

CAN WAR HASTEN SOCIALISM

A further reply to F. Evans.

In the November *Forum*, F. Evans says the second (atomic) industrial revolution will achieve world near-equality in levels of production, leading to an equal rate of profit based on an equal rate of exploitation. War, being largely the outcome of international rivalry for investment areas and spheres of influence, will become an anachronism. Concurrently sovereignty based on armed defence of national interests "dies of irrelevance" and is superseded by extra-sovereign institutions, themselves harbingers of "the administration of things".

War itself, we are told by Evans, is the most powerful impulse towards increased productivity, and thus accelerates the process culminating in productive parity. In last month's *Forum* it was shown that in the two world wars the reverse was true. A third world war occurring before parity of productive levels is reached, says Evans with prophetic insight, will leave an atom-scorched earth. It will, however, be a means of hastening the near-parity of levels of production! How war which leaves an atom-scorched earth yielding so little can also be a means of producing so much—a necessary condition of productive parity—Evans leaves unexplained.

Even if war does not occur, he says, the preparation for war which is now a permanent feature of the capitalist economy will bring about the same ends. Now, what evidence has Evans to offer that war preparation increases output and so accelerates the drive towards world near-equality of productive levels? In what way can he show that the British armaments programme has increased output, will continue doing so and lead on to productive levels comparable with those of, say the U.S.A.? How, on his assumption, explain Churchill's scaling down the armaments programme because, at the level first proposed, the burden would have been intolerable and jeopardized the

British economy? In the question whether Churchill or Evans is right, the facts compel me to plump for Churchill.

If, as Evans says, war preparation leads to greater productive output, what are we to make of the statement of Colin Clark, a leading economist and statistician, in the *Daily Telegraph* on the tenth of November last? He said: "The rate of economic progress has been slower in England than in some countries"—countries, which, incidentally, have carried no armaments programmes. On Evans' assumption that war raises productivity, the reverse should have been true. Russia, for example, spends more on preparation for war (both absolutely and relatively) than any other country, U.S.A. apart. This—*vide* Evans—should mean that the rate of expansion is greater in Russia than in most other countries. But according to Colin Clark "the rate of economic progress in Russia is below that of the Scandinavian countries."

Evans tells us also that war preparation helps to bring about a growing equality between the classes by causing a wider diffusion of use-values. Why then the shortage of consumer goods in Russia? Why the millions of ill-nurtured peasants whose resistance to government pressure was a big factor in the recent Russian shake-up?

Yet again, we are told: "diffusion of use-values out of higher productivity concurs with national defence taxation which helps equalize distribution of value." What are we to make of that muddled statement? Does he mean that the more is deducted from surplus value via taxation the greater is the expansion of the economy, and hence increased productivity? If, for example, the steel and engineering industries produced tanks, guns, etc., for which they were not paid it would be a direct deduction from their profits; less capital of their plant—the main source of increased productivity. More

efficient working of old plant has obvious limits in increasing production. If by some process (unexplained by Evans) restricted investment is nevertheless able to furnish greater productivity and presumably greater profits, we should like to hear more about it. However, if it were true it would seem to contradict his own view about growing equality between the classes.

In actual fact, both of the political parties have sought to offset the adverse effects of high taxation on capital investment by every means in their power. A capital levy was mooted in many quarters a few years ago as the drastic, once-for-all remedy to reduce taxation and so provide the volume of saving necessary for normal expansion.

The effects of high taxation on investments are summarized in a statement, based on the Government Blue Book on Income and Expenditure, by F. W. Paish, Professor of Economics at the University of London. In "A Survey of British Industry" (*Financial Times* Supplement, 8.8.53) he says the volume of saving, although about the same in proportion as 1938, has been altogether much too small to enable the country to make good its war-time physical damage, depletion of stock and under-maintenance of fixed assets. This flatly contradicts Evans' unsupported view that increased taxation for armaments leads to progressively increased production. In actual fact, the reverse has been true.

To quote Colin Clark again: "If (for the national economy) you compare the actual quantity of goods and services produced per man-hour with that of 1948, no statistician is likely to estimate a rise of more than 10 per cent." In that case, productivity has increased by, on average, little more than 2½ per cent. per year (less during war years). He adds: "by my reckoning, there has been no rise at all" (*Daily Telegraph*, 10.11.54).

The opinions expressed in this journal are those of the individual contributors, and are not to be taken as the official views of the party

Dr. L. Rostas, in the *Times Review of Industry* for April 1952, said the total output of manufacturing industry had increased between 1925 and 1948 by 32 per cent., but as the number of workers went up by 25 per cent. the physical output per worker had increased by 6 per cent. Less than $\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. per year, and below the normal increase for long periods: since 1948 it has been somewhat larger. Where, then, are the vast increases in wealth production via relative surplus value that Evans assures us have taken place under the impulses of war and war preparations—brought about, that is, by intensified competition between the capitalist powers? According to Colin Clark "the available data shows that advances in production during recent years have amounted to little more than making up war-time arrears." And if Evans thinks that armaments spending has progressively increased production and so cheapened goods, how does he account for the persistence of rising costs over the years—allowing for changes in the price level?

