

# FORUM

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## THE PARSONS OF PADDINGTON

A criticism of the branch's draft election address, (see June issue).

It is a pity to watch the degeneration of a once responsible branch of the Party into what is rapidly becoming a revolutionary sect who apologetically admit to being revolutionary. The draft election statement is so innocuous that it can only be regarded at best as essay on the principles of morals. The bewildering factor is that Paddington branch have chosen to present this essay as an election address. It is even more bewildering that the branch should be in favour of elections at all, as they deny the issue involved in an election, i.e., capturing control of the machinery of government etc. by the S.P.G.B. This is not expressly stated. Had the drafters done so openly it would have given the whole game away and some difficulty might have been experienced in getting official branch backing, not only on this aspect but on all the other hobby horses well and truly flogged in the draft. The penultimate paragraph is proof of this reluctance to stress the need for political action based on socialist understanding: "We scarcely need add that we do not beg for your vote—we only ask you to consider seriously the ideas that we put forward." In other words it doesn't matter whether people vote for socialism or not so long as they have socialist ideas. This point is amplified in the final paragraph: "That is why we insist that it is necessary to change people's ideas in order to change the way we live to-day. This is the socialist revolution . . ." This is not the socialist revolution, which is the dispossession of the capitalists of the means of production and their transformation into the common property of society as a whole. In short a change in the social basis. As this can only be achieved by political action it should be evident that socialist ideas in themselves are worthless without political manifestation culminating in political power. There are other

serious errors in the draft particularly the definition of the class struggle and the ambiguous use of the word property. Political action for socialism means the securing of property for everybody (common property). This is the issue in the class struggle, and not merely trade union action which Paddington suggest is the entire class struggle.

The draft deplores the effects of class society without mentioning one of them apart from a vague mention of millions going short. There is not one substantive fact in the whole draft, but just a conglomeration of loose phrases literally oozing humanitarianism. Great care is taken not to offend anyone or any group; and the few useful things the draft has to say are well diluted and the edges so blunted that they will harmonise with the main content. The chapter dealing with "What socialism will be like" is purely negative and a literal fraud, and should be properly called "Socialism—what it won't be like." In spite of their criticism about the failure of the party to formulate a policy on Socialism and what it will be like, the best Paddington branch can do when formulating their own policy, is to re-state the old Party stuff of over 50 years ago, i.e., production for use, no buying and selling, no armies etc. It is no argument to say that space was limited; the draft is so repetitive that its message could be written in a quarter of the space. In addition to this there is an utterly worthless chapter headed "Equality" which will certainly raise more problems than it sets out to solve. The fact is that Paddington have nothing to say on "Socialism—what it will look like," and, according to the main theme of the draft, even less to add to party propaganda.

The branch circularised their criticism of Waters' address which they considered unsuitable. Certain criticisms could be and were made of Waters' address. In spite of this features of telling people what elections were

Waters' address did have the redeeming feature of telling people what elections were for and why we were contesting. And of the futility of reformism. This does neither. Its Uriah Heep approach has emasculated our case to the point where it isn't worth saying. This invariably happens with those individuals who try to bring socialism in the back door: they must smother it in order to do so. Paddington's draft puts Socialism at a disadvantage by trying to make it 'respectable'. Moral reform replaces political reform as the whipping boy.

The draft literally begs the question on human nature and mistakenly assumes that this forms the basis of people's objections to socialism. We are told that human ignorance is the obstacle. What a glorious abstract phrase. Why not the old correct party answer—social and political ignorance. Note the reluctance to use the word 'political'! Human emotions (greed, jealousy, selfishness, love,) the whole stock-in trade of the politically frustrated, intellectual nomads and dilettantes are included; economics are avoided like the plague. The entire draft hasn't even the merit of being original and has been based on the first chapter of "Questions of the Day" (What Socialism Is). Had the chapter been inserted in its original form without being chopped around to cater for the "hobby horses" of sex, mass production and equality, the present volume of criticism would have been made from the standpoint of its suitability as an election address and not its content. The chapter in any event was purely introductory and does not stand on its own. If the best Paddington can do at election times is to re-issue a chapter from a party pamphlet then why have an election address at all? One particular amendment from the original deserves a mention. Original: "Human energy is used up in advertisement campaigns . . . in purely financial dealings, in attending on the useless luxury of the wealthy . . . (Questions of the Day, p. 7).

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Amended version: "Effort is frittered away on advertising campaigns, in purely financial dealings and on frivolous luxuries." This takes the bite out of the original text which attacks the wealthy. Are Paddington opposed to this?

The disquieting thing about the whole draft is that a branch of the party is prepared to bring controversy within the party before the electorate. Is it that the branch is being used by a handful of members as a clearing house for the weird ideas the minority hold? The E.C. would be advised to think twice before contesting the North Paddington constituency at the next election in view of the present branch indecisiveness and confusion on the class struggle and political action.

In the meantime, Paddington members should rouse themselves and leave this cup and saucer socialism to the socialist parsons who for the time being, unfortunately, are still with us.

