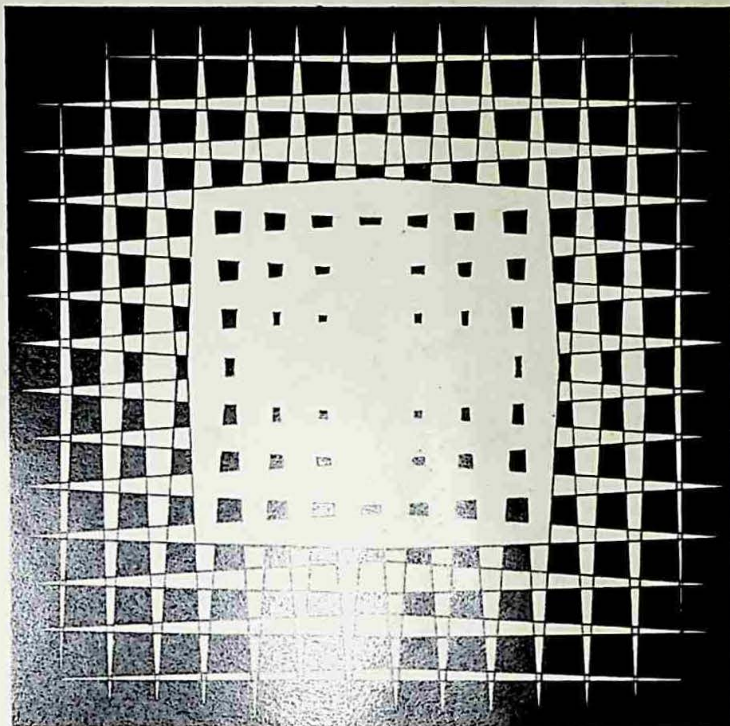

1967 NEW LEFT MAY DAY MANIFESTO

Two shillings and sixpence

this manifesto has been edited for a group of socialist workers, writers and teachers by
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For nearly eighty years, the international labour movement has taken May Day as a festival: an international celebration and commitment. On this May Day, 1967, as we look at our world, we see the familiar priorities of money and power, but now with one difference: that their agent, in Britain, is a Labour Government. It is a strange paradox, which must be faced and understood. In an economic crisis, with the wages of millions of workers frozen, the wife of a Labour minister launches a Polaris nuclear submarine. While thousands of our people are without homes, while our schools are overcrowded and our health service breaking under prolonged strain, a Labour cabinet orders what it calls a new generation of military planes, as if that, now, was the priority meaning of generation. In a hungry world, Britain appears east of Suez not as a friend but as what Labour politicians call a military presence: battleships, bombing planes, armed troops.

This is now the dangerous gap: between name and reality; between vision and power; between our human meanings and the deadening language of a false political system. In an increasingly educated society, in which millions of people are capable of taking part in decisions, in which there is all the experience of a mature labour movement and a political democracy, in which there is a growing and vital confidence in our ability to run our lives, we are faced with something alien and thwarting: a manipulative politics, often openly aggressive and cynical, which has taken our meanings and changed them, taken our causes and used them; which seems our creation, yet now stands against us, as the agent of the priorities of money and power.

How has this happened? This is the only real question to ask, on this May Day, so that we can find ways of ending the danger and the insult that the political situation in Britain now increasingly represents. The sound of protest is rising again, in many parts of the country, and this is a critical moment. The years of radical campaigning, from Suez through Aldermaston to the early sixties, made connections that still hold, groups that still function. The Labour movement, in the unions and in the constituencies, has worked and struggled with a remarkable resilience. And it seemed, for a time, just a few years ago, that all this effort was coming together, into a new move forward. While the Tory illusion disintegrated, the Labour Party, under the new leadership of Harold Wilson, caught up, for a while, the sense of movement, the practical urgency of a change of direction. After the defensive years, we saw the hope and the possibility of a really new start. There was a notable quickening in the Labour Party itself, and the new radicals, campaigning for human alternatives to a nuclear strategy, to social poverty and to cultural neglect, came, in majority, to work for a Labour government: never uncritically, but with a measured and seemingly reasonable hope..

After those years of shared effort, we are all, who worked for the Labour Party, in a new situation. For the sense of failure—a new kind of failure, in apparent victory—is implacably there, in every part of the Left. Not the crowing over failure; not the temporary irritation; but a deeply concerned and serious recognition of a situation we had none of us wholly understood. The obstacles to progress, once so confidently named for our eager combined assault, may now, for the government, have become a platform. But, however plausible the rationalisations, however ingenious the passing re-assurances, hardly anyone is deceived. A definition has failed, and we are looking for new definitions and directions.

At any time, in the history of a people, such a moment is critical. For to recognise failure can be to live with failure: to move, as it would be

easy to do, away from politics, and let the game, the sound, go on over our heads. There will always, it is true, be an irreducible nucleus of active resisters: the nonconformists, as has happened so often in Britain, losing their impetus to change the society but digging in, in their own circles, to maintain their positions. This minority is still large in Britain, by comparison with earlier periods: large enough, by any standards, to make certain that a living radicalism is maintained. Yet it seems to many of us, when all the pressures have been weighed, that now is not the moment for that kind of withdrawal. On the contrary, it is now, during the general failure, that it is time for a new, prolonged and connected campaign.

What failed to happen, in the early sixties, was a bringing together, into a general position, of the many kinds of new political and social response and analysis, around which local work had been done and local stands made. The consequence of this failure is now very apparent. While the positions were fragmentary, they could be taken, without real commitment, into the simple rhetoric of a new Britain. Now, as that rhetoric breaks, the fragments are thrown back at us: this issue against that. So a failure in one field—the persistence of poverty—can be referred to another—the economic crisis—and this in turn to another—the military expenditure—and this again to another—our foreign policy—and this back to the economic crisis, in an endless series of references and evasions. And then the character of the general crisis, within which these failures are symptoms, can never be grasped or understood or communicated. What we need is a description of the crisis as a whole, in which not only the present mistakes and illusions, but also the necessary and urgent changes, can be intelligently connected.

It is our basic case, in this manifesto, that the separate campaigns in which we have all been active, and the separate issues with which we have all been concerned, run back, in their essence, to a single political system and its alternatives. We believe that the system we now oppose can only survive by a willed separation of issues, and the resulting fragmentation of consciousness. Our own first position is that all the issues—industrial and political, international and domestic, economic and cultural, humanitarian and radical—are deeply connected; that what we oppose is a political, economic and social system; that what we work for is a different whole society. The problems of whole men and women are now habitually relegated to specialised and disparate fields, where the society offers to manage or adjust them by this or that consideration or technique. Against this, we define socialism again as a humanism: a recognition of the social reality of man in all his activities, and of the consequent struggle for the direction of this reality by and for ordinary men and women.

Outline

We present our case under the following headings:

1. Labour and the New Capitalism.
2. The Social Realities.
3. The New Imperialism.
4. War and Peace.
5. The Politics of Socialism.

1. Labour and the new capitalism

We have first to describe an unfamiliar but now critical phenomenon: what is called, in official arguments, post-capitalism or a mixed economy; but what is in fact a new kind of capitalism, which presents crucial problems of recognition and description, and which leads to political problems of a radically new kind.

The New Capitalism

Both in this country and elsewhere in the world, capitalism has to adapt and change in order to survive. In Britain, the attempt to manage such an adaptation has been the main task of post-war governments—in a piece-meal form under successive Conservative governments, and now, with gathering force, under a Labour Government. Their purpose has been to reshape an economy in relative decline, structurally imbalanced in relation to the outside world, backward in many sectors, paralysed by a slow rate of growth, by inflation, recession and balance of payments crises: and to create in its place a " new model " capitalism, based on organised, rapid expansion. An essential part of this strategy has been the containment and ultimate incorporation of the trade union movement. An essential pre-requisite is the redefinition of socialism itself, and the internal adaptation of the agencies for change—including the Labour Party—within some broad consensus. The current crisis is, then, a phase in the transition from one stage in capitalism to another. It is the crisis which occurs when a system, already beset by its own contradictions and suffering from prolonged entropy, nevertheless seeks to stabilise itself at a " higher " level.

New capitalism, though a development from free-market capitalism, is—in terms of its essential drives and its modes of operation and control—a distinct variant. It is an economic order dominated by private accumulation, where decisive economic power is wielded by the handful of very large industrial corporations in each sector. The scale of operation, the complex organisation, the advanced techniques required to man and control such units, and their pervasive impact upon society at large, are so great that the allocation of resources and the pattern of demand can no longer be left to the play of the free market. Technological innovation, the need for long-term, self-financed investment and growth, the desire to predict and pre-structure consumer demand—these factors have already substantially modified the mechanisms of free-market capitalism in practice. What is needed now, according to the controlling philosophy, is a further process of rationalisation, such as would enable societies to go over consciously to an administered price system, wage negotiation within the framework of agreed norms, managed demand, and the efficient, effective transmission of orders from the top to the bottom of the " chain of command." This would represent, in effect, a major stabilisation of the system. The free market, once the central image of capitalism, would be progressively by-passed for the sake of greater management and control, and the rewards of growth. It is this shift which makes some kind of planning imperative.

But planning in this sense does not mean what socialists have always understood—the subordination of private profit (and the directions which profit-maximisation imposes on the whole society) to social priorities. The fact that the same word is used to mean different things is important, for it is by way of this linguistic sleight-of-hand that Labour has mystified and confused its supporters, taking up the allegiance of the labour movement to one concept of planning while attaching another meaning, another kind of content, to the word in practice. Planning now means better forecasting, better coordination of investment and expansion decisions, a more purposeful control over demand. This enables the more technologically equipped and organized units in the private sector to pursue their goals more efficiently, more " rationally ". It also means more control over unions and over labour's power to bargain freely about wages. This involves another important transition. For in the course of this rationalisation of capitalism, the gap between private industry and the

State is narrowed. The State, indeed, comes to play a critical role. It makes itself responsible for the overall management of the economy by fiscal means. It must tailor the production of trained man-power to the needs of the economic system—a calculation to which many important pages in the Robbins Report on Higher Education were devoted. In the political field, it must hold the ring within which the necessary bargains are struck between competing interests. It must manipulate the public consensus in favour of these bargains, and take on the task directly—as it did in the seamen's strike—of intervening to whip labour into line behind the norms. In relation to labour and the unions, it is the State which draws the unions into the consensus, identifies them with the planning decisions and the fixing of norms, and thereby wins their collusion with the system.

Workers, of course, can only be expected to cooperate with the system if they regularly gain a share of the goods being produced. The first promise held out is that the State will be in a better position to manage the inflation-recession cycles which have beset the post-war economy. The second promise is that a stable system will be more efficient and productive, and that, so long as it works, labour will win its share in return for cooperation. When productivity rises, it is suggested, labour shares in the benefits. On the other hand, when the economy slows down labour cannot contract out since it has become a party to the bargain. This looks on the surface like a more rational way of guaranteeing rising standards of living: it is in fact a profound restructuring of the relationship between labour and capital. We saw above how the term " planning " has been maintained, but how its content has been redefined. The same can be said of the word " welfare ". Market capitalism was for a long time the enemy of the welfare state. In Britain, the welfare state was introduced as a modification of capitalism. Like wage increases, it represented a measure of redistribution and egalitarianism, cutting into profits, imposing human needs and social priorities on the profit system. But in Western European states of the modern capitalist type since the war, a welfare state in some form has come to be seen as a necessary element in organized capitalism: as is well known, some of these continental welfare provisions are more comprehensive now than the British system.

There is one vital difference, however, between this aspect of a modern capitalist economy and socialist economic models. Rising prosperity—whether in the form of higher wages, increased welfare or public spending —is not funded out of the redistribution of wealth from rich to poor. Redistribution would eat into the necessary mechanisms of private accumulation, internal reinvestment and the high rewards to management on which the whole system rests. Rising prosperity must, therefore, come out of the margin of increased growth and productivity. The existing distribution of wealth and power is taken as given. New wage claims can only be met by negotiation, out of the surplus growth, and controlled by a framework of agreed norms. The norms, however, are not the norms of social justice, human needs or the claims or equality: they are arrived at by calculating the percentage rise in productivity over a given period, and by bargaining at what proportion of that is the " necessary " return to capital, and what proportion is left over for wage increases and welfare costs. In effect, within this new system of bargaining, wage increases must be tied to productivity agreements (not to the claims of equality), and welfare becomes a supporting structure for modern capitalism (not an inroad into or a modification of the system). This is one of the crucial

markers between the new capitalism and the old, and between organized capitalism and socialism. It means that the rising prosperity of the working class is indissolubly linked with the growth and fortunes of private industry, since only by means of the productivity of industry will there be any wage or welfare surplus at all to bargain for. A successful modern capitalist system is therefore one in which people may enjoy a measure of increased abundance and prosperity provided there is growing productivity; but it is by definition not an egalitarian system in terms of income, wealth, opportunity, authority or power. There may be a levelling of social status; nevertheless, " open " capitalist societies, where stratification is not marked, are still closed systems of power. Market capitalism created the hostile conflict relations of a class-society: organized capitalism, where successful, seeks to end these conflicts, not by changing the real relations of property and power, but by suppressing all the human considerations of community and equality, in favour of the planned contentment of organized producers and consumers.