It seems to me that Evans has allowed airy generalization, based on a concept of immanent progress, to take the place of fact and empirical observation. This hinders any realistic approach to the better understanding of present society and becomes a substitute for hard thinking.

In the light of what has been said, what prospects are there for this future based on world near-equality of productive levels? I am taking it that when Evans speaks of the future he means observable trends in contemporary events. Any other "future" belongs to science-fiction and is irrelevant for the purpose of worthwhile discussion. Evans offers no evidence for his future. He contents himself merely with the curious statement that war hastens "the second industrial revolution of plastics and alloys (creation of atoms) which unseats national differences of productive power based on the natural raw materials (coal, iron, oil), when any power can conjure what it needs out of the air". It almost suggests that future production will be a by-product of the magician's art.

Industrial revolutions depend on power. Are we to assume that the new atomic revolution will be based on unlimited and virtually costless power—conjured out of the air?—and that coal, oil and gas will disappear? Will the vast coal deposits (not too difficult to mine) as well as the oil and gas of the U.S.A. no longer be productive assets? What data is there to show that fifty years hence nuclear power or something else will be "conjured out of the air"?

The U.S.A. is taking a long-term view of power resources because of the slow running-out of oil shales and the production of liquid fuel by coal hydrogenation.

Is the steel industry, based on iron ore, on its way out? If so, why the proposed thirty-million-pound outlay for plant re-equipment and expansion? Why does Sir Ellis Hunter, the President of the Iron and Steel Industry, say: "Because of the present and future demand for iron ore we shall have to, at some future date, start extensive underground mining of iron ore in Britain"? Or is the construction of capital goods to be a by-product of soya beans? Twenty years ago irresponsible press reports told us that Germany was going to produce ersatz goods from skyscrapers to coffee. This did not stop German capitalism continuing to expand its iron and coal resources. Today Dr. Adenauer assures us that the resources of the Ruhr are the basis of Germany's present and future.

It is true a thirty million pounds nuclear-power project will be started in Britain. The Government White Paper tells us, however, that nuclear power when it gets under way will do no more than ease the fuel problem. So far from coal being unneeded as a power source in the future, the White Paper goes on to say mining will remain one of the MAJOR employing industries. Mr. Lloyd, the Minister of Fuel and Power, spoke warmly of the new industrial revolution—nevertheless, he told his hearers: "Coal still matters. It will be the backbone of industry in our lifetime and our children's lifetime" (*Manchester Guardian*, 11. 2. 55).

The Report says that electricity produced by nuclear power is expected to cost more (perhaps ultimately less) than the electricity generated in the future from coal sources. To put the matter another way, it is estimated—"if all goes well"—that by 1975 atomic power stations will be generating electricity equal to that produced by forty million tons of coal; some atomic scientists estimate less. The present coal output is about two hundred and twenty-three million tons a year, including opencast. In the next twenty years it will probably be increased by another fifty million tons annually, apart from the contributions of other power supply sources. The amount produced by nuclear energy will be a small fraction of total power supplies.

Even by the year 2000, F. E. Simons (Professor of Thermodynamics at Oxford University) says, "nuclear power will be a relatively small percentage of our power needs". He adds: "even taking a favour-

able chance of increasing coal production, we shall be nowhere near the figures the U.S.A. regards as necessary."

The Truman Administration Report on U.S.A. power supplies estimated the energy used as the equivalent of one thousand, three hundred million tons of coal annually. The British equivalent would be about five hundred million tons annually. This is far beyond what the British economy uses now and, on estimate, more than it will use by the year 2000. The Truman Report also forecasts that by 1975 the U.S.A. will double its output of power and generate three and a half times more electricity. Thus, the disparity in power production and productive levels between the U.S.A. and Britain will have increased both absolutely and relatively. The American worker has at his disposal three times more power to his elbow than his counterpart here, and long-term trends indicate this power ratio will increase rather than diminish.

Even if a cheaper source of power than the existing ones could be made available, its effects should not be exaggerated. According to Professor A. J. Brown in "Aspects of the World Economy in War and Peace", cost of energy in manufacture is less than three per cent. of total costs. In England, it may be mentioned, fuel is about one-fifth of the total costs of generating electricity (same source). It is not suggested that saving in power costs, although small, is unimportant; but it certainly would not produce sensational economic changes. But there is another way of looking at the matter. The mineral fuel used by the world is less than one ton of coal per head per year (in advanced industrial countries it averages between four and eight tons a head). The potential demand for energy, as the so-called backward countries become industrialized, is enormous. In that case a steep rise in power-supply costs would ensue.