D'Arcy.

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## EDITORIAL NOTE

The following printing errors should be noted from the June issue of FORUM. In article by Reginald entitled *Principles and Practice*: From our comrade's head *should* read for our comrade's head. In article by W. Brain entitled *Socialists and the Retreat from Reality*: p.47, line 12, It is not more difficult *should* read Is it not more difficult. In article by Festina Lente entitled *Questions of the Dazed*: It does not run out of capitalism as a prisoner does out of jail *should* read It does not run after Socialism as a child would after a lolly-pop, but breaks out of capitalism as a prisoner does out of jail. In article by Paddington branch entitled *The Case for Socialism*: p.44, col. 2, under "Production for use" 2nd and 3rd lines of paragraph 2 omitted, viz: By contrast, under Socialism everything will be made as well as they can be for their intended purpose *should* read By contrast, under Socialism everything will be produced solely for the use and enjoyment of people. All things will be made as well as they can be for their intended purpose. We apologise for these errors to readers and to the writers concerned.

## THE NATURE OF THE SOCIALIST REVOLUTION

### — Some Comments —

Frank Evans has put all of us in his debt by the series of articles which have been running since the inception of FORUM. Even if he never writes any more, and even if these articles had been the only ones ever published in these pages, their content would have fully justified the existence of FORUM.

This fact makes it all the more important to correct any statements in that series which fall below the high level of the whole. There are some of these, and this seems as good a time as any to point them out.

The first statement which one must quarrel with is that which puts forward the view that Hegel was a dualistic idealist. Evans says (Dec. 52, p. 5)—"What we still have to bear in mind is that Marx did not demolish the dualism of Hegel by inverting it, he only perpetuated it right side up. And it is dualism, the false separation (of ideas and action, mind and matter, etc.) which underwrites idealism." And again, on the same page, he says—"The analogy we take over from Marx, which, in inverting Hegel, still opposes base and superstructure (production and institutions) . . ." He repeats this in his Aug. 53 article.

This suggests that (a) Hegel was a dualist, and (b) that, in particular, Hegel talked about base and superstructure, but in the opposite way to Marx, putting institutions first, and production second.

It is, on the contrary, very difficult to think of any philosopher who was more opposed to dualism than was Hegel. His whole approach renders any dualism quite impossible, and in his *Logic* (Wallace trans. pp.176-8) he produces a very simple and quite irrefutable argument showing that the dualistic position is an untenable one. It is obviously impossible in a short article to give a full discussion of Hegel's philosophy, but any honest reading of the *Logic* must reveal at once an adamant determination not to lapse into any dualism whatever. Even the shortest description of Hegel's philosophy brings out this fact: a 200-page work on philosophy states—"Hegel rejected the unknown thing-in-itself of Kant. He held that the entire universe could be 'penetrated' by thought. He held that mind and nature are not merely manifestations of an unknown absolute, they are the Absolute itself; nor are they two distinct realities, but integral components of one process of self-revelation."

Evans seems to see this himself a little later on in the same article, where he points out that Marx himself abandoned, at his best,

the dualism which he sometimes put forward.

For there is no doubt that, whatever Hegel may or may not have done, Marx and Engels both adopted a dualistic position when putting their case, on many important occasions, and Party writers have done the same. The celebrated passage in the "Critique", for example, can be riddled with critical holes on this score. It states that the relations of production are the base, and that legal and political matters are the superstructure. This implies that the relations of production *are not* legal and political matters, that they are distinct and separate.

Not only are they distinct and separate, but one determines the other. One is the *real foundation* the other is nothing but a superstructure. The word "superstructure" at once suggests something relatively flimsy and easily removed. One can easily alter a superstructure without changing in the least the solid base on which it stands. One can even destroy the superstructure—the base still remains.

Now it does not require any massive onslaught to show that this corresponds with nothing in real life. (In real life the base is not solid; everything changes subtly and shifts before our very eyes. In real life legal and political matters are not distinct and separate from the relations of production; this is most obvious in the Communist countries.) But if one still wants a massive onslaught, it is there in the Evans articles.

However, Evans does not make the mistake, as others have unfortunately done, of supposing that to expose this dualism is to quarrel with Historical Materialism. As he says—"It remains that nowhere does Marx explicitly define 'mode of production' because with him it is implicitly *society itself*." Once we see that the mode of production is not a *part* of society, but is the *whole* of society seen from a special point of view, we can start getting somewhere. As long as we see it as a part of society, which is *not* some other part (the superstructure) we shall go on talking nonsense.

Luckily, Marx usually did better in practice than his theoretical formulations would have led one to expect. In practice, he usually did see society as a whole, and treated the historical and moral elements with as much deference as the purely economic ones.

To conclude this point, we may say that Evans was wrong both in calling Hegel a dualist and in calling Marx a dualist, though all of us may slip into dualism when we are not being careful.