Modernisation

In the early nineteen-sixties, there was an open crisis of confidence in British society. The simplest versions of affluence and opportunity, which had sustained the Conservative Party in the fifties, were breaking down in the repeated confusion of stop-go economic policies. From the New Left there was already a socialist critique of the values of that kind of affluence, but now it was joined by a different set of arguments, which identified the weakness of British society as excessive deference to the past, with an out-of-date economic and political establishment. As the Macmillan government disintegrated, it was a matter of extreme importance which version of the crisis was adopted by the Labour Party. The urge for renewal, of a general kind, was indeed quite quickly taken up, and it seemed possible, for a time, that a very broad and strong front, for radical change, was in process of being created. What was actually happening, in the leadership of the Labour Party, can be seen now to be very different. As we compare the official rhetoric of the pre-1964 campaigns with the Government's present performance, what comes across with most telling force is the continuous process of redefinition, the major shifts of emphasis, the progressive narrowing of horizons. Mr. Wilson himself led the Party in the pre-1964 period into a savage assault on Tory stop-go economic policies. He attacked the speculation in land, the housing scandal, the control by " aristocratic connections ", " inherited wealth " and " speculative finance " over the commanding heights of British industry. Abroad, he scorned the " nostalgic illusions ", the " nuclear posturings " of the Tory Party. He drew the connection himself between the economy, defence and foreign policy, and the social services, in 1964:

" Yes, we can borrow, that's where 13 years of Conservative rule have brought us. You can get into pawn, but don't then talk about an independent defence policy. If you borrow from some of the world's bankers you will quickly find you lose another kind of independence, because of the deflationary policies and the cuts on social services that will be imposed on a government that has got itself into that position ".

In the ensuing months, however, the whole strategy disintegrated, the radical mood was dissipated and quite new emphases asserted themselves. Labour's mission to " transform " British society narrowed to the more

ambiguous call to " the nation " to build the " New Britain ". Then the " New Britain " was itself re-defined—first, in terms of " the scientific revolution ", then in terms of " modernisation ". Many of the crucial shifts of emphasis and meaning took place within the context of that term, " modernisation ". But what did modernisation mean? In the first place, it meant overcoming inefficiency—the cause to which all the weaknesses of the British economy were attributed. The British economy is indeed inefficient in many ways. But to abstract its deficiencies from the general character of British society was wilfully misleading. The problems of inefficiency cannot be detached, for instance, from problems of foreign policy, since some of the economy's heaviest burdens follow from the particular international policy which successive British governments continued to pursue. It cannot be separated from the gross inequalities, in terms of opportunity and reward, the immense discrepancies in terms of power, authority and control, between those who manage men and those who sell their labour. Neither can it be abstracted from the whole drive to consolidate a new capitalist economy which successive governments also pursued—a policy involving the emergence of larger private economic units, the control and absorption of the trade unions, the redefinition of the role of the State in economic activity. If we want to test the validity of modernisation as an economic panacea, we have to see it in its real context: as not a programme but a stratagem—part of the language and tactics of the new capitalist consolidation.

Modernisation is, indeed, the " theology " of the new capitalism. It opens up a perspective of change—but at the same time, it mystifies the process, and sets limits to it. Attitudes, habits, techniques, practices must change: the system of economic and social power, however, remains unchanged. Modernisation fatally short-circuits the formation of social goals—any discussion of long-term purposes is made to seem utopian, in the down-to-earth, pragmatic climate which modernisation generates. The discussion about " modernised Britain " is not about what sort of society, qualitatively, is being aimed at, but simply about how modernisation is to be achieved. All programmes and perspectives are treated instrumentally. As a model of social change, modernisation cruedly foreshortens the historical development of society. Modernisation is the ideology of the never-ending present. The whole past belongs to " traditional " society, and modernisation is a technical means for breaking with the past without creating a future. All is now: restless, visionless, faithless: human society diminished to a passing technique. No confrontations of power, values or interests, no choice between competing priorities, are envisaged or encouraged. It is a technocratic model of society—conflict-free and politically neutral, dissolving genuine social conflicts and issues in the abstractions of " the scientific revolution ", " consensus ", " productivity ". Modernisation presumes that no group in the society will be called upon to bear the costs of the scientific revolution—as if all men have an equal chance in shaping up the consensus, or as if, by some process of natural law, we all benefit equally from a rise in productivity. " Modernisation " is thus a way of masking what the real costs would be of creating in Britain a truly modern society.

Secondly, " modernisation " is identified with " planning ". But the present Labour government's policies amount, in fact, to the continuation and consolidation of that form of capitalist planning whose foundations were laid by Mr. Maudling and Mr. Selwyn Lloyd in the final years of the Conservatives, symbolised in N.E.D.C. and N.I.C. The Government's Incomes Policy is a remodelled version of Mr. Selwyn Lloyd's guiding

light—just as Mr. Callaghan's " period of severe restraint " is another version of Mr. Lloyd's " wage pause ". The style of planning which Labour adopted is not even a means by which the economic drives of capitalism can be modified by some overall framework of social priorities; it is " indicative " planning, the dove-tailing and rationalization of business decisions and targets. Labour " planning " is thus actively furthering the transition—under way before Labour came to power, but now considerably advanced—from a market capitalist economy to an organized capitalism centred on long-term planning and prediction, with State intervention and control to sustain capitalist enterprise, the inclusion of public capital in the private monopoly field (North Sea Gas, for example) and the application of private commercial practices to the public sector (as in the liner trains dispute).

It is a striking historical irony that the consensus on which the new capitalism relies could be achieved in Britain only through the agency of a Labour government. One has only to watch the confused response of the trade union leadership to the Incomes Policy, the wages freeze and the establishment of some permanent system of control over wage negotiations to appreciate fully the role which Labour has played in the whole process. Participation in capitalist planning is held out as the model role for trade unions in a modern economy. The unions know that there is something badly skewed about this model, but they fall back defensively on the older definitions—free wage-bargaining between labour and capital. They are then vulnerable to the charge that they want a return to the very " free-for-all ", the " wages scramble " which they have actively criticised in the past. The whole weight of the consensus is then brought to bear, by government and the media, against them, making the recalcitrant unions appear backward-looking and old-fashioned in the heady atmosphere of modernisation. Thus over a period of time, and by means of a mixture of invitation, declarations of intent, cajoling, blackmail, and pressure, the government forces the union leadership to collude with the system. For this purpose, the economic crisis of 1966 proved a blessing in disguise, since the need for quick, tough action permitted the government to bring in measures which, in effect, represent the skeleton framework of new capitalist planning. Under the rubric of " emergency measures ", Britain took a decisive step in the direction of the new capitalism.

Managed Politics

The political aim of the new capitalism, and the governments which sustain it, is clear. It is to muffle real conflict, to dissolve it into a false political consensus; to build, not a genuine and radical community of life and interest, but a bogus conviviality between every social group. Consensus politics, integral to the success of the new capitalism, is in its essence manipulative politics, the politics of man-management, and as such deeply undemocratic. Governments are still elected, M.P.'s assert the supremacy of the House of Commons. But the real business of government is the management of consensus between the most powerful and organized elites.

In a consensual society, the ruling elites can no longer impose their will by coercion: but neither will they see progress as a people organizing itself for effective participation in power and responsibility. Democracy, indeed, becomes a structure to be negotiated and manoeuvred. The task of the leading politicians is to build around each issue by means of bargain and compromise a coalition of interests, and especially to associate the

large units of power with its legislative programme. Consensus politics thus becomes the politics of incremental action: it is not programmed for any large-scale structural change. It is the politics of pragmatism, of the successful manoeuvre within existing limits. Every administrative act is a kind of clever performance, an exercise of political public relations. Whether the manoeuvres are made by a Tory or Labour government then hardly matters, since both accept the constraints of the status quo as a framework. Government, as the Prime Minister often reminds us, is simply the determination " to govern ". The circle of politics has been closed.

It has been closed in a very special way. There have always, in capitalist society, been separate sources of power, based on property and control, with which governments must negotiate. But the whole essence of the new capitalism is an increasing rationalisation and coordination of just this structure. The states within the state, the high commands in each sector—the banks, the corporations, the federations of industrialists, the TUC—are given a new and more formal place in the political structure, and this, increasingly, is the actual machinery of decision-making: in their own fields, as always, but now also in a coordinated field. This political structure, which is to a decisive extent mirrored in the ownership and control of public communications, is then plausibly described as " the national interest ". And it is not only that the national interest has then been defined so as to include the very specific and often damaging interests of the banks, the combines, the city. It is also that the elected element—the democratic process, which is still offered as ratifying—has been redefined, after its passage through the machines, as one interest among others: what is still, in an abstract way, called the public interest, but present now only as one—relatively weak and ill-organized—among several elements involved in effective decisions.

Under the present Labour Government, then, we can watch the process of a whole monopoly-capitalist system seeking stabilization. The politics of the transitional period in which the old capitalism crystallises into the new are primarily concerned with the management of political conflict and tension, dissolving old bonds and relationships as new ones emerge, until the new order is sufficiently stable. The perspective, however, is no short-term emergency adjustment to temporary problems. It is the establishment of a new status quo, indeed a whole new social order.

In this drive to organise and rationalise a stable new capitalism, both the individualist-liberal version of market capitalism and the community-egalitarian vision of socialism are surpassed, presented as technologically obsolete. The new model is made to seem inevitable, powered by the forces of technology, sustained by the drive for modernisation. Until quite recently, this has been discussed as an abstract model. It is an abstract model no longer. It constitutes the real ground of politics, the true perspective of the Labour Government. We can now see, in retrospect, some of the elements of this new system beginning to crystallise towards the end of the period of Conservative rule; but it has been converted into the living issues and textures of politics only within the period of the Labour Government. For it is in the period of Labour rule that the emergent economic system has discovered its political counterpart and fashioned the sophisticated means of political control. The debates and divisions within socialism in the last decade can now be explained in this context. The strained exchanges between the " old " and the " new " left in the Fifties can be seen as a crisis engendered by this emergent capitalism within socialism itself — the result of a faltering attempt to find a language in which the upheaval and transformation of

capitalism—and with that, the restructuring of the Labour Party itself—could be correctly described.

To take the planning and modernising emphases of the Government, then, in detachment from the capitalist realities in which they are rooted would be fatally to misread the nature of the crisis of British society. Such misreadings have already occurred, even among socialists: witness the belief that because an element of planning has entered our economic life, we are necessarily " stumbling into socialism ". Yet this very error of judgement illustrates how the new capitalism dismantles older political ideas and values, confuses and fragments the labour movement. For the new capitalism, in the very process of " surpassing " socialism, in fact takes over many of the collectivist forms—though none of the content—of socialism. Thus socialists have always believed in planning—and now organized capitalism needs to plan. Socialists have opposed the free play of the market—and now organised capital transcends the market in its old form. Socialists have supported state intervention and control—but the new capitalism also believes in an active State. Socialists have supported a strong trade union movement—and now organised capitalism needs a strong, centralised trade union movement with which to bargain. It seems easy to turn round and say: we are making socialism, only we call it the " new Britain ": the Government and industry and the banks and the unions, all in it together. As a propaganda operation, this may succeed for a time, but it is of course ludicrous. What has happened is quite different. The Labour Party embodied the aspirations of the working people. Long before the present transition began, its leaders and intellectuals translated these aspirations into a narrow economism—expert planning—and a minimum welfare standard. This was already a critical redefinition, a reworking, with the whole element of the democratic recovery and exercise of power left out. In our own period, these aims and redefinitions came to coincide with the needs of capitalism, in its monopoly phase— thereby, in one movement, both confirming and transcending one part of the socialist case. The Labour leadership, already wedded to a very special, and limiting, concept of what socialism, in practice, would mean, saw in just this change its opportunity for power. It thus made a bid for the job of harnessing and managing the new system: but was then itself taken over, from outside and in. The Party and the Government continue to operate under their old trade name, with all its accumulated goodwill and " consumer loyalty ". It is simply the nature of the business which has changed.

2. The social realities

To understand the new capitalism, and the political absorption of the Labour Party, we must examine its place in an international order, and its complicated relations with political and military policies in the rest of the world. But before we go on to this, it is worth looking carefully at the social realities, and the emergent social patterns, which are our immediate condition. It is part of the myth of new capitalism, and of Labour's accommodation to it, that poverty and inequality, of the most serious kinds, have been brought to an end. What poverty remains, it is argued, is incidental, a matter of special cases which can be treated in isolation from wider structural considerations. Inequality is similarly incidental, or is an essential differential on which the efficiency of the society depends. We reject these arguments. We say not only that there are still gross and intolerable areas of traditional poverty and inequality,

but also that new capitalism, even at its most successful, creates and ratifies new kinds of poverty and inequality: the social and cultural poverty which it has been the intention of the New Left to define and overcome.

Poverty

The remaining personal poverty in our society is not incidental: it is a matter of conscious social policy, and of the structures of society itself. That there is still poverty in Britain is now even officially admitted. The Government has agreed that about three quarters of a million old people have been living below national assistance or subsistence level. There is also serious poverty among families with children. But it refuses to face squarely what survey after survey in the last ten years has shown. Poverty is a condition of life for thousands among the old, the chronic sick, families without fathers. It is not even confined to those who are outside the market mechanisms of capitalist society, those who cannot earn. Wages in low-paid industries have risen less quickly than the average and the value of family allowances has fallen. So there are many families with two or three children where the father is in full-time work but whose total income is well below subsistence level. Each of these groups may be relatively small, but together they constitute a major probem. Estimates vary, but one survey suggests that in 1960, 14% of the population, that is between 7 and 8 mililon people, were in poverty.

This was the situation which the Labour Government inherited. Yet the steps it has taken so far have been little more than repair operations, marginal measures which leave the structural realities of our society quite untouched. It is not enough simply to direct more money into existing channels. A definition of poverty, and its connection to basic social and political facts, has also to be established. Because of conventional interpretations of what poverty actually is, the extent of the problem is seriously underestimated, and therefore little done to tackle it. We have to see poverty as a condition relative to a general standard of expectation, desire, demand, opportunity, in society as a whole. Modern capitalist society, in generating a tension between desire and opportunity, expectation and fulfilment, creates and confirms poverty in many ways. The poor must struggle for higher rungs on the social ladder, but the ladder itself is made to hold only a few. As long as this ladder relegates people to its own lower levels, the problem of poverty will remain unsolved. Poverty is the felt absence of an abundance of comfort and opportunity which is present in the society but is always beyond personal grasp.