Of course, the use of power goes with the use of other forms of capital, and it is these which constitute the overwhelming part of production expenses. Are we to believe that the productive equipment of the advanced industrialized countries, taking generations to build up and embodying colossal capital values, can—or their equivalent can—be conjured out of the air or anywhere else in the ascertainable future by any nation? Even if nations were able to utilize the latest technical processes, such equipment on any extensive scale would be costly beyond their resources. It is doubtful whether cheap and ample power supplies, if they had been possible in the past, would have affected in any marked way the growth and rate of

capital accumulation, itself the outcome of specific social and economic conditions.

Evans confuses techniques with economics; whilst the former is included in the latter, they are not identical. True he makes war and war preparation, profit and competition of capitals act as agencies, but on his own showing they are derived from and aspects

of the same development. Thus, he makes technical development—i.e., the world near-equality of productive levels—the sole and indispensable condition for major social change. Man's activities, institutions, etc., turn out then to be the by-products of technical development.

If Evans does not mean this, his articles

mean nothing and any attempt to introduce genuine human activity would so qualify his thesis as to render it incongruous. Evans then, is able to show that war and its preparation are aspects of progress leading to greater productivity and socialism. This I find not only economically untenable but ethically repugnant.

E.W.

TURNER — OR PRINCIPLES

Hampstead Branch has decided unanimously to charge A. Turner of Paddington Branch "with action detrimental to the Party, in that he agitates among Party members for the abolition of the Declaration of Principles".

Evidently the patience of the members of this branch, after two years of the most fatuous and sterile cross-talk, (it cannot be called "discussion") whose sole aim has been the advertisement of a so-called "personality" (A. Turner) is exhausted.

Each week the news is now coming in, showing the harm done to the Party, by the members' foolish toleration of Turner's attempts to undermine its existence.

Opponents (e.g. "Freedom Press") sell the copies of "Forum" containing his articles with glee. Pieces are appearing in Trade Union papers (e.g. "Operative Builders") and public journals (e.g. "Workers News Bulletin") saying that the S.P.G.B. has now dropped its Principles.

Members are leaving the Party in disgust.

The controversy between Turner and the Party has long since passed the stage of any semblance to reality. For months and years now, Turner has talked the most incredible nonsense, ranging from the banal platitudes against Socialism and the working class which we get from our opponents at every public meeting (*Forum* 17, page 13) to his announcement of the passing of the Law of Gravity at the last delegate conference.

Unable to be an ordinary member joining with other men and women as comrades in a common effort in a Party; deterred, even if it means becoming the Party clown and getting expelled, to occupy the centre of the stage at any cost, he has posed as the universal authority on everything, laying down the law for everybody else on subjects, the names of which he can hardly spell. Thus, at one gathering he lectured an audience (which included doctors in the Party) on Chromosomes. At another he airily wipes physics

out of existence in a couple of rhetorical, though ungrammatical, phrases.

Though openly declaring that he cannot do simple arithmetic, he finds no difficulty in expounding on Relativity.

A self-confessed illiterate ("I can't write") he has not hesitated to tell Party writers what to write, and Party speakers what to say and how they should say it, while also saying "they are afraid of their audiences". (*Forum*, No. 3)

Pursuing his tedious theme anent the obsolescence of the Party Principles because "everything has changed" in the last fifty years, he has publicly announced, to an astonished audience of about fifteen people, that "Science does not exist" (T.U. Club, September, 1952.).

History doesn't exist either. If A. Turner had been alive 500 years ago Socialism would have been established. (*Forum*, No. 3, page 8).

So-called "Forums" were held at the Party office whose only purpose was a platform from which this member could publicise himself, for him to state his (not the Party's) position, and display what he imagines is his eloquence.

The longer these ridiculous verbal duels went on, the more empty and boring they became, until the audience dwindling to nil, they folded up.

At one of these forums Turner announced that "you cannot capture political power". "A Socialist Party cannot aim at getting control of the Governmental machinery" (*Forum* 17, page 13).

At another he discoursed learnedly on Streptomycin, Streptococci and human equality. Though it is doubtful whether he can distinguish between a microscope and a telescope, he scrapes Biology off in a sentence.

At Paddington Branch one evening he announced that "canvassing at elections was a waste of time, because you could not make a Socialist in three weeks".

The faithful few in Paddington Branch, who hang on the lips of their Edgware Road Eugene Duhring with the devotion of well-trained sheep-dogs, drank this in with murmurs of admiration.

Big Brother had spoken!

Indeed, it is the moronic adulation of these idiots which has fed Turner's inordinate vanity and landed him in his present predicament.

Search through A. Turner's articles, listen to his incessant harangues, mainly on other people's dishonesty (yes, he is also a great authority on dishonesty) you cannot find one single fact, not a scrap of knowledge; only endless diatribes about the injustices he suffers and others unfairness, the whole thing based on his "position" i.e. Turner's fluctuating and fleeting "opinions".

At last he has gone too far. Not because he disagrees with us; but because he disagrees while still a member, there is only one thing to be done.