J. C. Rowan



# WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN US AND THE OTHERS?

Is it that the S.P.G.B. is opposed to reformism? Is it that we are against nationalisation?—or the Soviet Union?—or leadership? The answer is no, since others now or in the past have opposed all these things. The reason why we are different from (not just opposed to) all the rest is that we have a completely different aim, a different objective . . . Or have we?

Having heard some members advocating the "Dictatorship of the Proletariat"; "A transitional period"; and a lower and higher "phase" of Socialism; and others—"Ministries of Culture"; socialist cops (and robbers?); judges et al., I begin to doubt. And when I recently heard one member at a debate at H.O. disagree that in a Socialist Society "each will work according to his or her ability, and take according to his or her needs, each determining their own needs" I am forced to admit that some members (only a handful I hope!) do not want Socialism at all. They desire a glorified capitalism like the Stalinists! Or at least their conception of Socialism is so horribly conditioned by capitalism and its ideologies that they *cannot* conceive of a different way of life from the present one. These members are not Socialists; they are just anti-capitalist "Ninety fifty-four". Their vague, very vague—concept of Socialism turns out to be akin to George Orwell's "Ninety Eighty-four"!

## A BLUEPRINT

It is impossible to give a blueprint, we are told. I have said and written the same myself. Our ideas are determined by the real material world in which we live; we are creatures of our environment. We must change our environment (what into?) before we can say what sort of world Socialism will be like. We can, then, only be negative in our propaganda; we can only show the world down which road humanity must travel, but we do not know what is at the end of the road. (How can we tell that it is *really* the right road?) These are the arguments of the so-called scientific "Marxists" of the party.

Of course we cannot give a *detailed* blueprint of Socialism. We do not know what capitalism will be like in five years—whether we will have press-button factories, or whether office work will be mainly done by electronic computers and tabulating machines. We do not know what form transport may take in the future. But all the same, as I pointed out in a previous article, we *can* be more positive in our advocacy of Socialism. There *is* much that we can say. We *know* that money—a means of exchange—will be unnecessary; we know that war will be impossible; that there will be no power or privilege groups, or coercion; that there will be no basis for power or privilege with the abolition of property and ownership; no possibility of coercion or authority without state power to back it up. There are many things that we *know now* will be different in the future—whether Socialism is established in five years or fifty.

## CHANGING IDEAS

In order to bring about a new society, a new way of life, we must change peoples' ideas *now*. We must help them to rid their minds of race, sex, religious and other prejudices. This is an aspect—a most important aspect—of the "new society developing in the womb of the old". Unfortunately many members of the S.P.G.B. do not seem to have achieved this "mental revolution" necessary for the establishment of Socialism. Some only hate the capitalists, or capitalist society, which is useless from a socialist point of view. Socialists are, or should be, scientific, objective. They cannot let their emotions get the better of them; and hatred instead of analysis is more than useless to a socialist movement. Only by ridding ourselves of *all* prejudice and hatred can we achieve this mental revolution. Only by the mass of the people dropping *all* their prejudices and hatreds will they achieve a better world. Our job is to plant the seeds in which workers and others *if possible* can achieve their own mental revolutions. These will be the quantitative changes within capitalism, along with the ever-growing contradictions, that will result in the qualitative

change—the dialectical 'leap'—to Socialism.

Men make history. But only by changing the real world around them in which they are brought up. But unless they have a pretty good idea of what sort of world they *want* in the future they will not make much of a job of it. Unless Socialists have some idea of what Socialism *will* be like, they will have no success with their audiences; and the Socialist Party will stagnate or atrophy. It will become apathetic.

Therefore, in my opinion, socialist propaganda must aim (1) at defining Socialism in a *positive manner* as we *know* it will be like; and (2) we should propagate the ideas of the kind of society we *want* Socialism to be like.

Although it would be wrong for a speaker to dogmatically say that under socialism there will be no big cities like New York or Moscow, it would be quite in order for the comrade to say why he does not want big cities, and why *he* thinks they would be unnecessary and undesirable. It does not matter whether members differ on these points so long as it encourages people to think about a better world. The sum total of these ideas when put into practice by the "immense majority" will be—socialism. That it may not be quite like comrade "X" or "Y" postulated or desired five or ten years prior does not matter, as long as they differentiate between (1) what they know will exist—production for use, equality, an absence of authority and coercion, etc.—and (2) what they want it to be like—no big cities, no belt system, greater nobility of people, of free love, etc. etc.

This positive approach to Socialism, this emphasis on Socialism as a completely different way of life, will really show our audiences where we *really* differ from all other organisations—not the silly and meaningless hostility clause in our Declaration of Principles.

PETER E. NEWELL.



# NOTES ON CRISES

## (Part One)

Marx was the first economist to give a systematic account of the nature of crises. Due to the less mature form of capitalism, Classical Political Economy never seriously incorporated a study of crises into its scheme of things. The only thing we have on the subject at that period is the now famous controversy between Ricardo and Malthus as to whether over-production could arise due to deficiency in consumption and, as a result of this deficiency, lower prices, a fall in the rate of profit.