The numbers of the poor are not only large in Britain, but are almost certainly growing. There have been increases in social groups at an economic disadvantage: a shift in population-structure towards the older age-groups; a revival of the birth-rate and an increase in the number of families with four or more children; small increases in the number of chronic sick, disabled and handicapped among the middle and older age-groups. The increase in basic national insurance benefits in 1965 has already been largely eroded by price increases. National assistance is now called supplementary benefit; but there has been no new look at the concept of " subsistence ". These supplementary rates are still based on the war-time subsistence levels of Beveridge. Even when increased in real terms, all they provide is a standard which is a minimum, in the sense that it is the least that can be got away with. What is needed is a different conception of standards, in terms of what a decent society would give to all its members.

Within the framework of provision for dependency, the Labour Government has allowed to develop, unchecked, all those private welfare, occupational sick pay and superannuation schemes which are part of the mechanism which produces inequality. It has allowed the real value of family allowances to fall, while that of children's tax allowances, of special value to those who pay the full rate of income tax, and especially surtax, has increased. This confirms the existence of two nations, among families with children, among the sick and the old. There are those who have to rely upon the state with its " minimum " approach, and those who can draw on other private market sources to supplement their state benefits.

In the light of these facts, the Labour Government's preoccupation with the size, rather than the re-distribution, of the national wealth, is a serious misreading of the problem of poverty. The extra money directed into the conventional channels of welfare service by the Government has been little enough; but, more seriously, there has been no attempt to change the channels and build new ones. The pre-election promise of an " income guarantee " has yielded to the attitude of the National Plan: " an income guarantee would not contribute towards faster economic growth ". The motive of the Labour Government's intervention on the prices and wages front must be seen, not as a concern to shift wealth from rich to poor, private to public, but to strike a bargain between both sides of industry: a bargain measured entirely in terms of the achievement of a faster rate of growth, in isolation from urgent social priorities.

Inequality

But problems of poverty, in this primary sense, are only one aspect of the more fundamental problem of inequality. How much inequality in the command over resources are we prepared to tolerate? The myth that poverty has been effectively abolished in Britain is closely connected with the assumption that an " affluent " society has cancelled serious inequalities. But " affluence " is itself an assumption which needs closer examination. The " affluent society " in Britain was made possible by the successful management of post-war recovery. " Affluence " became a description of an economic system geared to the rapid production of consumer goods, which, in a period of relatively full employment, put these goods at the disposal of sections of the previously deprived. The result of this drive towards private consumption was the partial blurring of distinctions in patterns of consumption between social groups, a blurring felt in the whole " classless " tone and style which " the affluent society " tried to disseminate. But affluence was not a blind economic process: it was also a cultural pattern, a particular way of structuring and perceiving economic needs, an option for private consumption against public spending and service. This emphasis taken together with some shifts in the occupational structure, the break-up of some traditional working-class communities, the rise of the post-war housing estates, intensified the sense of a new mobility, a collapsing of traditional tensions.

Yet as the affluence matured, it became obvious that still, underneath, there were radical inequalities of wealth and opportunity, and the starvation of the public sector to supply the demands of private consumption. In the affluent society, universal public services have not automatically conferred equality of access: more middle-class than working-class children gain University degress at state expense; 70% of the schools in slum areas are gravely inadequate; National Health lists and school classes are larger in working-class areas; the poorest people seem not to qualify for subsidised Council housing, or are obliged to leave it for far worse and usually more costly privately rented housing.

The " affluent society " has not, in fact, abolished fundamental inequalities in the structure of British society, and it is to this fact that the problem of poverty must be related. Affluence left the distribution of income and the ownership of property relatively untouched. In 1913 and 1914 the unskilled worker received approximately 19% of the average earnings of " higher " professional workers, and in 1960 26%. In 1913 and 1914 he earned 31% of the average income of managers, but in 1960 only 29%. Such reductions in the unequal distribution of wealth as can be traced over the past decade are in the main a phenomenon of the war, and of the years immediately around it; signs of any consistent narrowing of income disparities in the decades before then are slight and uncertain, and if account is taken of the probability that means of tax evasion were more fully developed in the 1950's, this last decade or so may well have witnessed a slight regression, towards a distribution of effective income more unequal than in the 1940's.

More important even than income are inequalities in the distribution of capital. In Britain, two-fifths of all private property remains in the hands of 1% of the population, and four-fifths in the hands of 10%. Four-fifths of all share capital of private corporate business is held by 1% of the adult population, and nearly all the rest by 9 or 10%. In 1938, the ratio of gross profits to all employment incomes (including directors' salaries) was 1 to 4.5; in 1962 it was 1 to 4.8.

If the value of life-insurance policies and of owner-occupied houses is excluded, the 90% of the population who do not control the major private property would own very little capital indeed. The share of top income receivers (the top 1 or 10%) has remained constant in Britain for the last ten years; more significantly, the poorest of the population—the bottom 30% in the income scale—have actually been receiving a declining proportion of total income. When we turn to examine the effect of government measures via taxation, direct and indirect, and the provision of benefits in cash and kind, we find, as one authority recently expressed it, that " there appears to have been little increase in the amount of vertical redistribution (i.e. from rich to poor) between 1937 and 1959 ".

Similar structural inequalities apply in the case of work. In spite of certain real changes during the period of affluence—the growth of technically skilled labour, the increase in white-collar and service occupations, the spread of " tertiary " occupations in commerce and administration—the general effect on the class-structure was one of some increased mobility within classes, but a good deal less across class-boundaries. Certain skilled manual workers achieved white-collar living standards, but differences of work-experience and social value kept the class-divisions more or less intact. The man on the shop-floor is still likely to remain there for all his working life; the middle-class man has a career before him, prospects of promotion and a rising income. At the lower end of the white-collar scale, promotion opportunities appear more restricted than in the past, and economic levels are relatively depressed. The gap between skilled and unskilled manual workers widened during the period of " affluence ", but with the routinisation of office and administrative work, linked to the advance in skilled manual workers' income levels, a parallel gap seems to have opened up between controllers and supervisors on the one hand, and routine black-coated operatives on the other.

In Britain today, the odds against a manual worker's son achieving professional status, in comparison with the son of a professional man or business executive, are very much as they were at the beginning of the

century. In the distribution of educational opportunity, the social status of the child's father remains the single most important determinant of success. In the 1950's, only ½% of the children of unskilled and semi-skilled manual workers were reaching University, about the same proportion as in the late 1930's and the 1940's. About 14½% of the children of professional, managerial and intermediate occupational groups were doing so, compared with 4% in the 1930's. In recent years, one in every four of the non-manual middle-class children entering a grammar school course at the age of eleven have eventually gone on to University, but only one in every 15 to 20 of the children of unskilled manual workers entering such a course have done so. Upper middle class children obtain three times as many selective school places as the children of unskilled manual workers, more than twice as many as skilled manual workers' children, and 1½% times as many as lower middle-class children.

In the light of these facts, the relations between actual poverty and structural inequality in Britain should become clearer. It is not as if poverty, defined in all its senses as real material deprivation, frustrated expectancy, social repression, were a residual element, to be mopped up by the application of isolated remedies. On the contrary, it is a symptom of a society which is fundamentally divisive, exploiting and frustrating in its basic structures, which has been so for a long period, and which shows no signs of real change.

Social poverty

That poverty is in this sense endemic in British social structures is evident if we look at those areas which most immediately affect the quality and substance of social life. The case of housing and community planning is still outstanding. The failure to make housing a social service, and to break the speculative and bureaucratic interests which still stand between people and decent homes, continues, in Labour Britain, to outrage conscience. The persistent ugliness of our cities brought a notable response from architects and planners, who have shown repeatedly, given the least chance, how a civilised modern environment can be created. But it is not only that they have to live, like the rest of us, in the shadow of a financial policy which, pushing up interest rates, has made the money-lenders the only effective planners. It is also that when the conflict comes, as it seems to come in every city and town, between community needs and established or speculative commercial interests, there is a scandalous absence of any real national lead, any public dramatisation of the essential conflict, with all the facts in the open, so that we could fight the issue right through. Commercial and financial priorities have been learned too well, and many people are tired of fighting them. The weak and needy, without resources, have to put up with what they can get, at a still scandalous market price. Labour's attempts to assert a different policy have been slow and feeble; they have come from one part of the split mind of the party, its residual social objectives, and have been unable to prevail against the commercial run of the society which is elsewhere being actively protected and encouraged. No social policy can be carried through in isolation. All that happens, as now in housing, is that it declines to a marginal need. Thus, while the general policy remains one of allocating slum clearance programmes to often badly equipped local authorities, real housing and community priorities can not be established. Policy is formulated in terms of re-distribution and under-occupation, rather than in a practical urgency of local authority building and community development. If the ratio of public to private building remains unchanged,

if housing needs are unrelated to general community provision, the wrong houses will still be built for the wrong people in the wrong places.

Housing is a problem of need which slum clearance programmes neither exhaust nor define. The function, if not the intention, of the usual slum clearance campaign is to divert attention from the extent and variety of housing need by suggesting that the housing problem has at last been brought within manageable proportions. Targets for slum clearance are confused with attempts to assess the real number of slums. The bankruptcy of approach is revealed in the consistency with which clearance programmes end by revealing " the true contours of the problem ", or where the supposed success of the programme raises expectations to the point where yet more houses need replacing.

In the present situation in our society, at least half the number of houses assessed as needed will be built where speculative builders find it most profitable. In a society of acutely unequal income distribution, these areas will not coincide with the areas of need. Coloured immigrants, large families, the elderly and problem families are offered only the decaying lodging houses of Sparkbrook, Islington and Notting Hill. The landlords are typically the " slumlord " successors of Rachman; the children are from the " social priority " schools of Plowden; the " Cathys " are the families evicted from their last, despairing refuge. And here too flow the prostitutes, the drug addicts and criminals, all the deviant elements of our society clustering in the same anonymous gloom of deprivation. As long as the problem of housing is abandoned to private interests, and therefore unrelated to the whole concept of community planning and development, real poverty will continue to be created.

Health The National Health Service was a major attempt, by the postwar Labour government, to establish a new standard of civilised community care. Its present condition is a sufficient commentary on what has since happened, in the recovery of capitalism, to that kind of social objective. Dilapidated hospitals, bad pay and conditions for staffs, authoritarian institutions and attitudes, a drastic shortage of specialist workers in the overlapping fields of medicine, psychiatric care and social work, the draining of the public sector for private medical provision: all these are evidence of the disintegration. What is now happening is a fight to keep even this service going, against powerful pressures to revert to a more primitive correlation of care and money. It is only by asserting and developing the original principle that these pressures can be resisted. The present health service reveals a conflict between two opposed attitudes: the private enterprise concept of the individual doctor practising in his own home (to which the whole theory of private medical care is linked), and an emerging conception of community care and cooperative partnership, centring on an interrelating of social and medical needs, which is radically at odds with the " private enterprise " attitude. To return the Health Service to its true status, at the centre of any humane society, is to demand the resources which will make possible not only the reconstruction of the most threadbare parts of the service, but also the remaking of existing structures in the direction of community care. We need a wide range of experiments in cooperative partnership focused on the growth of health centres, and the democratisation of the whole service to allow for direct and effective participation in its working by staff, patients and public, by such means as democratically elected regional health authorities.

Education In education poverty can be seen in two main ways: in the severely inadequate resources available for this fundamental social need, and in the gearing of the educational system to a narrow and restrictive conception of human creativity and capability which confirms and perpetuates the class-structure of British society. The separation of an elitist education for the leaders from a rigidly vocational training for the lower ranks; the offering of false alternatives between education as liberal self-development for those not immediately vulnerable to the pressures of the economic system, and as the transmission of values and skills for a subordinate place within that system: these remain characteristic. The socialist alternative, of education as a preparation for personal life, for democratic practice and participation in a common and equal culture, involves several practical and urgent measures. We need to abolish a private educational provision which perpetuates social division. We need to create a genuinely comprehensive system of nursery, primary and secondary education which will be more than a matter of " efficiency " or " streamlining ", but will break through the existing, self-generating system of a class-structured inequality of expectancy and achievement. We need to shift emphasis, within what is actually taught, from the transmission of isolated academic disciplines, with marginal creative activities, to the centrality of creative self-expression and an organic interrelation between subjects, between theory and practice. The existing curriculum, particularly at the secondary stage, is an expression in intellectual terms of our underlying structure of classes: specialised and unconnected disciplines for what are called academic—in fact professional—people; the fallout from these disciplines, in partial and grudging ways, for the remaining three out of four. There can be no comprehensive education until there is a genuinely basic common curriculum, which relates all learning to the centres of human need, rather than to prospective social and economic grades. The present comprehensive programme has to be defended against openly reactionary attempts to maintain a discredited selective system. But equally it will in its turn be absorbed, into a persistent class structure, if in substance and manner the actual education remains divisive. An immediate lead can be given, in the necessary expansion of higher education, by the creation of genuinely comprehensive universities. Instead of the present class structure of institutions, it would be possible to link colleges of technology, art, education, domestic science and adult education with each other and with the existing university departments: making them regional centres of learning, of an open kind. At the same time it would be necessary to reform the bureaucratic structures of educational policy-making and management, and to make substantial provision for a share in decision-making by all members of staffs and by students.

Work One of the most bitter areas of poverty and inequality, in modern society, is our experience of work. It is characteristic that in the new capitalism, and in a diluted Labourism, the problem of meaning in work is hardly even discussed. What we get instead is the debased talk of human relations in industry: that is to say, the human relations that are possible after the crude economic relations have been laid down. What is now called man-management is an exact expression of this degraded technocracy; it means, quite openly, keeping people happy while they are working for you. Any other working relationship is now not even conceived.

At the centre of capitalism is the power of a minority, through ownership and control, to direct the energies of all other members of

the society. It was to end this intolerable situation that socialists proposed public ownership, as in the Labour Party's famous Clause Four.

But as the struggle to retain Clause Four has grown more desperate, the gradual erosion of its socialist content has gone largely unnoticed. A paper victory conceals a real retreat, implicit in the 1964 Manifesto which is now the rallying cry for the Parliamentary Left: " failing the nation " is a quite different concept from " the commanding heights ".

The terms of the argument have been increasingly dictated by the opposition: nationalization has been offered as the answer to inefficiency, or as the remedy for industries hit by current crises of capitalism.

