fight. We roused our members and got them into it to an extent never known

before. "By-Golly" we did, and *we won*. That's what he told us, they won the election fight—which meant that they had been trailing behind and spending the members' money on behalf of the Democratic Party. "We won", he told us, and then he added, "after this great fight into which we put everything we had, by-golly if the Southern Democrats didn't go and make a dirty deal with the Republicans to block the repeal of the Taft-Hartley Act." So the chains are still there, holding down the American workers, but Mr. Green is going to fight the Communists in order to defend the freedom that exists in America—freedom for the capitalists to rob and exploit the workers but no freedom for the workers to fight back. Such is the "progressive" American Government to which Labour leaders offer so much homage. Gangster capitalists and gangster politics, that has all along been the rule in America.

It is this technique that has been used in the aggression directed against Korea. On July 26, 1950, I sent the following letter to the *Daily Express*:

Dear Sir,

In view of the misleading statements that are being issued in this country from Governmental and other sources regarding the events in Korea, I would be very much obliged if you would extend to me the 'freedom of the press' in so far as to publish the enclosed article.

I know, in view of the policy that is being imposed on the press generally that it will not be easy to make a favourable decision on this. Still, I am sure you will agree that it would be all to the good if an opposite point of view to that generally accepted were given wide circulation, and so I submit it for what I hope will be your favourable consideration.

Yours faithfully,

(signed) William Gallacher.

To this letter I received the following reply on July 31:

Dear Mr. Gallacher,

I am returning your article, as I do not wish to make use of it in the *Daily Express*.

Yours, etc.

Nothing daunted however, I sent the same letter and article to the *News Chronicle*, and from them I received a similar reply:



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Dear Mr. Gallacher,

Thanks for letting us see the enclosed article. I am afraid, however, that it is not suitable for publication.

Yours, etc.

Having failed with these two I tried the *Daily Herald*, and the following is the reply I received from them :

The Editor thanks you for submitting the enclosed manuscript, which he very much regrets he is unable to use.

Hereunder is the thrice-rejected article :

"Why should the British people, with all their great traditions, be drawn into a new world war by Yankified Labour and Tory leaders, on behalf of the big multi-millionaires of America? Let anyone who cares read the industrial history of America and he or she will find it a shocking record.

"Every page is red with the blood of the American working class. When the workers in any great industrial area, provoked by hard conditions or inadequate wages, go on strike, a gang of thugs and gunmen is imported into the strike area. Then the Sheriff is brought on the job. He makes the thugs and gunmen Deputy Sheriffs, provides them with a badge, and they can then bludgeon and shoot the workers 'in the name of the law'.

"Behind this bloodstained garment of shoddy, fake legalism, the American monopoly capitalists have carried on the most vicious, criminal brutality against the American working class.

"This is indisputably true and an enormous mass of material exists to prove it. It is this criminal brutality they now desire to export to other countries as a preliminary for the export of investment capital which has accumulated in America to a degree never before known in the history of the world.

"See how the pattern works out in connection with Korea. Foster Dulles, after being in consultation with General MacArthur and the American Secretary of State for War in Tokyo, goes to Seoul, and there in the Legislative Assembly tells Syngman Rhee and his associates that America will give them full backing in a war against 'the Communists', meaning of course the People's Republic of Northern Korea.

"Then, when the provocation is carried out, America gets a rump meeting of the Security Council, every member present being a

recipient of dollars, and pushes through a decision against Korea. Then the aggression takes place, but under the cloak of shoddy, fake legality, so commonly used against the American working class. General MacArthur is given a 'Deputy Sheriff's badge'.

"It is a shameful thing that Labour leaders, who in former years condemned this fake legality when it was used against the American workers, should have now become so Yankified that they invite the workers of Britain to spit and trample on their own history and traditions, and join with the American capitalists in an effort to crush a people fighting to be free.

"But not only is there this to consider, we must also take account of what is happening to Britain as a nation. The Labour Government, without any consultation with the people of this country, handed the British navy or a section of it, over to American control. The lives of our young lads were placed at the disposal of the American multi-millionaires. In view of this, 'Rule Britannia, Britannia Rule the Waves' becomes a melancholy mockery of Britain's former greatness. The British lion is transformed into a slinking, petty-bourgeois jackal, following the 'kill' of the Wall Street tigers. Surely the British will never stand for this.

"These are the new allies of Morrison, Phillips and company. These are the people for whom our young lads have to die."