Ricardo vigorously denied this possibility. His denial arose from his acceptance of Say's "Law of the Market." This concept asserted that every supply involves a demand; that products exchange for products. Thus every commodity put on the market creates its own demand and every demand on the market so exerted, creates its own supply.

Ricardo saw only the unity and harmony of capitalist exchange relations not the contradictions and conflicts involved in them. For Ricardo the progressive accumulation of capital was a veritable "Golden Journey to Samarkand." Not only were crises impossible but the self-expansion of capital entailed no falling rate of profit. Accepting as he did the "Malthusian Population Theory," he thought—at least in the long run—that there would always be abundant reserves of "labour" able to serve the needs of capitalist accumulation. Because new investments would enlarge the productive process including "labour," and the supply of workers or the tapping of new sources of supply, would be equal or greater than the demand for them, no rise in wages need occur. So although each productive cycle would be larger than the previous one, the ratio in which capital was divided between productive equipment and wage payments would remain the same. Therefore no fall in the rate of profit need arise.

The only way the rate of profit would fall, he argued, was due to the "Law of Diminishing Returns." This he said would raise the price of food and so increase the subsistence cost of workers and thus reduce profits. Reduced profits would as a result, check the progressive accumulation of capital. The only way to offset this was to improve agriculture or to import cheap corn.

His charge against the landlord was that whereas all other persons benefited by cheap food, the situation for the landlord was never so prosperous as when food was dear. Thus he argued the interest of the Landlord is always opposed to the interests of every other section of the community.

Malthus, on the other hand, contended that increasing accumulation of capital might make it possible for production to outstrip consumption. This would result in a fall in prices and consequently profits. If then accumulation went beyond effective demand, and brought about "gluts," capital would fall into disuse and so cease to possess the character of wealth.

Ironically enough, this pessimistic author of a pessimistic population theory which held that the mass of the people must remain at a bare subsistence level, advocated the need for unproductive consumers (The aristocracy and their hangers-on; soldiers; judges; lawyers; clergymen; etc.). Only by increasing their living standards could these unproductive consumers take up the slack of effective demand and so effect a balance between production and consumption.

Malthus then fashioned a view which many decades later became a doctrine among the rag, tag and bobtail section of capitalist apologist that "luxury creates employment."

### MARX AND UNDER-CONSUMPTION

It was Sismondi, however, who drew serious attention to the disrupting effects of large scale market production. Rodbertus followed later with an under-consumption treatment of a crises. Stripped of their learned sophistries, the under-consumption theories of Hobson and Keynes are the lineal descendants of the views of Malthus, Sismondi and Rodbertus. Keynes himself declared the Malthusian doctrine of "effective demand" to be a fundamental contribution to economic understanding.

My reason for giving this brief background is an attempt to put Marx's views on crises in perspective: Also to pose the question: Was Marx's treatment of the nature of crises only a more detailed and systematic

exposition of the under-consumption views already expressed?; Did Marx believe that the cause of crises was rooted in the inability of the workers to buy back the wealth that they produced?; Or would it be truer to say that Marx's view on the cause of crises was not an under-consumption theory at all, at least not in the sense of the advocacy by Rodbertus, Hobson, Keynes and labour leaders and trade union officials.

Even a cursory reading of Marx on crises seems to show that he regarded under-consumption as merely a facet of a many-sided complex whole. Marx himself certainly regarded crises as springing not from one cause but from many. In short, crises were for him complicated phenomena only to be fruitfully studied in the totality of the class relations of capitalism.

I am aware that many Marxist writers have held that Marx's theory of crises was essentially an under-consumption one. It is true that certain statements by Marx on the subject might seem to lend support for this view. Nevertheless, viewed in the light of the whole context of Marx's writings on the subject, such interpretations seem highly dubious, especially when we have Marx's explicit repudiation of the Rodbertian doctrine which held that crises are caused by the scarcity of paying consumption.

I am not of course, suggesting that Horatio holds such Rodbertian views on crises. I merely venture the opinion that to say that crises are caused by the inability of workers to buy back what they produce, and leave it at that, might invite misunderstanding on the subject.

### EARLY PRODUCTION

To try and understand the complex phenomena called crises it is best to begin right at the beginning. It is pretty safe to assume that the relatively low production level of primitive society never allowed for crises of general overproduction.

In a society where production for consumption is the rule the exchange of products takes the form of barter—e.g. two goats = one sheep. The act of barter signifies that some portion of an article is superfluous to



immediate needs and constitutes for its owner a non-use value. Now although the act of barter can be expressed as C - C, commodity for commodity, it is one of form and not substance; they are in fact two use values confronting each other. It is only by the owner parting with something which has no immediate utility for something which has, that barter takes the first step to acquiring exchange value.

In a society which has advanced beyond this stage to one of simple commodity production where money has become the universal equivalent, the form of exchange becomes C - M - C, or commodity, money, commodity. The introduction of money splits the act of exchange into two parts, C - M (a sale) and M - C (a purchase). The introduction of money represents a great advance. Now the owner of a superfluous article no longer has to find another who has something he needs, and who at the same time possesses something he himself wants. He can now dispose of his product for money and purchase his needs in his own time.