Clearly, a more rational use of limited resources is part of any socialist programme. But public ownership has always meant, too, the substitution of communal cooperation for the divisive forces of competition. It is concern for the actual social relations generated by capitalism, of inequality, mutual exploitation, mutual aggression, which has produced the socialist critique of contemporary socio-economic organization. It is this which should be our central concern in redefining the concept of public ownership.

Nationalization really involves two distinct but related issues.

1. The " state " has been the democratic socialist's instrument for the capturing of power by the whole community, the transference of control from a minority of interlocking pressure groups to a whole society, as a means of transforming the existing inversion of means and ends whereby society becomes a mere adjunct of the economy. Nationalization is thus an instrument in the class-struggle, and, to be successful, it must mean more than a state takeover which leaves the existing structure virtually intact. In this context the whole issue of workers' control becomes of quite central importance, while it is clear, too, that genuine public ownership requires a radical redefinition of the scope, structure, and purpose of the " state " executive.

2. Besides being an instrument in a continuing struggle, a publicly owned economy would be the groundwork for the creation of a quite different kind of society, with transformed priorities and a transformed definition of the relationships between man and man, individual and society, society and its economic and organisational means. Again workers' control becomes a more than economic issue here.

Nationalization under the existing rationale does nothing to terminate the alienation of means from ends which is endemic to capitalist society. Only if its purpose is redefined in the terms of socialist humanism does it become possible to see the betrayal of values implicit in the apparently strong current of opinion in favour of it within the Labour Party: the argument itself has become assimilated to the pattern of alienation. We are offered justifications of nationalization which only perpetuate the separation of means and ends.

There are large state corporations in many European capitalist countries which seem to have had no real effect on the existing structure. In fact, under new capitalism, nationalization is no longer anathema if it fulfils certain basic requirements.

1. Essential service industries, transport, power, communications, too costly to be run by private enterprise, or ailing and inefficient and a liability to their existing owners can be taken into public ownership with little opposition. Subsequently, they may actually subsidise the private sector. Run at a loss, financed out of the public purse, they actually reduce the overheads of private enterprise, and thus increase profit margins or keep prices competitive.

2. Public money can be used to support existing, and initiate new, capitalist ventures in crucial " growth " areas of the economy, in " the nation's interest ".

3. Increased productivity, increased investment, rationalization of manpower and resources, can all be achieved by the infusion of public money and advice.

4. Less clearly " nationalized " areas of public expenditure, socially beneficial in themselves, become assimilated to larger economic needs: motorway building, for example, is a means of facilitating industrial communications, in addition to its use to the private motorist. More importantly, to a Socialist, the whole concept of public health and welfare services can be distorted in terms of the same priorities. Instead of being the growth point for a quite different concept of society, the Health Service can be seen as a kind of human service-bay for industry, ensuring a more efficient and productive work-force. Public education, in the same way, can be seen as a mass-production line for industry, turning out, at all levels, the technicians, managers, administrators, manual and skilled workers required.

Against all these tendencies, we have to reassert the principles of socialism. In every case, in coal and steel and in the other nationalized industries, with IRC or Fairfields, in the Health Service and in Education, there is a clash between those who work in them and the use to which their efforts are put. Socialists will support the efforts of all those who work in these industries and services to enlarge the areas of democratic control, and to press for initiatives which serve the public rather than private enterprise. But unless they are supported by a general revival of socialist consciousness and direction their efforts must be largely frustrated.

In a technically advancing economy, and in the extreme complication and impersonality of large-scale institutions, we are forced to choose between fitting men to systems and fitting systems to men. Against an advanced capitalism, only an advanced socialism offers any chance of the recovery of human controls. Men can gain more control, not less, when the kinds of work that have been, through generations, backbreaking, frustrating, or boring, can quite practically be mechanised and automated. But if, as now, these technical developments are used mainly to reduce the cost of labour to the capitalist, there is no good future in them; only unemployment and loss of meaning in activity. If, instead, they are used to reduce labour itself, under the democratic controls which will ensure that men are not simply discarded and that the released energy will be used in active ways—a more active care for people in need; the endless work of exploring ourselves and our world—they are the means of a liberation which the labour movement has always imagined and which is becoming possible. The new capitalism, and its adjusted labourism, are in nothing more poverty-stricken, more attached to the meanness and scarcity of a dying world, than in their attempts to rationalise the priorities of machines, and to reject all perspectives which offer the release of free human energy. In a jaded period, they can often communicate their cynicism, or transform into enemies the very men who in their places of work try to preserve a human priority and to assert a human will. We believe that in work, centrally, the quality of our society will be decided.

Communications

The twentieth century is a world of new and major techniques for human communication, of a kind which we believe can make large-scale

democracy possible and effective. Yet all these means of communication have fallen into the hands of minority interests, and the rate and scale of this process, under the new capitalism, are increasing alarmingly. Almost all British newspapers are in the hands of a few monopoly groups, and their viability is now decided not by whether they are good newspapers but by their suitability as vehicles for commercial advertising. In the popular field, two million people buying a newspaper are not enough to ensure its survival. This is not a fundamental economic law, but a result of a capitalist structure which in Britain has taken an acute monopoly form. The pressure of advertising, to control all communications, is a characteristic feature of new capitalism. What is expression, in quite practical ways, is the subordination of all other human information and opinion to this industrial priority. This has the additional advantage that through minority ownership there are regular means for attempting the manipulation of public opinion, in a formally democratic society. It has been difficult to preserve any alternative principle in communications, even in the diluted form represented in broadcasting by the BBC, where the idea of public service has in practice been mediated through a centralised and heavily bureaucratic structure, and has moreover been directly challenged by the institution of a rival commercial television system. It was only with great effort, and perhaps temporarily, that the same divisive situation was prevented in sound broadcasting. Meanwhile, in a major modern art such as film, there is extreme monopoly in production and distribution facilities, ensuring the regular priority of commercial over creative intentions.

It is necessary to win back control, of a democratic kind, in all our cultural institutions. This will involve the public ownership of the means of cultural production—printing works, newsprint, studios, transmitters, cinemas, theatres—and their leasing, through public trusts, to properly constituted and democratically managed professional companies of journalists, actors, film-makers, or broadcasters. Only then will we get past the present deadlock of Labourism, which accepts commercial control in all majority fields, and then provides marginal public support for minority activities of certain kinds. The experience of most artists and workers in communications, under the present system, encourages them to acquiesce either in the old idea of a minority culture, or in the corresponding idea of a frankly commercial mass culture. Against this, socialists are conceiving a democratic culture of a new kind, which is especially relevant to a generation of active contributors who are nearer in experience and in hope to the majority of our people than any of their predecessors. A crucial intellectual battle is now being fought between the emergence of that generation on its own terms, and its conversion by existing structures and priorities into a timeserving company of well-paid attendants on advertising and public relations. The status and prestige of new capitalism as a whole will to an important extent be determined in just this field, where values are established and communicated. The particular concern, once again, runs back to the central concern.

3. The New Imperialism

We can now look at the transition to new capitalism, in a wider context. In Britain, the transition has been discussed almost exclusively in internal terms. But it is not, in fact, a national or local phenomenon. The model for what has been called the breakthrough has for some time been located in the United States' economy and in the European Common

Market countries. Not only do these countries belong within the same economic family, mutually dependent in terms of trade, mutually inter-connected by means of the giant corporations and the movement of investment and capital. They also belong, ideologically, within the same orbit, and they are organised, militarily, into one alliance. The attempted transiltion in Britain is, therefore, part of a global development, and can be fully understood only in international terms.

In fact, in Britain, for all the political and institutional changes, the transition, so far, has been strikingly unsuccessful. It would be difficult to offer the British economy, in its present state, as a new model for anything. In part this is due to internal factors. The trade union movement, though fragmented and often confused, has provided one major source of resistance. A substantial sector of public opinion though subject to merciless verbal assault and pressure from political leaders and the media, appears unconvinced by the proffered alternative. The needs which press most insistently upon the public conscience—the failure in the fields of housing, education, the social services, community development—are the very needs which (necessarily, we have argued) get a very low priority in Labour's programme. The economic crisis continues, with widespread unemployment and stagnant production. But these harsh realities are not simply manifestations of some lethargy of spirit in the domestic economy: they have a critical global significance, an international dimension.

Arms and Sterling

The main indicators of Britain's economic difficulties are all related to this world-wide context. One major source of instability is Britain's balance of payments crises. Recurring payments deficits, unique in frequency if not in cause in Britain among European countries, have induced governments to cut investment, output and employment in ever-deteriorating cycles. The permanent causes of these deficits are the burdens of lately-transformed Empire and the interests of industrial and financial circles with a major stake in foreign trade, resulting in large capital outflows; and the burden of military commitments to the global defence of the West, resulting in defence costs overseas. To put this more directly, the British economy is peculiarly vulnerable, even compared with other western European countries, and this vulnerability can be traced directly to the nature of British capital's relation to the world economy, and to the character of Britain's involvement with the strategic tasks of the Western military system.

Another major component of the balance of payments problem is the position of the pound as a reserve currency. Sterling is held by foreigners both for trading purposes and as part of financial reserves, and is both useful for, and extremely vulnerable to, speculative financial movements. Confidence is repeatedly damaged by Britain's relatively weak trade balance and large overseas expenditure deficits. When confidence fails, there are flights out of sterling, often on a panic scale, and the inadequate reserves have to be depleted in order to defend parity. British governments working this system must not only bring current payments into balance, but also counteract the less tangible " loss of confidence " in the management of the economy. When such losses of confidence occur, financial interests, both at home and abroad, dictate the terms in which confidence can be restored; these have always involved recession, cuts in public spending and a wage freeze. This system, which has direct and immediate repercussions on the whole domestic economy, is maintained as a set of institutions within the British economy—notably, the City and

those international corporations which are directly associated with investment abroad—and as a set of abstract monetary " rules ".

Compromise and Capitulation

The Labour government of 1964 took power at the very moment when this system reached one of its crisis peaks, and in the very first weeks of its administration declared its determination to stand by the system, even at the risk of its other commitments to growth at home, and to the ending of stop-go cycles in the economy.

The choice it faced was critically clear. It could break with the system as a whole, by taking powers to control trade and the movement of capital, and to appropriate, in the real national interest, British overseas private holdings of foreign shares and securities. These crisis measures would have enabled the situation to be held, as a preliminary to creating new institutions to control production and distribution, and to end capitalist power. Yet any such policy would be a direct attack on the centres of irresponsible power in the society, and would be opposed and sabotaged by interlocking financial interests with power gravely to hurt the British people. Nobody can pretend that such a choice, though in fact the only socialist choice with any chance of success, would fail to involve strife, bitterness, and temporary economic dislocation. It is easy to imagine why some nerves would fail. But it was not only this. The very institutions that would be forced to give up their private interests to the will of an elected government were precisely the institutions through which, for all Mr. Wilson's occasional rhetoric, Labour was planning to work. He underestimated them. What was intended as a compromise became a capitulation. The elected government could direct and manage everyone and everything else, but not capital. And accepting its priorities meant accepting its whole system, which then imposed its costs: deflation, cuts in social services, rising unemployment, stagnant production, in a steadily unfolding and dismal record. Labour's whole attempt to " modernise " the economy had come to terms with the constraints of the world capitalist system and the political and military alliance which parallels it. The success or failure of any new capitalist solution came to depend on Britain's vulnerable and subordinate position in capitalism as a global economic and military enterprise.

A New International System

This global system—which we call the new imperialism—is a complex structure, and only some of its features can be discussed here. The first and most significent development is the emergence of the international company. Throughout the 1950's and 60's, the large corporations in the United States, Western European, and Japanese economies have been increasingly " internationalised ". They have expanded at home—but also abroad, in the colonial and ex-colonial world, and, increasingly, through investment, and the establishment of export and manufacturing subsidiaries, in one another's home territories. Nearly all investment is private, nearly all private investment is direct company investment, and a growing proportion of this is between the already developed industrial countries. More than half the private investment income flowing into both the U.S.A. and the U.K. comes from developed countries, and two-thirds of the outflow of capital goes to them. What we have today is a development of cross-investment, originating in the struggle for survival of the giant international combines: a struggle which is undertaken both within the developed countries of the world (at the expense of the

developing countries) and in old traditional markets overseas. Only the international company has the capital resources, flexibility, access to research and development necessary for competition on this scale. This rapid internationalisation of the private corporation has had a major impact on the pattern of world trade. It has squeezed the developing nations, with their single-crop or single-mineral economies: it has squeezed its smaller and less efficient rivals—notably in Britain. Further, it is these large international corporations which provide the institutional economic framework for national economies. It is their decision what shall be manufactured and exported in local subsidiaries; their decision how much of the profit on overseas operations should be repatriated, their decision where to hold liquid funds and where and when to transfer funds across foreign exchanges. It was not the gnomes of Zurich, but the giant international companies—many of them British—which made massive transfers out of sterling in November 1964 and again in June 1966. It is largely as a result of their pressure to export capital that both Britain and the US have found themselves running large deficits in international payments. (Both countries have had to take steps to correct these deficits: the outcome, however, is a shortage in world liquidity). The large international companies are now the central institutions of the world economy. Their operations both undermine the position of the developing countries, and continually put national economies at risk.