## WHO IS FOR PEACE?

WHEN Churchill, half Yankee and half British, was in America in 1946, he was used—a willing tool—by the American monopoly capitalists to open the war campaign against the Soviet Union and the socialist countries of Eastern Europe. In fact against the advancing working class of all countries.

At that time the Labour Members of Parliament as a whole expressed themselves strongly against the Churchill-Yankee line. But in America a “smearing” war campaign was carried out day and night, in the Press, on the radio and in the cinema. An appalling war hysteria was the consequence. One of the biggest men from Wall Street, occupying a high, important position in the Truman administration, Forrestal, howled so much about Russia that he drove himself insane and ended up by jumping out of the window to his death.

What is the cause of this general madness in the ranks of the capitalist class?—and it is madness. The peoples of all lands have had enough of war. They want peace. Only madmen could actually work for war.

In the Soviet Union a new film has just been on show, entitled *The Conspiracy of the Doomed*. It is based on the trials in Hungary. It could equally well have been based on the trials in Czechoslovakia. Or it could apply to the bourgeoisie as a whole throughout the world. The historical process of which we and they are a part has condemned them to vanish from the scene.

One of the war correspondents, Michael Davidson, has drawn attention to the fact that the only notices welcoming American troops were signed by the Bankers' Association of Korea. He then goes on to say that it is very difficult to get the ordinary people to believe that Communism is as great a danger to them as it is to the bankers.

I should say it is difficult. Wherever the liberation forces advance the landowners go, the capitalists and bankers go. The people remain in possession of their own land, their own industries, their

own national resources, and the liberation forces are maturing and advancing more and more in every country throughout the world.

The bourgeoisie as a class is doomed. Here it should be noted that ninety years ago there was a Northern and a Southern government in America. The Southern government was instituted in order to bring about the secession of the Southern States. After a deliberate provocation on the part of the Southern forces (the attack on Fort Sumpter), President Abraham Lincoln declared war in the name of a united America against the Southern Government, at the head of which was Jefferson Davis. That war, one of the bloodiest in history, lasted for four years, and ended with victory for the North, the freeing of the slaves and the unity of America.

During the course of the war, every foul attack and slander was made by the Press of this country against Lincoln and the North. An attempt was made to stampede the people of this country into recognising and supporting the South against the North. But it failed. I have already, earlier on, quoted Karl Marx's tribute to the British working class at that period, and the stand they took against those in this country who desired to support the slave states against the North.

In the North there was "free wage labour", i.e., capitalism; but capitalism represented an advanced form of economy in comparison with slave economy, and was therefore destined to supersede the more backward slave method of production. In Korea there is in the North a People's Democracy, rebuilding their country on the basis of socialist economy. In Southern Korea a puppet government, headed by Syngman Rhee, who had spent most of his early life in America and who was a recognised stooge of the American capitalists; he was prepared to make Korea a field of investment and exploitation for the American capitalists.

Obviously the modern socialist economy of Northern Korea was as far ahead of the capitalist economy of Southern Korea as, ninety years ago, capitalist economy in Northern America was ahead of slave economy in the Southern States of America.

But the bourgeoisie, doomed as they are, will not leave the stage quietly. They would destroy the world rather than let it pass into the possession of the working class. So we get the aggression in Korea, intended to be a sort of curtain-raiser for a third world war.

But the peace forces are very strong. Not only so, but the bourgeoisie, particularly the multi-millionaires of America, have

## WHO IS FOR PEACE?

become absolutely desperate. The liberation of China has been a terrific blow to them. China and the Far East was looked upon by American imperialists as a new Eldorado from which they would take tribute and constant gains. Now their dreams of easy money have turned into a nightmare of perpetual crises. Desperate men cannot think clearly, they plunge into events without thought of the future. Here it may be remarked that we who are for peace see the present as providing an opportunity for building a happy and prosperous future. The imperialists can only think of the present and of profits. As a consequence they are bound to make blunders, and I am certain the adventure in Korea will prove, in the course of time, to have been a colossal blunder on the part of Americans and those who so foolishly associated themselves with this dastardly affair.

But those who are for peace are calm and steady, with the recognised processes of history supplementing their efforts.