In this way the introduction of money brought about a great economy of effort, thus making possible a more diverse sub-division of labour, and so providing the basis for greater productivity.

### CRISES OF SHORTAGES

The circulation form of C - M - C holds, however, the possibility of crises. Thus, if a producer sells his goods to another producer, which is represented by C - M, but fails to purchase from him then, the circulation process is incomplete, because M - C is an essential link in the exchange circuit. As a result, the producer who has failed to sell cannot buy from another producer, who in turn is unable to buy from someone else, and so on. If the linkage break becomes widespread, it will in time affect the whole economy.

This rupture in the exchange equilibrium will then bring about features associated with crises, i.e. unsaleable stocks due to lack of purchasing power. In one sense it could be termed overproduction, but only in one sense. It must be remembered that the cause of overproduction was due to a rupture of exchange, and not *vice versa* as in modern crises. In substance it would be a crisis of shortages and not surpluses.

### CAPITALIST MOTIVATION

In simple commodity production, each producer owns his own means of production.

In capitalism, ownership of these things is vested in a particular set of individuals. Those who are excluded from ownership have only their labour-power as a means of livelihood.

Capitalism is production organised for sale with a view to profit. Means of production and labour-power are then both commodities. The capitalist functions as a capitalist by purchasing means of production and labour-power. To do this he has to have a sufficient sum of money (capital). At the end of each productive process the result is realised on the market for money. Unlike the C - M - C process, which starts with a commodity and ends with a commodity, the capitalist starts with money and ends with money; or, if you like, he begins with exchange value and ends with exchange value. From this it follows that the major form of circulation in capitalism is M - C - M.

The aim of the capitalist is, however, to finance production in order that at the end of each productive act he will have a greater sum of money than at the beginning. This is represented by M - C - M', where M' is a greater magnitude than M.

The motivation for production by the capitalist is not one of use value, but the expansion of exchange value. Capitalism is then a profit motive system. The facts of how profit is made and its realization *via* the profit urge is a universal motive. The drive market need not detain up here.

It is not true to say however that the for greater profit as a means of expanding capital accumulation is a motive peculiar to the economic function of an owner of capital. Because of the competitive compulsion of capitalism, each capitalist must try and keep in the race with his rivals, or, failing that, drop out. Thus his economic security, social prestige and status as a capitalist are inseparably connected with the process of accumulation.

### THE WORKING CLASS

On the other hand, by far the larger number of individuals in capitalist society do not take part in the appropriation of surplus value in order to devote a considerable portion for the purpose of accumulation. Their economic function is of a different order; to produce surplus value, and receive payment for the maintenance of the energies required to do so. Starting as sellers of labour-power, they are concerned to get as many use values

as possible in return for services rendered. Their motivation is then one of increasing consumption. This difference of motivation has its roots not in any abstract category of human conduct, but from the different role the capitalist and worker have in the social productive relations.

It is of course true that the capitalist is interested in consumption. As Marx says—“At a certain stage of development luxury enters into capital's expense of representation . . . his expenditure grows with his accumulation without the one necessarily restricting the other . . . But along with this growth there is at the same time developed in his breast a Faustian conflict between the passion for accumulation and the desire for enjoyment.”

### CONSUMPTION

Capitalism then can never be a system of consumption *qua* consumption. For the capitalist the need to convert a large portion—the largest portion, in fact—of surplus value to capital accumulation has priority of claim. Again quoting Marx—“The capitalist shares with the miser the passion for wealth as wealth.” Unlike the miser who withdraws money from circulation in order to satisfy his passion, the capitalist seeks to gratify his by throwing money into circulation, in order to draw out at a later stage a larger sum.

The mainspring of capitalist motivation—the urge to accumulate—has been rationalised by present-day economic apologists into “the reward of waiting,” “subjective costs,” opportunity costs,” “scarcity principle,” etc.

It is true of course that orthodox economists have come to regard crises as important phenomena (the Business Cycle theory) but they treat it not from the class character of capitalism but from the neutral point of disequilibrium between supply and demand elements of investment funds. This arises from their notion that capitalism is a social arrangement which shares out its productive resources in the ratio in which they are necessary to the satisfaction of different needs. As Marx says—“This fiction arises from seeing capitalism not as an historical product but as production *per se*.”

If all this seems to the readers of FORUM a rather long preamble to the subject of crises, I think it is essential if we are to put crises into perspective. In the next issue I propose to deal with some of the factors involved in crises and, later, to attempt to subject them to a closer scrutiny.

E. W.



# WHAT SOCIALISM MEANS TO ME

## *A Personal Statement*

'Arguments proceeding logically from one point to another may drive the individual into a corner. But as a rule he will find some way—if necessary a very illogical way—to retain his beliefs. No change of convictions on any single point can be established in more than

an ephemeral way so long as the individual has not given up his hostility to the new set of values as a whole, to the extent of having changed from hostility at least to open-mindedness.'