These international concerns trade and invest heavily in the developed countries. But they are also deeply involved with the continued exploitation of the colonial and ex-colonial world. A relatively small proportion of British, United States and Western European foreign investment now goes to the Third World, but this is a highly profitable investment sector. The pattern of this investment appears to be altering. The area of the small colonial enterprises and trading houses is declining, but the sector concerned with mining, electro-metallurgy and industrial agriculture is growing. The much-publicised transformer industries set up as development industries in backward economies are, in fact, largely service industries to the great electro-metallurgical and extractive concerns. To this, we must add the crucial foreign investment in oil, both in the Persian Gulf and elsewhere. The financial operations of these large concerns throughout the Third World represent an internationalisation of economic colonialism in two senses. First, the large mining and metallurgical enterprises are financed by consortia in which banks and enterprises of all the imperialist countries participate—the U.S., Britain, France, West Germany, etc. Second, the fields of operation cross the older lines laid down by traditional colonial spheres of influence. The whole area of the Third World is treated as a potential sphere of operation by these international units. Thus national colonialisms find themselves eliminated from the privileged positions they held in the nineteenth century, and are replaced by a more international economic operation geared exclusively to the needs of a world market. As far as a vulnerable but developed country like Britain is concerned, the impact of the system is critical. Flows outward—whether in the form of private investment or aid—affect the British national economy and its balance of payments and liquidity position: but what goes out in the context of a national situation (and is paid for, when the pressure is on, in terms of a national recession, unemployment on a national scale, a national squeeze), comes, back, in trading profits and very high returns on new investment, into the hands of private investors and institutions: mainly international corporations and the City and finance houses.

A British Interest?

The return on British investment in the ex-colonial world may not be so large now as it was at the height of Empire. Certainly, equal weight must now be given, on the part of the modern corporation, to the penetration of markets in other developed countries—by exports, investment capital and the establishment of subsidiary firms. It is a matter of controversy, even among socialist economists, how far, in terms of an ideal model, an industrial country like Britain still depends upon economic imperialism, even in its new form. Still, the return on investment with the Third World is lucrative, and a powerful sector of the British economy—partly for historical reasons—is deeply involved in it: the City, the foreign finance houses, firms like Unilevers, the oil and mining corporations. Its importance to Britain can be seen in the fact that in 1964 and again in 1966, the government chose to sacrifice industrial growth at home to the interests of this sector—the defence of sterling, the maintenance of parity, the husbanding of foreign reserves, " confidence restoring " measures. The whole British way of life became identified—at untold cost— with the defence of sterling. Thus the international combines with a British interest, the banks and the international capital market were able to exercise a decisive influence on national policy at a crucial turning-point, out of all proportion to their share of our total production and trade. There are in fact at this point important conflicts of interest between differently-oriented sectors of British capitalism, which might, in certain circumstances, generate pressures for a different kind of solution; a sort of English Gaullism. This, too, would have its illusions and its limits, but the contradictions involved may have an important eventual effect on British politics. At present we can note only the subordination or containment of industrial-capitalist interests within the complicated structures of the domestic political and financial establishment, but also, and mainly, within the overall pressures of an interlocking and international political and financial system.

This brings us to the increasing dominance of the United States in the evolution of the new imperialism. In the case of the United States, foreign investment in developed countries also accounts for a greater proportion than investment in the Third World, though, once again, the lucrative nature of the latter type of investment, as in the case of Latin America, should not be underestimated. Some American economists also point out that to gain a full measure of the economic involvement of the U.S. in foreign markets, the impact of military spending—the so-called " defence programme "—must also be reckoned with. This raises another dimension of the new imperialism: the military global aspect. The significance of the industrial-military complex in the United States economy, and the contribution of defence contracts to the stability of the corporation, is a well-publicised and established fact. Defence expenditure is undertaken to service the U.S.A's global role in " the defence of the West ". But the " West " is not just a political ideal, a way of life: it is a massive economic and political complex, engaged—as American governments see it—in a life-and-death struggle, at every level, with " international communism ", centred in the Soviet Union and China, and with " wide-spread subversion " throughout the Third World. It is not necessary to argue that the U.S.A's imperial role throughout the world can be wholly explained by reduction to economic factors. What does seem clear is that a parallellogram of forces, which include internal and external economic forces, the military programme, political and ideological factors have acted, in the context of the Cold War, in such a way as to convert the West as a socio-economic system into an aggressive-defensive world-wide military presence.

It is in this sense that we have to look again at the ordinary belief that Britain's phase as an imperialist power has come to an end, in the twilight of the colonial era. Indeed, here, in this question, the overriding political questions of our time come together: the real relations between new capitalism and new imperialism; the true character of the Anglo-American political and military alliance; the actual position of Britain in the contemporary world.

The end of Empire?

To most people in Britain, imperialism has its immediate images: the union jack, the cockaded hat of the colonial governor, the lonely district officer. Few people can now be nostalgic for these images: they so clearly belong with the past. It is a recurring theme in Labour Party pamphlets and speeches—how " we gave India independence ", how " we " liquidated the Empire. Certainly, the old symbols have been dismantled: the flags hauled down, the minor royalty dancing with the new black prime minister, the new names on the atlas. And yet, if we look at Britain's relation to the Third World, we have to account both for change and renewal: politically, the colonial phase has been largely wound up, but there is still the vestigial role, dispensed with all the ambiguities of late colonialism, in Rhodesia and Aden. Economically, the operating staffs have been " Africanised "—but still, at every central point in our economic crisis, the imperial and international imperatives seem regularly to assert themselves as emphatic and determining. Militarily, Britain has recalled the occupying regiments from several quarters of the colonial globe; but still, we have a " mission East of Suez ", vital interests with our allies in the Middle East and Asia, defence responsibilities to India, frontiers on the Himalayas. The collapse of the old colonial Empires is a major fact in the history of the world, and particularly in the history of Britain. But the revival of an imperial mission, of a global military system, in company with other Western powers, and especially the United States, is also a fact of history. What are the new and governing political, economic, military and ideological structures of this new imperialism? What is the character of Britain's deep involvement with them? What is their meaning for the new nations of the Third World? So far as Britain is concerned, we can only speculate that the full liquidation of Empire never in fact took place. In economic terms, it is clear that where colonial governors left off, the new international companies and financial interests took over. Similarly, the political record is more complex and abiguous than in the usual accounts. The story of how we " gave " the colonies their freedom comes to sound like that other story of how the rich and the privileged " gave " the rest of us the vote, the welfare state, full employment. This story looks different from the standpoint, say, of Kenya, Cyprus, Malaya, Guyana, Rhodesia, Aden. In many cases the process by which the Empire was " wound up " entailed armed revolution, civil war, prolonged civil disobedience. In other cases, freedom came in a hurry, by political directive, almost before the national movement demanded it, while safe leaders and cadres still retained power. In between these extreme cases, there were many mixed examples: suppression of one wing of the national movement, handing of power to another; imprisonment of political and trade union leaders; withdrawal under latent or mounting pressure; the creation of new and largely artificial political structures, such as federations, to bring independence in

a particular way. The present complexity of the ex-colonial word is deeply related to this varied history. This is not a straight story of " liberation " by any means.

" Underdevelopment "

But now a new model comes into place to explain our relations with the ex-colonial countries. This model is not imperialism as we have described it above: it describes simply a physical, technical condition—the condition of " underdevelopment ". This is, of course, just the kind of term the new capitalism would create (compare " under-privileged " and what it still calls the " underdog "). It has a special relevance as a way of looking at a country: not a poor people, but a poor tract of land, an " undeveloped " land. Yet others, taking up the description, can see it as the duty of a developed country to help the under-developed countries, as it was the duty of the rich to help the poor. Into this model of what relations between the rich and poor countries are now like, much generous feeling is directed. And when it is realised, as is undoubtedly the case, that the gap between rich and poor in the world is not closing but widening, and that with rapidly rising populations there is a profound danger of hunger and poverty disastrously increasing, still, within this model, we can only say that we must simply do more: give more aid, be more charitable. Much of the best feeling in Britain now is of just this kind.

Of course, the help must be given. But just as the Labour movement developed as a better alternative than charity for ending poverty and inequality, so, in the problems of the poor nations, we need a different perspective, and we must begin by understanding the political and economic structures of the world we are trying to change. We are not linked to the Third World by " aid without strings ", Oxfam, and Freedom From Hunger alone. We are linked also by the City of London, by sterling, by Unilevers, by gold, by oil, by rubber, by uranium, by copper; by aircraft carrier, by expeditionary forces, by Polaris.

Consider " underdevelopment ", as an idea. At its best it is meant to imply that the poor nations are rather like ourselves, at an earlier stage of our own history. So they must be helped along until they also develop, or perhaps are developed by others, into our kind of economy and society. But, in its simplest form, this is really like saying that a poor man is someone who is on his way to being a rich man, but who is still at a relatively early stage of his development. In Victorian England, some people even believed this, of the poor of their time. But very few poor men believed it. They saw wealth and poverty being created, as well as inherited, by the property and working relations of their society. In the same way, we have to ask, of the poor countries: is this only an inherited, or is it also a created condition?

It is often inherited, from the familiar colonial period. Africa lost millions of its men, to the slave trade. Oil, minerals, agricultural produce have been taken in great quantities, from the poor countries to the rich. In this process, during the colonial period, the economies concerned were developed and structured for this primary purpose: that it to say, in single-crop economies or in the mining and oil-extracting areas, they became directly dependent on the world market, through the colonial powers. At a later stage, in their own internal development and from the needs of the expanding economies of the colonial powers, they became also outlets for exports and for capital investment: their development, that is to say, was as satellite economies of the colonial powers. It will

then be seen that when we say " underdevelopment " we are not making some simple mark along a single line: such development as there was took place in accordance with the needs of the occupying powers. The poor were not just poor, in isolation; they were poor, in those precise ways, because there were rich in the world, and because the rich, through political and economic control, were determining the conditions of their lives.

We have then to ask how much was changed, when these countries gained their political independence. They were still, obviously, dependent on the world market, because their whole economies had been built up for that main purpose. And this was in many ways a weak position, since it meant that prices could be determined, by those in control of the world market, in ways that could radically affect their whole national income. And, again, they needed capital, which for the most part could only come from overseas. On what terms would this capital be provided?

The working-out of these questions has been the political and economic history of the ex-colonial world. Two very different answers were possible. They could go on, economically, much as before: producing for the world market at prices fixed from outside, accepting imports from the industrial economies, again at prices fixed from outside, and accepting capital, for development, on terms and in ways convenient to its suppliers. Or, very differently, they could stop regarding their own economies as simply producers and consumers for others, take control of their own national resources and develop them in accordance with their own needs, and accept foreign capital only within the context of that kind of national plan. The first course would lead to continued economic dependence, after political independence. But the second course would lead to immediate political and economic conflict with the foreign controllers of markets and capital. In the complexity and urgency of their actual poverty, no course was simple. But we must then consider our own position, in the countries making the decisions about food and raw material prices and about investment. What, now, were our own priorities?

There have been some attempts to regulate trade and to provide capital on terms consistent with the development of the ex-colonial economies in their own peoples' interests. But what has mainly emerged is the system we are calling the new colonialism. The economic grip has been held, and has been described as assuring our own vital needs. Where a former colony has taken the quieter course, it has received investment and aid in terms which ensure its continued development as a satellite economy. Great efforts are made, in bargaining and in political manoeuvre, to maintain this situation. Instead of the flag and the cockaded hat, we have the commodity market and the international banker. It is not what has been popularly known as imperialism, but, to those experiencing it, it is still a decisive foreign control, over the most critical matters in their lives. And then, if there is a political movement, within the country, to change priorities and end this dependence, it can be plausibly presented as subversive; to put it down is " peacemaking ". A break for economic freedom, by a government, can be met with every kind of economic, political and even military pressure, as at Suez. For us at home, reading of these events, decisive labels are attached, to the contending parties: they are " pro-Western " and " moderate ", or " extremist ", " terrorist " and " communist ". The new colonialism, of the commodity markets, the mining corporations, the oil companies and the financial syndicates, becomes the new imperialism, of the military presence, the peacekeeping force, the political manoeuvre.

Political Managers of the World

What was once a relatively specialised field, of colonial management, has become, in these ways, a whole and complicated global strategy. Within this strategy, economic, political and military elements are so closely woven that they form an apparently seamless fabric. The investment programmes of the giant corporations with a vested interest in the system are of course directly capitalist. But behind them there is another kind of investment, from different sources but sharing the same ideology. Heavy stress is laid, when capital is offered to an ex-colonial country, against schemes of nationalisation, and for " free enterprise ". Political developments in the receiving country must not " frighten investors away ". Foreign corporations, with the ready technical know-how, must be allowed freedom to work. Political stability must be ensured: internally, to keep foreign plant and investments safe; strategically, to keep the country free from communist " subversion ". Stable regimes are required—both the economic and the military strategies require them—even if they are military dictatorships or puppet regimes: order is preferable to the " chaos " which would be part of any radical change. The reference to chaos is of course hypocritical. Indonesia denouncing neo-colonialism was a pariah: Indonesia after a massacre of its communists was suddenly a promising country, deserving a favourable mention from a British Foreign Secretary.

In certain circumstances, of course, political stability can be ensured by other means: by timely moderate reforms—some land reform, some improvement in health and housing conditions, some development in native terms. The limits of reform, however, are very strictly maintained. The Alliance for Progress is launched in Latin America: but groups which seek a more radical political solution are subverted and governments undermined; Cuba is beyond the pale. Where the economic climate and the political regimes are " favourable ", the economies can be supported by infusions of economic aid. But it is characteristic that such schemes are financed out of the public revenue, and a great deal of it, which goes into the building up of the infrastructure—roads, dams, power supply—also, incidentally, service and make more profitable the ventures of private capital, though the actual cost of this kind of basic development is borne, not by private capital but by public funds. But if moderate reforms are to be of lasting success, if aid is really to stimulate genuine economic growth, then new social forces must be released within the poor countries, and new programmes set in motion which are likely to take these countries out of the safe orbits of the West. Old privileged groups may resist these changes, but these are just imperialism's best friends, the groups and classes within the new nations which precisely make them " safe " for democracy. When any such revolutionary momentum is generated, the bland face of " aid " is quickly replaced by the harsher face of political intervention and counter-subversion. The new nations, then, are forced to exist within this mystifying circle: aid for the safe, the trustworthy, force; but a military presence for the revolutionary.