In defence of his individualist position he will doubtless claim that he was "invited" to "state his position" and thereby seek to imply that the Party is responsible for it.

This is a piece of impudent nonsense to oppose its principles. Even if they had, the responsibility is still in the man who does it.

Starting off, four years ago, with the rubbish about "telling people what Socialism will be like" (*Forum* No. 3.), passing on to "the improvement of the workers by Capitalism", (*Forum* No. 3), discovering next that the working class has nothing to do with Socialism and that you cannot capture political power, anyway, (*Forum* No. 3, page 17), he had a fit of temper when the E.C. refused to appoint him speaker in June, 1954, and resigned from the Party; only to withdraw the resignation at the next Branch meeting (Letter to all branches, June 14th, 1954).

Asked at the last members meeting whether the statement by Trotman in the current *Forum* that "he said in debate at the Party

office that he did not accept one word of the Party's Declaration of Principles or its object either", was correct, he said in the hearing of 150 members "Of course it isn't true. I don't disagree with anything completely. I don't completely disagree with everything in the Conservative Party or in the Catholic Church".

One member afterwards called this "A lame and sorry reply". Members of the S.P.G.B. sign a document declaring that they do completely disagree with the Conservatives, and are hostile to them and the Church. After stating that "everything in the Party principles leads up to Clause 6", Turner says he rejects Clause 6 (*Forum* No. 26).

but still agrees with the Declaration of Principles.

The whole business has now degenerated into a futile squabble unrelated to Socialism. Soon it will come to an end. Comb the agenda of the forthcoming Conference and you will not find a single proposal by Paddington Branch on anything.

Turner's dissenting views, on Socialism, Class Struggle, Political Power, Democracy, Criticism, Surplus Values, History, Mass Production have all evaporated, being replaced by the monotonous refrain "You are dishonest".

Like most people who abandon principles, he has become mentally bankrupt.

In the hard and difficult days to come we shall try to forget this pathetic episode, preferring to recall with pride and affection the stirring days of September, 1939, when like Casabianca, he stood on the burning deck, "whence all but he had fled".

If, even now, a majority of the members of the Party will not expel an arrowed opponent merely because he was once a good speaker, those who do support the Declaration of Principles, and are not concerned with personalities, will have to seriously consider the formation of a Socialist Party.

HARRY YOUNG

DISSENT AND TOLERANCE

Reply to Harry Young

On Tuesday, 8th March, the committee responsible for the publication of *Forum* placed an article before the E.C. The article was headed "TURNER OR PRINCIPLES" and was written by H. Young.

In the opinion of the majority of the *Forum* committee the article was unsuitable for publication prior to conference, on the grounds that it was likely to prejudice the delegates who will have to hear the charge the E.C. has brought against me. The E.C. having had the article read to them, passed a resolution permitting the article to be published in the April issue of *Forum*.

I did not hear the article when it was read to the E.C. nor did I hear much of the discussion, as I did not arrive until the vote was about to be taken. When the vote had been taken I asked the E.C. whether I would have the right to reply—this was granted. I had no idea of the contents of the article until several hours later when I read the copy which had been typed for me. Had I known its contents I would have protested there and then. Having read this outburst, I have no intention of replying to it except to say that I am sorry that Comrade Young can feel such hatred towards any human being, let alone a fellow Socialist, for, to write such untrue and malicious statements can only spring from unhealthy hatred.

I can only hope that Young's article is not a dress rehearsal for the conference,

because if it is, I doubt the wisdom of being present at 2.30 p.m. on Good Friday when the charge is to be heard. As it is, I have written to the E.C. protesting against the part they have played in permitting such an article to be published before the charge has been heard by the conference delegates.

At this stage I only wish to state that as far as the charge is concerned, I will endeavour to answer my critics at the proper place—THE CONFERENCE. But on the wider and more important issue "DISSENT AND TOLERANCE" I bring a non-socialist to speak on my behalf:—

"Why is it that totalitarianisms arouse our deepest hostility?" The best answer is not so much in their immoral quality as in the fact that they are inherently unstable because they are at war with our only trustworthy way of living in accord with the facts. For it is only by trial and error, by insistent scrutiny and by readiness to re-examine presently accredited conclusions that we have risen, so far as in fact we have risen, from our brutish ancestors, and in our loyalty to these habits lies our only chance, not merely of progress, but even of survival. They were not indeed a part of our aboriginal endowment: Man, as he emerged, was not prodigally equipped to master the infinite diversity of his environment. Obviously, enough of us did manage to get through, but it has been a statistical

survival, for the individual's native powers of adjustment are by no means enough for his personal safety, any more than are those of other creatures. The precipitate of our experience is far from absolute verity, and our exasperated resentment at all dissent is a sure index of our doubts.