—Kurt Lewin.

Despite their references and questions to me, I think that to attempt to answer D'Arcy, Lock and others point by point would not get us very much farther. Our disagreements so far revealed indicate that we have a different approach to such vital questions as what Socialism means, what socialist propaganda is, and why we are in the S.P.G.B.

I do sincerely want to resolve these disagreements, and think that this may be done by a comparison of ideas at a more fundamental level than hitherto. Accordingly, I shall try to state my views as positively as possible, and only to mention differing views so far as this is necessary for clarity. The following statements are not intended to imply that other members necessarily disagree with them.

First, I am in the S.P.G.B. because of its object. I think that Socialism is a desirable system of society, not just for myself or any class or group with which I happen to be identified, but for all people. I think of it as something positive to have, rather than as a negation of something to be got rid of. In contrast to the popular notion that discussion of the future leads us into controversy, I find that it is our attitude to the present, not the future, that causes the most controversy.

My answer to the question 'What are you doing about the class struggle?' is "trying to end it." The argument that the successful prosecution of the last class struggle means the end of all class struggle has never sounded convincing to me—perhaps it is too much like 'the war to end all war.'

The S.P.G.B.'s work is not to champion one class against another. It is propaganda for Socialism—no classes. It should always act in such a manner that it will be recognised on this basis. Any other standard of measurement of the S.P.G.B.'s progress will inevitably reveal its inadequacy by *this other standard*. The real danger in our trying to have a finger in every pie—trade unionism,

sending messages to strikers, etc.—is that it will leave us with no appetite for Socialism.

I am in the party because it is helping to bring Socialism, and for no other reason. I do not ask, nor expect the S.P.G.B. to help me in any struggle with an opposing economic group. It seems that some members think that advocating Socialism is not enough—they seem to want the party to curry favour with non-socialist working class organisations by a policy of 'all that the others have got and Socialism too.'

May I therefore underline my view that all we can expect a Socialist Party to advocate, at all times and in all places, is Socialism. This involves *criticism* of other objects, though it does not mean that we are obliged to express either support of or opposition to these objects. When a socialist takes part in the class struggle he does not "oppose" his own actions *nor need he justify them*. His attitude should be that he wants to abolish Capitalism because it makes people enter into antagonistic instead of harmonious relationships.

Socialism means the emancipation of the working class, etc. But it also means a new system of society. I am more concerned with what there is to be gained than to be lost—the world to win rather than the chains to lose. And so 'socialist propaganda' is a term I prefer to reserve to mean 'telling about Socialism'; not just in the sense of what it will be like, but to show why it is desirable and possible as a new way of living; how even today people do want to live harmoniously, even if they don't want 'common ownership'; to avoid playing on the destructive emotions of envy and resentment which spoil our love of humanity.

Now a word on party membership and the D. of P. The party is essentially an organisation for propagating ideas. It has no dogma—nothing is sacred. The very concept of social progress (which socialists should, above

all things, desire to expedite) demands that every opinion, theory and judgment—including the D. of P.—should give a reasoned account of itself, on peril of being superseded. To be critical of our principles today is not necessarily to oppose them. It is (as, I believe, the recent Conference recognised) the necessary prerequisite of better ones. Members should not be shocked at the proposal to rewrite the D. of P., as a living expression of what holds socialists together, in the light of 50 years' development of socialist thought.

My main criticism of the D. of P. is that it emphasises working class capture of political power rather than the basic ideas necessary to establish Socialism that are held by socialists. For a definition of 'socialist' I am quite content to make that given in the S.S. (Dec. 1949): "one who holds that Socialism is a practicable alternative to capitalism and who seeks to establish Socialism." The real test is whether the socialist objective is *your* objective, whether you refuse to compromise your advocacy of it, and whether you are prepared always to speak and act in such a manner as to promote it by making other people socialists.

Despite the 'fellow workers' form of address, I do not believe that the "class character" of the S.P.G.B. is a fundamental aspect of the socialist case. And despite its appeal to members of the working class, people do not join in fact as workers but as socialists. Workers who are not socialists are not admitted to membership, anybody who is a socialist is admitted. This appears to me to be the correct position for a socialist party to adopt, notwithstanding the D. of P.

### SPECIAL ANSWERS

I hope that the above explanations will help to reduce the area of disagreement. Certain opposing points do, however, need special answers. First to D'Arcy, who thinks



that "people in the economic circumstances of Feudalism cannot understand Socialism." If this is so, then what message does he think the S.P.C.B. should have for such people? Presumably we cannot ask them to work for what they allegedly cannot understand. So either we should advise them to do something about their form of property society (such as, to develop Capitalism)—or we should say nothing. It seems so easy to avoid such a dilemma by advocating Socialism in *all circumstances*.