The exploitative military and economic relations between the new nations and the West thus confirm the exploiting situations within the new nations, and compound the very " backwardness " of the " backward countries ". The peoples of the rich countries are exploited by the developers who claim to be acting on their behalf, and who are also exploiting the poor countries. But the peoples of the poor countries are also exploited within their own societies—by the many intermediate groups, the chiefs and sheiks, the local bourgeoisies and comprador classes, the indigenous landowners and producers for commodity markets, the

local representatives of international concerns, local capitalist enterprises, and the political and military bureaucracies which exist to mediate and maintain the new colonial relationships. Between the imperial classes of the developed world and the exploiting classes of the underdeveloped world there exists a common economic, military and political cause. Some of these bureaucracies and cadres are what we call the governments of the new states: their corruption and brutality can be mystified, as evidence of the inability of " backward " peoples to govern themselves properly, but their true role and character can only be understood within the complex of actual economic and political relations. The honest and patriotic governments are ceaselessly submitted to pressures, so that their survival is precarious. The resolute governments, determined to gain an economic independence to realise their political independence, are either broken or break from within under the strain. To the degree that they are successful, they are represented as our enemies.

This is the political and social reality of the relations between the rich and poor nations of the world. This is the reality we have to change. For we have only to look at the centres of violence in the contemporary world, all now, precisely, where the poor of the world are trying to win their independence, to know that is it not only exploitation we are seeking to end; it is also, in our time, the main cause and source of war.

4. War and Peace

Socialists have traditionally seen war, in the twentieth century, as the conflict of rival imperialisms: for colonies, for trade, for spheres of influence. But this situation was already modified by the Russian revolution, and international politics, for a generation, came to be dominated by reactions to this new factor—the existence of a socialist state—and its associated movements. The second world war, like the first, began in Europe, but it was already different in character. The old national and imperialist rivalries co-existed with the complicated process of political struggle between socialism and, on the one hand, liberal capitalism, on the other hand, fascism. Before the war ended it was further complicated, in Asia, by an imperialist conflict, of a new kind.

The making and remaking of alliances, within this struggle during the war and post-war years, have been deeply confusing. For socialists in Britain, the actual progress of Russian communism, under severe pressures—internally, in the rapid fight out of backwardness; externally, in the invasion and hostility of the old powers—was of a character to check all easy, utopian assumptions. Many features of this communism could not be recognised as anything but hostile to the socialist ideas nurtured in a more temperate historical experience. The remaking of the communist societies remains urgent, and, in expressing our opposition to their disciplinary and manipulative features, we are at the same time expressing a necessary solidarity with the growing volume of democratic criticism within these countries themselves. But it has been everywhere a matter of extreme difficulty to express this democratic opposition, clearly and strongly, without at the same time aligning ourselves with all those who are the enemies of socialism in any of its forms.

The Cold War

The cold war was a bitterly divisive experience, for these reasons. It was never possible for us to accept the propaganda version of the Soviet Union as an aggressive imperialist power: yet in fact that the charge was made in this way illustrated the complexity of the new politics: imperialism, now, was seen and offered as a natural enemy. Similarly, the previous

apologists of the parties of order, of every kind of authoritarian regime here and elsewhere, expected us to join them because of Soviet authoritarianism; and yet, in declining, we had to insist, often against friends and comrades, that the authoritarianism was there and was brutal and insupportable. Millions of people, including many in the working class movement, were then brought, if not to participation at least to acquiescence in the cold war, on the understanding that it was an essentially defensive operation.

This had never been true, even from the beginning. For the popular resistance movements in occupied Europe, during the second world war, although communist-led, can be seen as agencies of Soviet imperialism only by the most grotesque historical distortion. They expressed an authentic popular movement, with authentic revolutionary aspirations, germane to those which brought Labour's own sweeping electorial victories in 1945. The case of Yugoslavia, during the worst years of Stalinism, was to show how far such indigenous and democratic impulses were beyond any imperialist control. And it was the repression of these popular movements —in Greece, in France, in Italy—and the re-instatement of the old interests and regimes (now under American military protection) which contributed as much to the origin of the cold war as did the Stalinist repression of liberal, social-democratic, and (at length) communist opposition in Eastern Europe.

The cold war had no single author. One page was written at Yalta, another at Fulton, yet another in Prague. It has always entailed a radical falsification of European culture, history, even elementary geography. There is no " West " confronting an " East ": the lines of ideological argument, of cultural influence, and of political solidarities have always followed their own necessary logic across all arbitrary frontiers. We have never been able to see the cold war as anything but an interregnum in European history, an unnatural parenthesis.

The parenthesis may at last be brought to an end. The cold war, in its original character as a confrontation in Europe, has for several years now been changing its shape and source. We believe that, already confused by the cold war and its tensions, the Labour movement has been painfully slow to recognise the altered character of international relations. Under the nuclear arms race, the cold war reached deadlock in Europe; it is now being fought elsewhere, on different issues and by different means, in ways that shed light back on the original confrontation. We believe that we were right, back in the fifties, to identify nuclear weapons as the immediate and major danger to civilisation and indeed human life. We were right to demand British withdrawal from a nuclear strategy, and to offer this as a positive political and moral initiative. We had to choose, and had always needed to choose, even in the worst period of Stalinism, between rival world political orders which, in the sheer weight of their military power, made any unambiguous choice virtually unbearable. That was perhaps the instinct of the simple call for unilateral nuclear disarmament: to establish a human choice where no fully supportable political choice existed.

In the subsequent development of the cold war, this situation has radically changed. The movement for nuclear disarmament, like the movement for colonial freedom or against world hunger, can become political in new ways. For while the dangerous deadlock has remained in Europe, the active conflict—for the reasons we explained in our study of the new imperialism—has moved to the formerly colonial world. The war in Vietnam is an outstanding and brutal example of the political strategy of

the new imperialism. Just because this is now an interlocking and international system, it has passed beyond the phase of simple pressure or intervention against a recalcitrant or revolutionary ex-colonial society, and successive imperialist powers can take up the fight. And then what is wrong in the Vietnam war is not only that it is pitiless and brutal, calling forth, as it must in every humane person, an answering cry for peace. It is also that it is a war consciously fought, by the United States, as part of an international struggle: an international test case.

The Ring of Bases

The cold war, that is to say, has moved outwards: from old metropolitan Europe to the newly awaking continents. In Asia, the United States has built up a chain of allies and satellite powers on China's peripheries—Japan, South Korea, Taiwan, the Philippines, Thailand, Saigon, Pakistan. Indonesia is rapidly moving towards inclusion; Indian neutralism became unviable after Nehru's death and the Sino-Indian border dispute. In Latin America—where the United States has for long enjoyed an unbroken economic hegemony—an inter-American military command has come into existence: and the security of this sphere of influence is maintained by aid programmes, by direct political intervention and extensive counter-revolutionary training. In Africa, U.S. military aid and capital poured in as the older colonial powers pulled out: the first ideological military confrontation here was in the Congo.

The consolidation of this worldwide system of economic and military imperialism was completed as the old European colonial powers withdrew, and after a brief period of liberation. In that interregnum, a neutralist bloc of nations emerged, and the term " non-alignment " seemed to have a relatively stable and meaningful value. In fact, the West remained the final arbiter as to what kinds of non-alignment were acceptable and what kinds were not: the use of regular and irregular military contingents from NATO countries by Tshombe and Mobutu in the Congo was " acceptable "; the request by Lumumba to the Russians for help in the transport of his troops was not. Thus, in effective terms, the West established a definition of what types of political regime, what kinds of economic reform, what style of foreign relations were " safe for democracy " in the Third World: and took the means—by direct economic and military pressure, and by indirect subversion—to make those definitions operative. As a result, non-alignment has become progressively illusory. In some cases—Vietnam, Venezuela, the Dominican republic—the United States has intervened directly. But the new imperialism does not require everywhere a direct political and military presence, as the older style of colonialism did. A measure of local autonomy can be " permitted ", especially where the regimes are " friendly " or " sympathetic ", that is, " pro-West " in character (for a country does not need to have internal democracy in order to be " safe for democracy "). But these regimes are " neither in full control of their major economic resources not domestically secure in their foreign policy options ". As Conor Cruise O'Brien put it: " Instead of thinking of a non-aligned Third World, it would be more realistic to think in terms of a world-wide capitalist economy of which the supposedly non-aligned countries form an integral part and, considered as a whole, a profitable part ". This economic relationship is maintained within the framework of a global system of military and strategic containment which operates as powerfully upon Third World countries as the colonial brigade of former days. In recent years, American policy has become more activist, with direct political pressure, the training of counter-revolutionary forces

by the CIA, economic blackmail and large-scale war as its common techniques. The choice for the Third World countries has become increasingly polarised, as their fragile independence is eroded by economic weakness vis-a-vis the developed countries, by internal stress and external pressure—either to be within the global orbit of imperialism or against it. The rapid toppling of regimes in the Third World, and the " emergence " of more pro-Western governments in recent months—in Brazil, the Congo, Algeria, Indonesia, Ghana, the Dominican Republic and Guyana—suggest that this hard-line imperialism has not been unsuccessful.

It is impossible to believe that, confronted with this situation in a pure form, the Left could take any position other than outright opposition. But the confusion of the cold war has been consciously continued, with the characteristic substitution of China for Russia as the main enemy: China, of course, because it is the contemporary example of a successful Asian revolution. And, further, the complicated and deeply-rooted alliances and institutions, of the whole cold-war period, provide a dense political reality, which cannot be opposed by moderate policies, but requires an absolute and exposed decision: for or against. That is why we cannot confine our critique of current foreign policy to local amendments and qualifications. We have to reject the whole world-view, and the consequent alliances, on which it continues to be based. Our problems are not the last stage of Britain's withdrawal from an imperial position. They are a continuing stage, in what if unchecked will be a very long conflict, of Britain's participation in an international military alliance against the colonial revolution and its allies.

Thus our indictment of the cold war cannot be separated from our indictment of the new imperialism. It is not only that some of the giant companies have annexed this political conflict as a base from which they can really plan, in the now enormously profitable military contracts. It is not only that our political and intellectual life has been penetrated, In a hundred discrete areas, by cold war agencies like the CIA, which evades even rudimentary democratic controls and recruits and operates the mercenaries of anti-communism. It is also that in the financial difficulties over sterling, and in the increasing penetration of the British economy by United States capital, pressure to support particular policies can be put on us, directly, in ways not unlike those of the new colonialism and imperialism in the most backward parts of the world. This is why, again, we see Britain's crisis as single and integrated. The fight against imperialism on an issue like Vietnam is substantially linked with the fight against direction of our own economic and political policies, not only by the Americans, but specifically by the international institutions of monopoly capital which include elements of our own society. In fighting anywhere, we are fighting everywhere.

A Socialist Reply

To state the indictment is to see that we walk, every day, through the corridors of nightmare. But to state the indictment is also to begin to find the means to change it. We have no patience with those—and there are many of them, on Labour Party committees and in university common rooms—who accept that much of this indictment is true, but who shrug off all action, because " Britain has no influence " and " Vietnam is an American war ". We shall have whatever influence we are able to earn.

British socialists deserve to have no influence unless they reassume full citizenship of an undivided world. We must reject all complicity with the partial routines of " West " and " East ", and, whether as trade unionists or as intellectuals, seek to rediscover a common voice which disregards the rival structures of power. Nor will the voice which supersedes the cold war be one of passive neutralism or of quietism. In Western Europe and in the United States it will be the voice of all those who protest, to the limit of their powers, against the involvement of their own Governments in the new imperialism. In Russia and in Eastern Europe the voice may be more muffled—sometimes in devious ways and through opaque censorship—of those who are working to dismantle the obsolete structures of authoritarianism. Our allegiances can be given no longer to any partial description of interntional crisis, but only to a total description, in which both movements of resistance are seen—and are seen to converge —so that a socialism which is both democratic and revolutionary can be realised once more as international aspiration and actuality.

Within this perspective, we must continue familiar duties—the struggle to withdraw Britain from Western nuclear strategy—and assume new ones with more vigour. We have a particular duty to reject, on every occasion, the official descriptions of international reality, and to explain to our own people what we understand to be the true one. And as access to the central media of communication becomes more difficult—as American hand-outs appear more frequently on television and in the press—we must attend more energetically to creating the means to ascertain international realities, and communicate the truth in the widest possible way.

The details of foreign policy must be contested week by week, as they arise. But the perspectives are clear. In Europe we must press for disengagement between East and West in the political sphere (whether in the form of nuclear-free zones and a European Security Pact, or in piecemeal initiatives by individual nations), and for active association in economic, cultural, social and educational spheres. Negotiations to enter the European Economic Community should be judged by their relation to this more important objective. We have seen how the new capitalism reduces, or attempts to reduce, every political and social question to its own priorities of international investment and the organised market, though indeed it often sends ahead, in its public relations, what can look, momentarily, like an ideal.

To join what is called the " Common Market " would, in itself, be no more than an exercise in the political economy of the new capitalism: Europe, including Western Europe, is more than a market, and the decisive questions are not at that level. What is in fact at issue is a question of international politics, in an exceptionally complicated and fluid situation. It is essential that we cooperate, at every stage, in the necessary process of political change in Europe, with the single objective of ending the outdated policies of the cold war. But we get different answers, weighing that question, from France and from Germany, as we get different answers again from Rumania and from Poland. No simple decision is then possible, but we state our priorities: to begin disengagement; to oppose the spread of nuclear weapons; to resist the capitalist alliance and its open and covert political aims; to prevent any hardening of economic structures which would divide Europe and harm the rest of the world.

Such priorities are continuous with our necessary role in Asia, Africa and the Middle East. We believe that it is imperative for Britain to disengage from its position as junior partner— allotted its role and zones —in United States international policy.

There are, of course, economic objections to the cost of this role, but these would not, in themselves, be decisive, if the policy were in the interests of the people concerned. What in fact needs changing is the

definition of peacemaking, which we see, directly, as a commitment to the United Nations. The convulsions of Asia and Africa, in our view, are a necessary process of political and social change, in which our weight must be thrown on the side of the hungry and the poor. As part of this change, we must redefine aid in a new strategy of co-operative development, for we cannot withdraw ourselves selfishly from the world crisis of poverty and population growth. The problem of development must be taken out of the context of capitalist trading relations, and this involves as much change in our own society as in the newly emerging countries. In this context, the leaders of popular revolution in Asia, Africa and Latin America are our natural allies, and we should move to decisive support of them, and opposition to their many and powerful domestic and foreign enemies.