All discussion, all debate, all dissidence tends to question, and in consequence to upset, existing convictions: that is precisely its purpose and its justification. He is, indeed, a "subversive" who disputes those precepts that I most treasure and seeks to persuade me to substitute his own. He may be of those to whom any forcible sanction of conformity is anathema; yet it remains true that he is trying to bring about my apostasy, and I hate him just in proportion as I fear his success. Heretics have been hateful from the beginning of recorded time; they have been ostracized, exiled, tortured, maimed and butchered; but it has generally proved impossible to smother them, and when it has not, the society that has succeeded has always declined."

Mr. Hand, retired chief judge of the Second Circuit United States Court of Appeals, speaking before the annual meeting in New York of the American Jewish Committee. ("Time", Feb. 14th, 1955)

A. W. L. TURNER

THE SOCIALIST MOVEMENT

A Re-examination

This is a statement by a number of Party members who have taken part in the discussion on the Party's Object and Principles during the past year or two. We who have signed it are not necessarily committed to every detail, but are agreed on the general propositions it contains, and are agreed also that the Party discussions have helped to change and clarify these views. This has made us feel justified in now responding to the many requests we have had for a statement of our position.

We hope that this statement will help to clear up some misconceptions and enable the issues involved to be discussed more widely and with as little as possible of animosity or interruption of current Party work.

But before we begin we must make two things clear. One is that we are not speaking as an alien or hostile group, but as Party members whose views and proposals have been developed within and by the Party. The other is that the changes we suggest in outlook or activity are not put forward as an ultimatum, or as a programme to be now adopted. We conceive them simply as representing the likely evolution of the socialist movement, and as a natural development of what the Party already is and does. That development (if any is needed) cannot be established by resolution, but can only grow spontaneously out of free and patient discussion.

Let us begin by considering the question of the basis of membership. We suggest that the basis of membership could be agreement on principles somewhat as follows:

UNDERSTANDING that social change is continuous, and that change in

men's attitudes and their social institutions is one process;

RECOGNISING that the development of present (capitalist) society include the changing of the institutions of property and authority (the institutions of class and power and privilege) in the direction of socialism;

RECOGNISING AND DESIRING socialism as a way of life characterised by production solely for use as an integral part of a freer, more equalitarian and more harmonious society; and

UNDERSTANDING that the purpose of the Socialist Party is to urge on the emergence of socialist society by encouraging the growth of socialist tendencies in attitudes and institutions.

In this statement we give our reasons for the view that these principles are necessary to characterise a socialist organisation to-day. But we repeat that we do not suggest that the Party should now be asked to adopt them. What we do suggest is that if they are more in line with social needs, then the Party's principles as at present formulated will come to be interpreted in the spirit of the alternative here set out.

The mode of verbal reformulation is not our immediate concern. We are concerned only that this alternative statement of socialist principles and policy should be discussed by the membership as a whole, without haste, and for so long as it takes to bring out all that it implies.

We will deal briefly in turn with each of the four principles above.

I

UNDERSTANDING that social change is continuous, and that change in

men's attitudes and their social institutions is one process.

If we define *institutions* as the relatively fixed ways of doing things which operate in a given social field, and *attitudes* as the relatively fixed outlooks of the people working in that field, we can say generally that a change in one will always be accompanied by a change in the other. The social habits (institutions) and the mental habits (attitudes) are the same thing in so far as they are expressions of the work being done in that field, that is, of the actions and interactions of those concerned in it.

The relationship between one social field and another is not necessarily so close. This means that attitudes and institutions in different social fields are not always changing in the same direction or at the same rate.

There must be some interaction, no matter how indirect, between any two social fields, but some fields will have much closer interrelation than others. Where the interrelation is very close, two or more fields may behave as a functional unit. In the degree to which this happens, attitudes and institutions of one must be consistent with those of the others. In the degree to which the interrelation is remote, the various fields may show divergent attitudes and dissimilar institutions. But since each social field is part of the environment (near or remote) of every other, mutually conditioning each other, there is a tendency towards conformity in all fields. Further, we can show that this tendency has a significant general direction.

In the course of history, the changing activities of men continually change their institutions. New ones emerge, sometimes in a limited field or in relative isolation.

They are said to be "ahead of their time". Others lag behind the general development, and are called anachronisms. But the inter-relation between social fields becomes closer as society develops, and this on a world-wide scale. The attitudes and institutions of one social field are less and less able to develop independently and maintain themselves in isolation.

This is in line with what the Party already accepts, although the Party may express it differently; as, for instance, in the *Socialist Manifesto*, where we say (p.17): "(Capitalism) found the means and methods of production crude, scattered and ill-ordered . . . it leaves them practically one gigantic machine of wealth production, orderly, highly productive, economical of labour, closely inter-related . . ."

Periods of relatively rapid and radical social change (revolution) are those in which a significant trend has accumulated sufficient force in the sufficiently large number of fields to sweep through the remainder. "Snowball", "avalanche" and "emergence" are all useful analogies to help us to visualise the complexities of social change. The Party has developed two theories of how socialism will come—the snowball and the avalanche. But these are faultily presented when they imply that people's increasing understanding of socialism develops in isolation from, and independent of, the institutions of capitalism, which are alleged to remain unchanging.