## PROBLEMS OF CAPITALISTS

D'Arcy further asks: what problems do capitalists suffer from and how will Socialism emancipate them? Well, capitalists won't get killed in wars, they won't get ulcers from worrying about money or bored from living idly. Lots of what Coster called "innumerable individual and social difficulties and frustrations" are experienced by members of both classes. But unfortunately he got it the wrong way round; it is not that workers and capitalists have different things to gain from Socialism. They have different things to *lose*, but the same things to gain, namely, socialist conditions.

## SOCIETY A PROCESS

I am at a loss to understand the attitude of those members who think of Socialism only as an economic solution to "physical" needs of members of a class, and their studied indifference to "mental" problems of members of a society. To me, these distinctions between the physical and the mental (mind and matter, evolution and revolution, basis and superstructure, etc.) are unreal and discussion around them singularly unhelpful. Society should be viewed as a *process* rather than as a sum of static institutions; thinking should be in terms of class struggle and co-operative endeavour rather than of the two classes and "common ownership."

## NEW LOOK SOCIALISM

Lastly, I do agree with H.B. that Socialism is worth every effort. Don't however, blame the present half-heartedness on "new look Socialism." It is deplorable if our internal discussion becomes an incessant wrangle between two or more sides, emphasising and preserving differences rather than similarities. The true object of our internal discussion should surely be that tomorrow's propaganda should contain all that is worthwhile in today's *plus* new ideas. In 1954, no more than in 1904, has all been said that can be said on the subject of Socialism.

S.R.P.

# A WORKING-CLASS PARTY FOR SOCIALISM

In opposition to Turner's thesis as laid down in 25 points (February Forum), I present the following:

Socialism (the suffix "ism" = ideas or theory) is that critical analysis, of society, especially Capitalist Society, which lays bare the economico-historical causes of human exploitation and working class poverty arising from the social relations of production, and points the way to the solution of the problem through changing those relations to one of common ownership of the means of production.

Socialism does not mean "social equality of humanity" but advocates a society in which social equality shall exist. Socialism is not in the interests of *all*. Primarily it provides the method through which workers must attain freedom from capitalist exploitation. This is against the interests of the capitalist class whose very existence as an exploiting class depends upon the retention and maintenance of the present social relationships, viz., wage-labour and capital. It is in the interests of the working class, not as wage-earners within these relationships, but through the revolutionary process to the complete change-over to Socialist society. Socialism teaches them why and how this process must be pursued.

Turner's statements (points 1 & 2) ignore the process of social evolution, the emerging from Capitalist society, which the Capitalist Class have an interest as exploiters in maintaining, into Socialist society in which, of course, the interests of *all* will be equal. During the process the Capitalist Class and their supporters put up some resistance.

Concerning (6) the implication is that Working Class interests are confined to wages and the cost of living as wage-workers. But their interests extend further, i.e. to solving poverty by ending the wages system through the establishment of Socialist Society.

In contradiction to (8): Working class interests ultimately do equate to social interests because only through the establishment of the new society can they end their poverty and degradation; i.e., Social Equality being the only way to solve their problems, it logically follows that herein their interests are in line with the whole of society into the future.

Turner's arguments in points (8—10) result from a formalistic approach, as he assumes some class or group interests apart from "Human Interests." The class or group interests are concrete, real, arising out of peculiar social circumstances, and *are* human interests. His "Human Interests" are an ideal

abstraction which ignores the social circumstances, the social relations which determine those interests. This is to say that class interests are something other than "Human Interests."

What are these "something other than?" Are not economic interests "human" because only humans have economic interests and such have only been evolved by human beings in association.

(11 to 15): A Socialist Party, of course, comprises people with socialist ideas and while it is not an "economic unit" it certainly represents the interests of the Working Class, as I state above, and is consequently a Working Class Party.

Its propaganda is primarily an appeal to that Class because it is they who have most to gain in striving for the new society viz.: economic security.

The Capitalist Class possess the means of life and as a result have all the luxury of an exploiting class. Consequently they look upon this society as the best possible and are determined to hang on to their property, privilege and prestige by every possible means.

"Humanity" and "Mankind" are just empty abstractions when considering the capitalist world, and to talk of appealing to ALL human beings to think and act as equals in such a world is just nonsense.

(17 to 20) The question of coercion and the use of armed force would depend upon the kind and quantity of resistance put up by capitalists and their supporters. As State power is essential to Capital the job of Socialists is to disarm them (the Capitalists) by getting control of the State.

As the police and army consist mainly of workers, when the majority are socialists, those in these forces will simply fail to function in the interests of the Capitalist Class and the latter will be rendered practically helpless.

To talk of using Government as it is used by and for the Capitalist Class just shows a failure to recognise that in a situation as above described 'Government' ceases to exist. The general trend of governments within capitalist society to control social economy, e.g. transport, postal services, radio, railways, banking etc., becomes completed in socialist society into economic-social administrative institutions but without the character of *government*.

While a Socialist Party relies upon the socialist understanding of the Majority that



majority cannot ignore the importance of having control of government. It is not a question of "relying" upon the use of law and armed force to establish the new system or of maintaining it, but of disarming the Capitalist Class. The final word, of course, is in the *desire* for change always providing that the conditions of production are so far developed as to warrant it.