In all these changes of policy, our relationship with the United States must cease to be a decisive factor. Our practical dependence on the United States, expressed in political and military alliances, locked in financial arrangements and the penetration of our economy by United States capital, and supported, as a planned operation, by many kinds of cultural and educational colonisation, makes any attempt at disengagement a fight from the beginning. We would not wish, in such a fight, to rely on the counter-force of crude nationalism. What we have to disengage from is a specific and complex political system. We can only do this intelligently if we begin by opposing the British political and economic system which is making the subordination inevitable, and, as part of this change, by making new international contacts.

What we are committing ourselves to is an international political struggle which includes the important political struggle within the United States. We shall work for the withdrawal of United States troops and bases from Britain and its associated territories, and this, though necessary and urgent, is not a merely negative policy, but a deliberate initiative against an international political system which depends on bases and client states. Few events in the past five years have given us greater cause for encouragement than the rebirth, on the campuses and in the squares of the great cities of the United States, of a movement for peace and against imperialism which works towards the same internationalist objective as our own. The elan and the courage of this young movement of the American people presents an urgent claim upon us for our solidarity.

At the same time, to begin to commit ourselves to opposing the new capitalism and the new imperialism is to make possible a new kind of negotiation, and a new kind of discourse, with the communist world. There also, not only between states, as in the tragic division between the Soviet Union and China, but within societies, a critical struggle is now taking place. We do not want or expect the Soviet Union to come to resemble western capitalist societies, though we welcome the increasing prosperity of the Soviet people and the technical advances of its economy, not least because it has demonstrated that social and economic growth, in the modern world, are wider and more rational processes than the parochial vision of the new capitalism. At the same time we wholly reject the view that China has replaced the Soviet Union as a threat to the " West ". There is no way of describing the Chinese bomb, for example, that is not also a way of describing the United States, Russian, British and French bombs. The Chinese revolution against poverty and exploitation is remarkable and welcome; and the response of the " West " to this revolution has been remarkable only in its rancour. It is only when we ourselves have broken out of the strategies of the new capitalism and

imperialism, and from their fixed defensive responses, that we can expect any genuine discourse to be opened. Our own immediate duty is the overthrow of capitalism and imperialism, in our own kind of society. In this process, we shall look for friends and allies, not among states but among peoples, in what is at every point, for all the necessary variations of method, a serious and prolonged revolutionary struggle.

5. The Politics of Socialism

The struggle against imperialism is already international. It is our duty, as socialists, to take part in it wherever we can. The most active fronts are elsewhere, but still, historically, we are in a critical position, in the heart of one of the old imperialist countries. It would make an important difference, in the balance of power in the world, if we could make a socialist Britain, or, as a stage on the way, build so powerful a socialist movement that British participation in the new imperialism could be limited and then ended.

Yet our duty is not fully defined by our international commitments, urgent as these now are. In one of the old industrial countries, with important traditions of democratic experience and organisation, we are in a position to respond to the new forms of advanced capitalism with what would, undoubtedly, be a new and advanced socialism, of a kind not historically possible in lands where socialism had to be built from extreme poverty and open tyranny. We have made our commitment to the many peoples who are living through this very different historical experience, but it is now, primarily, a commitment to their future. An active socialism, in our own historical situation, would be a relevant contribution to just that future, as well as the necessary next stage in our own growth.

The definition and organisation of a contemporary socialism must become international, as a matter of urgency. Yet our own first task is undoubtedly the creation, in Britain, of a powerful and contemporary socialist movement.

And the first question is then: can socialists go on accepting the assumptions of Labourism, the illusions and their consequences, telling themselves for comfort, over and over, that the difficulties are temporary and that this year, next year, sometime, a progress on the former terms can be simply resumed? Or shall we, at last, face the full dimensions of the crisis, and measuring them against the familiar programmes of Labourism, take the critical decision of a new political road: a new analysis, a new organisation, a new kind of social and political struggle, in what seems the only remaining chance to carry our values and aspirations through to political reality? Shall we, in fact, from the heart of the Labour movement, try to create in actuality what has long been imagined in theory, a new Left?

Successes and Failures of the Left

In every advanced capitalist society there are areas and movements of opposition and criticism. The history of the Left, in recent years, has been one of special campaigns. Some of these have been defensive, on ground chosen by those managing the society: in 1951, against massive rearmament and cuts in the social services; in 1956, against aggression at Suez; in 1961 and again in 1966, against the wage freeze; since 1965, against British support for the United States' war in Vietnam.

Running through these defensive campaigns, but at a different tempo,

have been the many trade union struggles, usually particular and isolated, though often enough with a common theme. Miners, railwaymen, dockers, busmen, seamen, nurses, car-workers, teachers: each group in turn has been and will be again at a pressure point in the society, and their critical reactions, as a threatened group, attain for a time a political significance, drawing on wider support.

Meanwhile, there have been campaigns of a different kind, on ground chosen by radical opinion. There have been the humanitarian initiatives: War Against Want, Freedom from Hunger, Campaign Against Racial Discrimination, Poverty Action Group, Shelter. Important radical groups, often with local organisation, have been active in education, community service and communications. Major groups, for colonial freedom and against apartheid, have campaigned over many years. The Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament, seizing a single major issue, became the most active radical movement in Britain since the thirties. At the same time, in research and theory, there has been an active renewal of socialist writing and intellectual inquiry, which has moved decisively into the consciousness of a new generation.

A substantial body of opinion, making and supporting socialist analysis and policies, undoubtedly exists. It is of course a minority, but then the active ideologists of other positions—of an unrestrained new capitalism, or of a social democracy coming to terms with new capitalism—are also minorities. In a simple count of heads, they are not, as individuals and as immediate working groups, much more numerous or more active than the committed socialists. But they are more effective, for two main reasons: first, that they are working not only with the grain but on behalf of the structures of existing power and of communications in the society; second, that they constitute or are directly associated with the leaderships of the two major political parties.

By straightforward tests, of activity, commitment, and identification of issues, the British Left has been strong and persistent. Yet by the test it would apply to itself, of success in changing the main direction of the society, and in building an organised, principled and continuing movement capable of offering an effective challenge to the structures of power, it has not done nearly enough. Is the answer then to redouble the campaigns? At that simple level, there is no real choice: all the campaigns must go on being fought. To withdraw from any of them is to withdraw from our sense of being human. Yet at the same time we must examine the specific causes of their relative failures, and we identify these now as threefold:

(i) the lack of connection between separate campaigns, and especially between those facing the major international and humanitarian issues, and those facing problems of wages and working conditions;

(ii) the continuing tacit acceptance of many of the assumptions of the state and its institutions, leading to the exclusion of " unofficial " and " unconstitutional " tactics;

(iii) the lack of continuing major institutions, representing Left opinion and activity, both for political continuity, and for publicity and communication.

The shape of a new Left, as we see it, must be determined by these major needs. What is already an intellectual position, and an active network of particular campaigns, must begin to break through to a connected and developing political movement. Ideas must be taken to ever wider groups of people, and must give rise to new forms of organisation, however difficult the first attempts and however precarious the first advances may be. It is in these ways, always, that a socialist movement is built.

The New Politics

To initiate such a movement will be difficult because we confront a whole system which is foreclosing upon democracy, and which is expropriating the people of their political identity. We do not mean to signal the danger of a rebirth of fascism, the armed authoritarianism of the thirties. The authoritarianism of the sixties is altogether more bland. It does not come with knuckle-dusters and revolvers but with political sedatives and processing. It does not segregate dissenters in concentration camps but allows them to segregate themselves in little magazines and sectarian societies. It does not require of its supporters that they should march through the streets, but simply that they should be apathetic.

For not only the policies of the two major parties, but also the parties themselves and their auxiliary institutions, are in an advanced stage of adjustment to the demands of managed capitalism. Free-market capitalism could tolerate, in the nineteenth century, a free market also in political ideas and policies. Within this framework, adjustments of interest could be made without excessive tension; and what the forms allowed, the long democratic pressures of the British people endowed with greater content. Within these forms—but only after repeated failures, and the most determined struggles—the Labour Party finally emerged as a party of working-class interests.

But managed capitalism in our own time has repented of its youth. The old kind of political conflict introduces uncertainty into planning and continually reactivates centres of resistance to its dispositions. Just as the new capitalism finds it increasingly necessary to forecast and at times to create demand, so in its political expression it finds it necessary not to adjust to but to create what it calls public opinion. And in doing this, unprecedented means of persuasion lie to hand.

The first outlines of new capitalism became visible, to many of us, through what was happening in communications. In the struggle for democracy in the nineteenth century, dissenting minorities and the new popular organisations had, if not equality, at least some comparative opportunity of access to the places where opinion was formed: the cheap printing-press, the hustings, the soapbox, the chapel, the public hall. Many of these means are of course still open, but the main channels of fact and persuasion are now very different, in television, the national press, the monolithic political party. Opposition groups may get an occasional hearing, in any one of these, but normally on the terms of the established system. On Vietnam, for example, we have had to buy advertising space in the newspapers. On television, the occasional dissenter will be interviewed, but as part of the passing show, which is normally following the existing contours of opinion. Balance, for example, as a principle of public service broadcasting, is balance between representatives of the parties, or at most sections of the parties. All the widely distributed newspapers are in capitalist hands, and conduct their own continual campaigns and pressures. To be outside this system, and against its values, may allow, at times, a brief invitation to join it, or to have dissenting views processed by the established commentators. More commonly, it allows what is said to be ignored, in the confidence that the small-circulation pamphlet, the serious book, the meeting in a hired hall, will not get through to the majority of people, in ways that would make the suppression obvious. When we go out into the streets, a hundred thousand people, to campaign against nuclear weapons, we are reported and placed as an eccentric group, a traditional rite of Easter, an event in the Labour Party. For that is the point, in the mode of opinion-formation under new capitalism. The system is offered as absolute; it, and only it, is

normality. In open and free debate, such normality might be challenged, but this precise new capitalism—a working partnership of public and private bureaucracy, in defence of established political and economic interests—has the major communications system safely in its own hands, at a level of organisation and cost which makes any challenge to it, from the beginning, unofficial, marginal, even petty. It seems a kind of arrogance, in such a climate, to stand up on one's own terms, and offer an opinion at the level of any other. " Who are these people anyway? ": the conditioned response has been learned. In fact the answer is simple: people like any others, all needing to be heard. Yet to state that principle now is the most absolute challenge; every device of habit, pretended amusement, false political realism, interest in a job, will be deployed against it.

Parliament

" But democracy means parliament ". Isn't that the usual answer? At a formal level it appears that democratic parliamentary politics continue. But in practice our democratic institutions are being converted to machines which give the illusion but never the fact of democratic participation. Power resides, in this society, in a whole series of institutions, most of which run back, in the end, to the capitalist system of property and production. The great financial institutions, the increasingly large industrial combines, the employers' federations: these have to be negotiated with, in practice, by any elected authority, as if they were what in fact they are: separate and self-sustaining powers. What people want and elect (from a choice already processed by this style of politics) is seen as a factor, but only a factor, in what is going to happen; one element in a conflict of interests. This conflict is not between desire and reality. It is between some people's wills and others: between an elected programme and what the bankers want, what industry wants, what the " experts " want, what the civil servants want, and what the Americans want. The Government is then not the people in power, but a broker, a co-ordinator, a part of the machine.

The style of politics to which we have become stealthily habituated is then apparent. Great emphasis is laid on the reform of all the machine institutions, so that they may more effectively play their part in just this process. Civil servants must interchange with industrial management; universities must develop more narrowly-applied business schools; members of parliament must combine, in new institutions, with the representatives of these separate powers; management must reform itself, to develop men and procedures which fit rationally into the system; trade unions must reform themselves, to fit rationally into the system, and—the only case, ironically, where this problem arises—to be better able to control their members.

What can then be achieved—the process is of course not complete—is the final expropriation of the people's active political presence.

Instead, we shall have a new technocratic politics, fitted into the modern state. It is a politics which would replace, even at the formal level, all older theories of the sovereignty of the people through their elected representatives. It offers, instead, a congress of representatives of the new capitalist state and its consequent political relations. These will, of course, often quarrel among themselves, and the rest of us may be asked to take sides. But all actual choice will be directed towards the resolution of conflicts within that specific machinery.

The political parties remain, ironically, an element which cannot be finally assimilated; and yet whose imperfect assimilation is necessary—at least in the transitional stage—to legitimise the machine. The parties' real fights, and even their sham fights, can disturb the machine; but on the other hand, without them, it would be apparent to everybody that all the major decisions are taken, not by the people, but by the machines and the system.

The Labour Party

None of this is surprising. It is exactly what one would expect new capitalist politics to be—changes of techniques to maintain older priorities. What is astonishing is that one of the two major parties which have adapted most readily to the modes of managed capitalism is the Labour Party: at once the party created to transform the system, and to offer the prospect of an alternative society; and still the party of the great majority —some sixty or seventy per cent—of the working people of Britain. Labour and Conservative, Conservative and Labour, have reduced immediate political choice to a choice between them, to the extent that it is seen as a choice between this or that man. In this respect, politics is seen in a quite special way as " the art of the possible ", since all that is really possible is a choice, in nineteenth century terms, between Boodle and Doodle. A majority of political commentators accept and project, however cynically, this version of effective choice. Any other emphasis, on what they call " ideology " or " theology ", is dismissed as irredeemably out-of-date; by comparison, presumably, with their own fantastic attempt to cancel history, to recreate two parties who agree about the structure and purposes of society but who disagree about secondary policies, about details of administration and about their own personal capacities: the party system as it existed, though in less organised and monolithic forms than now, in the nineteenth century, before the arrival of Labour and the working-class electorate. Like many other versions of what is now modern, this orthodox political view is an old and discredited procedure—of alternation rather than of real opposition—which has been given new life by the pressure on twentieth-century parties to conform to the strengths of capitalism.