For example, Gilmac says, in FORUM February '54: "Capitalism will not evolve gradually into socialism; up to the moment of establishing the new system, capitalism will retain all its main features—private property, commodity production, the wages system, the State. The establishment of socialism will be a sudden basic change, involving the abolition of property."

In the previous July issue, Rab puts a point of view which is nearer our own when he says: "I do not think that capitalist control of state machinery can ignore a growing sentiment. I believe all sorts of concessions will be made to powerful socialist convictions. I anticipate that a 20% socialist electorate calls for far different behaviour by the capitalists than the current .0001%."

It seems to us that the way Gilmac puts it is to fall into the same error as do those who ask our speakers who will do the dirty work, or what will happen if people are greedy. These questioners are projecting some present-day conditions into a social context in which they are inappropriate. They grant that social institutions will have changed, but assume that mental habits will have remained unchanged. The Party is

tarred with the same brush if it fails to recognise that the spread of socialist attitudes can only come concurrently with changes in the same direction in other aspects of society.

We can accept the fact of snowball accumulation, and we can agree that there may well be some measure of avalanche at some stage, but we cannot accept them as applying to ideas in isolation. We can accept them only as applying to ideas and institutions alike. We hold that in the actual movement of capitalism there are changes in the direction of socialism, however halting or lame or confused, and that the more we can make people see that this is the general and significant direction of social change, the better can we help to accelerate the movement.

II

RECOGNISING that developments of present (capitalist) society include the changing of the institutions of property and authority (the institutions of class and power and privilege) in the direction of socialism.

We do not say that all developments of existing society are making for socialism in the same way or at the same rate. Nor are we just referring to the vaster social movements which are so obviously paving the way for socialism, such as the approach of a world society, and the growth of man's control over his environment, both technical and human. What we want to show is that there are significant changes in social institutions to-day in a socialist direction, and that this is the most consistent direction of social change.

Let us deal first with the question of free access to the means of living, that is, distribution according to need, money being out of the question. Any application of this principle, however partial, any encroachment on classical commodity relationships, should have our attention. In our view the area of this encroachment is expanding.

One example is the growth of social insurance. The principle of all insurance is the flat rate payment and the receipt of benefits according to need (the accident or loss sustained). In national insurance the premiums vary a little in accordance with ability to pay (as between juveniles and adults, men and women, etc.); and the principle of need is extended to benefits paid to persons married or single with children and in respect of sickness, injury, unemployment, maternity, old age, etc.—bearing little relation, for the individual, to the money paid in.

Insurance is not socialism, but the attitudes and institutions of paying into common pool and taking out what you need are more akin

to socialism than to shopkeeping. There is no delusion that the contributors as a whole (the workers) get their medicine or cot blankets for nothing. But in the same sense no more will people get things for nothing under socialism. What society doesn't put into the pool by working for it, can't be taken out. It remains that the characters of contributions in accordance with ability and benefit in accordance with need are socialist characters, and the development of such institutions make socialism more thinkable, more operable, and more matter-of-course and natural.

Such institutions and attitudes constitute one of the two most consistent qualitative changes in the evolution of capitalism. In the 350 years of capitalism between Elizabeths I and II there has been a progressively increasing allocation of national wealth to words providing goods or services to which access is free: roads and bridges, parks and playgrounds, reading and writing, water and drainage, books and barristers, gramophone records and refuse removal. The Poor Law Act of 1601 was a tiny snowball of cold charity which has become an avalanche of local and central government handouts.

The designation "Welfare State" signifies acknowledgment of a radical change from the relationships of cash and carry. To the socialist it has a different significance, for although it is only a change within capitalism it has its face towards the much vaster, universal, and therefore qualitatively different freedom of access to the means of life and organisation of society on the basis of needs and abilities which is socialism. The face is blind, and in our view it is precisely the function of the socialist to put eyes in it.

The second of the two most consistent qualitative changes in the evolution of capitalism is in the development of institutions and attitudes which promote the social equality of persons independent of age, sex, colour or ability.

In education, for instance, not only has there been a continuing trend towards equalising free educational facilities, but there is also an increasing concern to provide facilities in accordance with needs, without the social stigmas or distinctions which attended the crude division into so-called bright and so-called dull. Again, there are all sorts of capitalist reasons and capitalist limitations in the process, but its social effect is to expand the acceptance of the social equality of all people.

The same influence is at work in the treatment of the sick, in the care of the institutional poor, in penal reform, in the treatment of young offenders as more sinned

against than sinning, and in the desperate efforts to get neglected or orphaned children out of institutions and into family a background.