Finally, the logic of Turner's thesis is that the Socialist Party should renounce politics, cease to be a Party and become a mere philosophical society.

H. G. HAYDEN

## CORRESPONDENCE

Dear Comrades,

Nobody has complained, but I am sure some members think that two articles by me in the June "Socialist Standard" was one too many. I should like through "Forum," to say that I think so too, and to give an explanation.

On the day when the Editorial Committee met to make up the June "Standard" I had reason to telephone to them. They had already one article from me, but told me they had insufficient material of any sort and were in an extreme predicament. Somebody had to write something in a hurry, and I promised that I would. Hence "The Edwardians," which I had intended for the following month and did not incorporate nearly as much material as I wanted to collect.

I think there is value in the sort of article I've been writing for some time now—the investigation of minor social phenomena. At the same time, I think one in a month is sufficient. Hastily written articles, too, are unlikely to be good ones; in spite of my past—and no doubt my future—criticisms of it, I think the "Socialist Standard" is a paper with a remarkably high standard, and I certainly can't approach that standard when I am rushing my literary cojones off.

The Branch-room critics of the Party paper—and the advocates of planning each issue—might think on these things. Perhaps I may say something else. A lot of members believe—I used to believe it myself—that the Editorial Committee "rejects good articles." By invitation, I have been attending the Committee's meetings for nearly eighteen months, and that simply isn't true. Most months there are just enough articles to fill sixteen pages; some months there aren't enough. And an article is rejected only for one of two reasons: it says incorrect things, or it is just God-awful.

R. COSTER.

## PRINCIPLES AND PRACTICE

The main object of this month's contribution to "Principles and Practice" is an endeavour to show further why the controversy around the D of P calls for early Party consideration and decision.

It is probably not realised that misgivings as to certain words and phrases have been entertained for a very long time; a desire to avoid controversy, and "get along with the business," strengthened perchance by a small pinch of mental reservation, has inhibited open expression; Stella Jackson's scathing remarks re "diametrically opposed" were an exception.

The circumstances under which the first D of P were formulated must be taken into account in considering this question. Generally speaking, the early Manifestoes were a justification for the splendid revolt against the execrable "leaders" of the SDF; firmly planting for the first time in history a truly democratic Socialist Party (do we adequately recognise what a magnificent, momentous event this was?) the new Party inherited certain unmistakable features of its unholy parent; the solemn crooning of the dismal "Red Flag," to mention one very minor, but still significant item, soon disappeared. The assumption that the SP was committed to VIOLENCE, if only of the police variety, was a clear inheritance from their forebears, and carries implications demanding earnest attention.

It is quite understandable that a Declaration which has preserved itself intact for over 50 years should acquire a sentimental value. And there is a useful place for the Romanics in the Party, but the danger of becoming a political Fundamentalist must be guarded against.

In the event of a relatively drastic revision of the D of P, I must point out that other changes would necessarily follow: the word "OBJECT" would make its bow. I suggest (in all humility) something like this at the head of the actual D of P.

WHAT SOCIALISM IS  
SOCIALISM is a SYSTEM OF SOCIETY which will utterly supersede Capitalism.

ALL the means and instruments (fields, factories and workshops) producing wealth will be COMMONLY OWNED.

GOODS will be produced for USE; profit will disappear.

The production of Wealth and its distribution will be DEMOCRATICALLY controlled.

There will be NO distinction between RACE, SEX or COLOUR.  
TO EACH ACCORDING TO HIS NEED: FROM EACH ACCORDING TO HIS ABILITY.

I propose next month to begin examination of the separate items of the D of P.

Reginald

## ARE THE WORKERS BETTER OFF?

The following quotation from "Wage-Labour and Capital" by K. Marx is pertinent to the discussion. The final paragraph in my view gives the answer to the question.

D. W. LOCK

"A house may be large or small; as long as the neighbouring houses are likewise small, it satisfies all social requirements for a residence. But let there arise next to the little house a palace, and the little house shrinks into a hut. The little house now makes it clear that its inmate has no social position at all to maintain, or but a very insignificant one; and however high it may shoot up in the course of civilisation, if the neighbouring palace rises in equal or even greater measure, the occupant of the relatively little house will always find himself more uncomfortable, more dissatisfied, more cramped within his four walls.

"An appreciable rise in wages pre-supposes a rapid growth of productive capital. Rapid growth of productive capital calls forth just as rapid a growth of wealth, of luxury, of social needs and social pleasures. Therefore, although the pleasures of the labourer have increased, the social gratification which they afford has fallen in comparison with the increased pleasures of the capitalist, which are inaccessible to the workers, in comparison with the stage of development of society in general. Our wants and pleasures have their origin in society; we therefore measure them in relation to society; we do not measure them in relation to the objects which serve for their gratification. Since they are of a social nature, they are of a relative nature."

(Chapter VI. Relation of Wage-Labour to Capital.)