Recently I went on holiday to the Soviet Union. I spent some time in Moscow and Leningrad and Kiev. Everywhere I found the people energetically rebuilding their cities so badly shattered in the Second World War. Nowhere is there a thought of, or any talk of war. All their desire is for peace. Anyone who has seen the havoc caused by the Second World War will appreciate the fact that the people who suffered so much will never want to see another war. In these three cities, and the same applies all over the Soviet Union, they are all the time going forward and upward. The only thing that could possibly hold them back would be war. It would be a terrible evil, the worst that could befall them. Peace will provide them with the opportunity of giving an example of what can be done under socialist construction which will astound the capitalist world, and force its way through the imperialist "iron curtain" on the attention of all working people.

I visited the famous Putilov works, now re-named after one of Leningrad's finest sons, Comrade Kirov. There, in talks with the workers and directors, I got a great impression of what was being accomplished and the pride the workers took in the part they were playing in establishing Communist society. Great workers, with a great goal just ahead of them—but for this, peace is absolutely essential.

In the Ukraine, I went to visit a collective farm. I don't know when I've had such an interesting and inspiring experience. The

village lay in very attractive surroundings. We got there by car while a peace meeting of the village was taking place. We were warmly welcomed and taken around to see the extent and the varied possessions of the collective. As far as the eye could reach a sea of mellow waving corn. I have never before seen anything like it. Their cattle, real fat cattle, beautifully clean, are a pleasure to look at. We went through the stables and saw their great collection of horses. Every one a picture of what a horse should be, every care and attention bestowed upon it. At the farm they have their own stud, and there were as we went through the stables about a dozen foals from two days up to a month old. A huge orchard, chickens by the hundreds, and over and above all this a brickworks—the property of the collective farm. There the peasants were busy making bricks and as they made bricks so they went on building. The village has to be entirely renewed. The plan as I saw it and as it is being worked out, will make an ideal village, something truly beautiful. The chairman of the collective farm, a peasant himself, said to my wife and me as we were leaving, “Come back here in a year or two and you will not know the place”.

In Czechoslovakia, where we spent two weeks on our way back, we found the same atmosphere. Everywhere, in the industrial and in the country areas, all their energies are directed towards the rebuilding of their country on a sound socialist foundation. The co-operatives in the villages are making very great headway and are steadily replacing the old costly strip method of farming. In the industries socialist competition, healthy happy competition, is sending up production all the time. With the rise in production there also goes a rise in the standard of living.

There also the desire expressed everywhere is for peace and good relations between the people of Czechoslovakia and the people of Britain. So it is in all the countries of Eastern Europe. Peaceful reconstruction is what guides the minds of leaders and people alike.

I had many pleasant and interesting experiences, both in the Soviet Union and in Czechoslovakia, but one that stands out more strikingly than any of the others, was a visit I paid to the opening of a children's village on the outskirts of Karlovy Vary.

In a beautiful wooded valley, with a clear inviting river flowing through its centre, the village has been constructed. The cottages are very attractive. The village will house a population of 1,000 young people. It has its own power station, its own post office,

its own railway and its own administration. In Czechoslovakia as in the other New Democracies of Eastern Europe, there is no problem of juvenile delinquency such as we have here.

As I have said, the minds of all are directed towards the reconstruction of their country, and this affects their attitude to the children and the attitude of the children towards their elders. They are given opportunity for responsibility, and so there is no possibility of their minds degenerating towards destruction and the other affairs that have become so prevalent here. I passed a note to an American comrade, pointing this out, and saying that it was significant that in Czechoslovakia as in Hungary, and the other Eastern European countries they were building such special villages for their young people, while in Britain we were all the time considering special types of prisons for many of our young people. The American comrade passed me back the note with the words added to it, "that goes double for America".

What is the lesson that is to be drawn from the hysteria in America and the keen steady reconstruction that goes on in the Soviet Union and the countries of Eastern Europe? It is that all who are for human progress are for peace. All who put profits before the welfare of man are for war.

The British working class has a long history of earnest and desperate struggle against capitalism and against the exploitation that has provided the capitalists with their profits. They are now asked to betray their own history. To betray the great traditions that stretch back through the Chartist movement, to the Levellers and beyond, to Wat Tyler, John Ball, and the Peasants' Revolt. To betray all this and to line up with the American imperialists and their vassals here in Britain against not only the people of Korea but the working class of all countries, for the re-establishment of capitalism or failing that the destruction of the world.

I am certain the British working class, the British trade union movement, however much its mind may be poisoned by the lying propaganda of Transport House, will never sink to such a depth of infamy. They will rise, rise like lions, as they have risen many times in the past, and will declare, "We are for the forces making for peace, we are against the warmongers and imperialists, we are for the higher and better life, we are for the new world of Socialism."

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