In all these instances there is the same revolt against their treatment as "cases" or as "units" of poverty and crime, and the acknowledgment that they are human beings. Like social insurance, this is not socialism. They are capitalist sick and capitalist poor, and capitalist sinned against or sinners. But the change is towards equality of consideration which, universalised, is socialism.

The same equalitarian tendency is apparent in the machinery of state. Members of all classes are being brought into government at every level, on the ground primarily of their ability to do the job. This widening delegation of authority (the wider dispersion of functions which were formerly the preserve of a small hereditary caste) changes the character of their functions by reducing the element of autocracy and privilege and increasing the element of social administration. As with the term "Welfare State", the change in the operation to be given a name—Bureaucracy.

This is not the old German and Chinese Bureaucracy, concerned merely with ruling. It is an instrument for the collection and interpretation of information—production figures, population, consumption, transport and distribution figures—including information about the detailed working of shops, offices, fields and factories which were once regarded as trade secrets, not to be revealed to any outsider. Many long steps have been taken in the direction of that free access to society's vital statistics which must characterise socialism, and new bureaucracies like O.E.E.C. show that further steps are still being taken.

The cumulative effect of these changes is that power and authority are more widely delegated (for the collection and organisation of the data), while policy itself becomes more and more determined by the data, and less by personal discretion. The shape of the institutions and attitudes we call "power" and "authority" are changed by imperceptible degrees. But the blind face, in this case again, turns towards allocation of jobs in accordance with ability and the "social administration of things".

As one more example, let us look at the changes in property institutions. "A general weakening in the ideas tied up with property ownership . . . has been provoked by social development during the century, including the mass destruction of property during wars,

the changing personnel of the owners and the movement from direct ownership of industries to ownership through share and bond-holding. Property ownership, in the narrow sense, no longer has the universal hold upon people's minds that it had 100 years ago. Ideas are changing. The general insecurity which world wars have disseminated has helped in this process." (Gilmac, FORUM, Feb. '54.)

One must remember, also that one of the features of property which we most object to is the assumption that he who owns something can do as he likes with it, even if this is clearly harmful to the community at large. This assumption is being questioned more and more to-day, and has resulted in such measures as the establishment of a Ministry of Town and Country Planning.

"Ownership" is a word summing up a very mixed bag of rights, and the contents of the bag are continually being changed. But these changes have the same general direction as the other changes mentioned; property moves progressively away from the private to the social. The competitive mature of capital (as Evans puts it in *Forum*, Oct. 52) "urges on the concentration of capital in the State; State control furthers the depersonalising of property; this depersonalisation begins the expropriation which is the socialist aim. It begins to change domination of class by class into anonymous administration of things."

It is not possible to do more than touch on these changes, but the fact of change cannot be denied, and the general direction of the change seems to us to be away from commodity relationships and towards the relationships of socialism. And if it is recognised that this is taking place it becomes not only more difficult, but quite unnecessary, to accept the view that socialism will come as a sudden break with capitalism.

In the gradual development of things like free access, the increase in the administrative aspects of the State, the weakening and breaking down of property ideas, the increasing inter-dependence of social spheres and units, the movement towards treating people simply as human beings—in all these ways, and in many more besides, socialism can be seen taking shape in existing society.

3

RECOGNISING AND DESIRING socialism as a way of life characterised by production solely for use as an integral part of a freer, more equalitarian and more harmonious society.

We recognise the value of defining socialist society in terms of its mode of production, but think our propaganda should be more positively directed to expounding the human ends of which that mode of production is the means.

If we accept the view (as we must) that society is the mode of existence of the human species, we must acknowledge also that it is the mode not simply of obtaining material wealth, but the faculties, maintaining the sense of individuality and the sense of belonging, of providing not simply assurance of physical needs but security of acceptance as a person. These needs (which are all aspects of one another) are satisfied in varying ways and in varying degrees as society changes.

Production for use, and the satisfaction of all these needs, go together under socialism. This is the reason why there will be abundance under Socialism. The abilities of all members of society will be tapped to the full, as never before. This means that the problem of how to tap the full energies of men and women is a problem for socialists. It is not simply a question of "removing obstacles" and "creating conditions", but of working actively for the understanding and furtherance of *human co-operation*.

Human co-operation is not a matter for airy generalisations but something which is the subject of proper study. Social scientists have become increasingly concerned with the problems of human co-operation. This has been very largely because of the capitalist interest in "incentives". While the achievement of the 19th century was the development of machine technique, the problem of the 20th century is that of *human technique*. But although it is of interest to capitalists for the purposes of profit, it is none the less of interest to socialists from the point of view of understanding what socialism means as a way of living.

Throughout our whole conception of socialism runs the thread of *equality*. Under capitalism, the intention to treat others as equals (as like oneself, as human beings, as ends in themselves) can hardly be more than a pious wish. And yet managers concerned with profit have found that the closer they come to treating workers in this way, the more productive do those workers become. The less they insist they have power over the worker to make him do his job, and the more they emphasise that all equally have functions to perform in a common endeavour, the better the results.

The more equalitarian character of socialist society is obviously a concomitant of production solely for use, that is, of free and

equal participation in social production and free and equal access to the social product. But this order of equality, reaching to the roots of society, inhabits also the flower and the fruit. All relations between people (however remote from the "field of production") become freed from the poison of status resting on privilege and power. Every human being is relieved of the crippling burden of self-defence, of the need to go girded and guarded against loss of face, of the suspicion of intentions, of false fronts, of the demoralising disparities between precept and practice which bewilder the young and falsify every adult sentiment.

This welter of false values is counterpart of the welter of false needs, the load of rubbish to which our godlike powers of production are geared. "Production for use", which appears superficially as an economic category, is thus in fact a cultural one. It can exist only as part of a social whole in which faculties of men both as producers and consumers, making social co-operation and the sense of self the essence of each other, raising both to a level we barely glimpse.

We emphasise here the integral nature, the oneness, or equality, social co-operation, individuality, and production for use—not so much because it needs to be said, as between socialists, but to emphasise also that any effort or aspiration which is equalitarian, co-operative, etc., is a contribution to socialism. The more we realise the unity of society (of "base" and "superstructure", for instance), and the unity therefore of social change, the more our essentially educative function is seen to involve participation in the activities of men which face towards socialism.

Our concept of socialism is thus no static one. It is implied in what has been said that all the concepts which we see as most certainly true about socialism as a way of life are limiting concepts; that is, a process is going on which has socialism as its limit. This means that we can always go on working

for the fuller realisation of socialism; there is no point at which we stop doing that and start doing something else.

People with predominantly socialist attitudes are today a tiny minority (and even then the attitudes are streaked and distorted by contact with a capitalist world) and institutions with predominantly socialist tendencies are a tiny minority (and similarly streaked and distorted). But it is all a question of more or less. Attitudes and instructions are more or less socialist, and elements within both are often conflictingly more or less socialist. The emergence of socialism is the emergence of the more out of the less, rather than the all out of the whole—and this in attitudes and institutions together.

Along with all other socialists, we hold that there will be production solely for use, free access to what is produced, no exclusive ownership, etc. It is because we are so sure about these attributes of socialism that we can say that changes in existing society towards free access, and so on, are changes in a socialist direction.

On the other hand, there are many details of the actual running of socialist society that are at the moment more speculative. Our views on detailed social processes must necessarily be less definite than our formulation of the general principles. In a world in which everything else is changing, it would be foolish to expect our more particular concepts of socialism to remain static. That is why we must keep discussing the details of socialism—and advocating what we think is desirable. It is a most necessary part of the socialism-developing process.

4

UNDERSTANDING that the purpose of the Socialist Party is to urge on the emergence of socialist society by encouraging the growth of socialist tendencies in attitudes and institutions.

If we recognise that capitalism moves towards socialism, what do we, as socialists, do with this knowledge? Our view is that we should discuss, hold meetings and publish literature to show where more socialist attitudes and institutions are arising in society. We should try to establish lines of communication between ourselves and people who are working in socialist ways. We should look for those sides of every social movement and every existing organisation which are tending in a socialist direction. We should speak and write about them, and get the people concerned to speak and write to us. We should make them known to each other and to ourselves, and show how their efforts are

helping socialism to come, and how they could do so more effectively.

Facilities for exchange of information and views would be set up for all those who are consciously or unwittingly working in a socialist direction—and that can include teachers, reformers, scientists (particularly social scientists: we have always used their work, e.g. in combatting racial prejudice), advisers, writers—workers in every field of social activity. They would be made more aware of the work of other people and movements whose activity represents some aspect of the growth of socialism. The efforts of each would thus become more consciously and positively directed towards socialism.

The Party would not lose its identity in these movements: on the contrary, it would more coherently and positively establish its socialist identity. For in order to develop the consciousness of the socialist element in other people's activities, it must above all apply itself to the presentation of socialism as a science and a way of life.

Thus, in short, the Party exchanges identification with the working class for identification with society's incipient socialism. By exchanging for the exposure of the limitations of reforms the clarification of their socialist direction, by seeking out and plugging their socialist-leaning element, it extends the horizon of men and movements without slapping them down. The revolutionary act in our time is one which exchanges the nugatory policy of sympathetic opposition to reforms for the positive function of socialist participation in the ordinary affairs of ordinary men, precipitating the socialism which society generates.

F. EVANS (Lewisham)

S. R. PARKER (Paddington)

J. C. ROWAN (Hampstead)

A. W. L. TURNER (Paddington)

NOTE!

Articles should be submitted in ink and on one side of the paper only.

Correspondence and articles should be sent to FORUM, S.P.G.B., 12 Clapham High Street, London, S.W.4. Subscriptions: 12 months, 7/6d. 6 months, 3/9d. Cheques and P.O.'s should be made payable to: E. Lake, S.P.G.B.