It is an old and discredited theory, but it is also an actual and effective practice. A growing distance has been opened between the real politics of managed capitalism and the people in whose name and under whose title the politics are supposed to be carried on. This distance could never have been opened, or if it had, it would have been opened along the line between the two major parties, if the Labour Party had remained a party within which democratic processes moved with freedom and fluency: a party capable of articulating the aspirations and grievances of the working people.

The difficulties of socialists have seemed to flow from this paradox: that the major working-class party, in which many socialists still work, has been absorbed, at the level of government and political decision, into the structures of capitalist politics. The development of the current Labour government—it is perhaps better to call it, in traditional terms, an administration—has confirmed this fact of absorption, but this is no sudden evolution. It has been clear for a long time that the Labour Party is a compromise between working-class objectives and the traditional power structure: the first, it has often been hoped, could be achieved through the second. It has been possible in the past to see this as a necessary tension: the only way change can come. But what is more and more evident is that, in effective politics, this tension has gone.

The idea of socialism has not been abandoned—that was the straightforward gesture of adaptation (the excision of Clause Four) which was

tried, and failed, under Gaitskell. With Wilson, socialism has been quietly written out, allowed to lapse. And it has now been given out—not so much in argument as in mood—that socialism is in any case an outdated conception, outside any realistic political structure. Or, where an appearance of continuity seems necessary, to keep the party together, a kind of upside-down definition is adopted: whatever the Labour government now does is socialism: do not the Conservatives and the right-wing newspapers still call them socialists?

No coherent analysis of capitalist power, no movement of socialist education and propaganda, no authentic ideology of social change, has emerged from the institutional Labour Party for two decades. Whatever has emerged (like the New Left) has been the initiative of individuals working outside the party's institutional framework, who have improvised their own organisations, and who have been regarded by the officialdom of Labour with distrust or (as in the case of several initiatives among the young socialists) with actual proscription.

It is only necessary to imagine, in a utopian sense, what a democratic mass party of socialist and working-class aspiration—capable of confronting managed capitalism—would be like, to disclose, by contrast, the present predicament. Such a party would draw strength from active, committed groups not only in the communities but also in places of work. Such groups (quite as much as the national organs of the party) would engage in the continuous work of education and agitation necessary to disclose the incompatibility between human and capitalist priorities. A first call upon the resources (both intellectual and organisational) of such a party would be the establishment of a national daily newspaper capable of organising demand and of disseminating through the society alternative, socialist descriptions of reality. The reason why the dissolution of the " Daily Herald " caused so little anxiety, even in the Labour movement, is that it had long ceased to do that, or anything like that. So far from suspicion or repression, such a party would welcome—could not, indeed, function without—the self-activating initiatives of socialist shop stewards, intellectuals, and student and youth movements. Above all, such a party would seek in all its activities to enlist the active democratic participation —in nationalised industries, in university and educational structures, in municipal and community affairs—of the people in their own self-government. And what it sought to extend, in democratic actualities, throughout the society, would be expressed also in its own internal structure. Its leadership would be clearly accountable to the party's effective and active membership, drawing upon their experience and controlled by their criticism.

As a model this may be utopian: but there is no longer any point in pretending that there is any correspondence, of the most distant kind, between the model and the actuality of the Labour Party. Over the years the commitment of members has been dissipated: in part, by the bureaucratic character of the machine; in part, by actual political disillusion and victimisation; most generally, by the apathy provoked by a party which has no use for the intelligence of its own members, but only—and then only in election times—for their dutiful feet.

Just as power no longer resides in parliament, but the elected element is only one factor among other interest groups, so a parallel process has been reproduced within the structure of the Labour Party. Power is not in its Conference—the party equivalent of parliament—but in its executive leadership. The business of Conference (as the political commentators make clear) is not to decide policy but to project the public image, and

the interesting questions are how party leaders will manage their critics, and how they will neutralise any resolution passed against the platform. In this they can count (as Gaitskell could on unilateral disarmament) upon the unabashed support of the media, in the name of the " national interest " and consensus politics. The parliamentary party can disregard Conference decisions, since parliament is, supposedly, responsible not to a party but an electorate. The party leadership can disregard advice from its national executive or the parliamentary party, since it is in possession of secret information and it is its business to " govern ". But the individual member of parliament who seeks to vote against the Government (on an issue of political principle, and one which, perhaps, accords with his own pledge to the electorate) is immediately threatened with deprivation of party rights. In any such case, a constituency party must be quick to support its member, and to combine with others in the defence and formulation of socialist policies. But the regular denial of democratic principles is not the result of accident; it is intrinsic to a machinery designed for just these purposes. As Richard Crossman has written:

" The Labour Party required militants—politically conscious socialists to do the work of organising the constituencies. But since these militants tended to be ' extremists ', a constitution was needed which maintained their enthusiasm by apparently creating a full party democracy while excluding them from effective power."

Here, even cynically, the rationality—and not just the accident—of the existing machinery is described. The description could be profitably hung in every committee room: not as a way of emptying it, but to show what we are up against, and how we need to recover control of the movement we still maintain.

The Trade Unions

What is true about parliament and about the Labour Party is also increasingly true about the trade unions and the T.U.C. Under definite pressures, they have in some cases been successfully converted to machines which, offering certain finite advantages to their members, then successfully sustain an executive leadership responsible nominally to its members but practically to itself.

Trade Unions of this kind can then be steadily absorbed into the political and economic structures of the new capitalism, under apparently progressive slogans of " planning " and " sharing in managerial responsibility ". Similarly, such a trade union movement can offer to administer a " voluntary " incomes policy, as an administratively preferable alternative to the statutory policy of wage-control by the government. In fact, in either case, they will be acquiescing in a drastic reduction of their traditional objectives, under the guise of building a " modern " trade union movement. There are of course some unions, and many thousands of trade union militants, who oppose such policies. But they will be easily isolated, and the whole movement confused, unless socialist policies over this whole range of questions are clearly developed, as an alternative to the methods and assumptions of organised capitalism.

Workers already " participate " in industry, but on terms set by capital. A socialist policy on industrial democracy begins from this fact, and from a principled rejection of the structures it creates. The socialist aim is to substitute publicly accountable ownership and control for the present system with its " managerial (in fact, capitalist) prerogatives ". As first steps, it demands definite controls, by trade unions, over such matters as dismissals, discipline and safety. In wider questions of policy, it insists, in

the case of joint discussions within any particular firm, on all the facts being made available—" opening the books "—and further, on the extension of such discussions to the level of the whole industry, so that cost and market questions can be brought to a rational plane—a plan for the whole industry—instead of being left within the irrationalities of competition. That is to say, a socialist trade union policy envisages a step-by-step extension of workers' control to the point where it engages with the policies emerging from the wider democratic process, at which point the power of capital can be isolated and ended. These long-term aims must be seen as a guide for more immediate actions. Wages militancy, and campaigns to improve working conditions, need to be related to these principles. But, further, it is absolutely essential, as the unions enlarge their functions, that their internal democracy should be radically overhauled and extended. Trade unionists will have gained very little if they have " representatives " in new consultative and semi-managerial functions, unless these men are, at all times, strictly accountable to their members, bound by no secret clauses to withhold information from them, and subject to recall. We strongly support the many thousands of trade unionists who are fighting for these policies, from the most local wage struggles to the most general industrial campaigns. They are playing a vital part in the building of a contemporary socialist movement. And because their objectives and principles contrast so sharply with present structures and tendencies in much official unionism, and with its tacit contract, through the official Labour Party, with new capitalism, these trade unionists will see the need for, and will help to build, a new Left.

The Labour Left

The major division in contemporary British politics is between acceptance and rejection of the new capitalism: its priorities, its methods, its versions of man and of the future. Yet this major division cannot be made clear, in any general way, because its line runs somewhere down the middle of the Labour Party, and is continually blurred by the orientation of the party towards preparation and recovery from elections.

The most urgent political need in Britain is to make this basic line evident, and to begin the long process of unambiguous struggle and argument at this decisive point.

With Labour out of office, it could always be supposed, by a majority even of socialists, that the line ran between the Labour and Conservative parties, so that the electoral struggle was also the political struggle. To win a general election was to win power for the Left. All socialist policies could, by inclusion, be carried forward by the Labour Party in Parliament. This cannot any longer be reasonably supposed, yet for many years it has determined the basic strategy of the Left. This or that resolution would be got through the party Conference. This or that man would be backed, in the contest for the leadership. Whenever the line became blurred, and the political struggle confused, things could be set right by this kind of action: getting Labour in and keeping Labour Left.

We do not now say these efforts were wrong, though when they come to contradict each other, still giving political priority to Labour in Parliament when Conference decisions have been ignored and the nominees of the Left are part of this corrupt power, some change of the strategy is obviously necessary. Even while the efforts at internal change are being made, the limitations must be clearly seen. Thus we can welcome some of the stands and speeches made by Left Labour M.P.'s, but for all the courage and sanity of many individual members, what is being shown, as a

whole process, is their subordination. It is not only that, within the terms of the new politics, such efforts can only—at the very best—attain to marginal successes, which it is then the role of the managers to direct and contain. It is also that a strategy which is wholly enclosed within the forms of Labourism is directing energies into the very machines which socialists should fight. By endorsing the illusion that it is in this place—and in this place alone—that politics occur, energies are diverted from more public arenas and more uncompromising confrontations. And a Labour Left strategy of this kind becomes, of necessity, involved in the same kind of machine politics, the same manipulation of committee votes in the names of thousands, the same confusion of the emptying institutions of the movement with the people in whose name they are conducted, as that of the managers whom they seek to displace.

The principal distinction between what can be called the old and the new Left—cutting across what is often an agreement on policies—is in just this question of the nature of political power, and so of relevant political action, in this kind of society. For, just as the Labour Party has been a compromise between working-class objectives and the existing power structures, at the national level, so the traditional Labour Left has been a compromise between socialist objectives and the existing power structure, at the party level.

The purpose of any new Left must be to end this compromise. We therefore declare our intention to end the system of consensus politics, by drawing the political line where it actually is, rather than where it might be thought convenient for elections or traditional descriptions.

The Politics of the Future

The shape of contemporary socialism, and of a new Left, must then be apparent. There are always local opportunities for effective action and particular campaigns, within the quarrels of the machines and the system, and sometimes these arise from the very fact that adjustments are incomplete, so that margins for movement remain. All such opportunities we believe, must be taken. But what we must build beyond this is a new kind of movement, which is defined by the fact that it is opposing a new political system, and that it cannot defeat it by electoral action alone. Thus we stop subordinating every issue, and every strategy, to electoral calculations and organisations.

Instead we say:

(i) The system cannot solve the major problems of the society. It is keeping people going by pretending the difficulties are temporary. They are in fact permanent. The system is not designed to give, and cannot give, to the majority of our people: rising production and full employment; real social security; a humane education; peace and disarmament. These are not its objectives, but they are the conditions of its survival.

(ii) The system cannot identify or solve the new problems of the society. It has opted against social change, and substituted its rising curve on existing lines and inequalities. But it must then absorb or deflect new kinds of demands, in a changing world. It cannot provide for the growing demands for meaning in work and leisure, for participation in actual communities, for an urban environment shaped by human priorities, for the entry of women into fuller equality, for personal liberation from the routines of living inside the machine. All it can offer are its fashionable gimmicks and substitutes, and these feed on themselves. In the face of dissent, apathy and violence, it can offer only new manipulation, new forms of control and force, for it cannot conceive what indeed would end it—a

responsible, cooperative and equal society.

(iii) The system cannot operate with genuinely conflicting political parties and movements, and so it must try to drain these of meaning, which in practice involves taking significance and values and participation away from many thousands of actual people. To take away from the Labour Party its tenacious idea of a new and better society; to take away from the trade unions their daily commitments to the improvement of the lives of their members: these are things it must try to do, to fit the machine, but that it will fail to do, because people will not hand themselves over, bound hand and foot, ballot-slip, party and union card, to that kind of convenience.

(iv) The system cannot, finally, stand the pressure of the contemporary world. It is the last dream of a local group: a way of preserving its structures of minority power against a world revolution, with which the needs of its own people, for peace and democracy, must be eventually ranged. Centred in its dying concepts of what the world should be like, it is being driven to war and massive rearmament even while it proclaims its own version of life as an endless, mild, hand-to-mouth paradise. This contradiction is already breaking it, and will continue to break it. It is the weak link, in its otherwise plausible policies. It is the point where change will begin, and where we must be ready to push the change right through, until the system as a whole is dismantled.

We can therefore begin a campaign of a new kind: a campaign of needs and issues, against what we have shown to be a system. In the coming years, the adjustments and the failures of the system itself will provoke repeated struggles, on particular issues, representing the urgent needs and expectations of millions of people. We intend to take part, as allies, in all the social conflicts, of every kind, which then follow. We will see each conflict as an opportunity for explaining the character of the system which is cheating us, and so as a way of helping to change consciousness: to follow the needs and the feelings through until they reach the point of demands which the system can neither satisfy nor contain. What has been our weakness, that we have run separate campaigns in so many different social and political fields, can become our strength: that we are present in the society where the system and the political leadership are not. To be a socialist, now, is to be at the point where a firm is taken over, by foreign capital; to be where profit and convenience are hurrying, threatening, discarding men; to be where a wage is fought for, or a reduction of hours; to be where a school or a hospital needs urgent improvement, or a bus-service, a housing development, a local clinic needs to be fought through, against the ordinary commercial and bureaucratic priorities; to be where Council rents are being raised, during a standstill on wages; to be on a newspaper or magazine, threatened with closure by the calculations of the advertisers and combine proprietors; to be a student expected to pass quietly through to a prescribed job with no share in the definition of his subject or in the government of his institution; to be a teacher, struggling to maintain his ideals against a bureaucratic grading of children and a perpetual shortage of resources; to be a social worker, knowing that where people are in need there is always shortage, of skilled helpers, of building and equipment, of the necessary respect; to be out in the streets, in the rush of society, demanding attention for what is happening to the unregarded poor, in our own and in other countries, breaking the system of human indifference and opposing the preparation, the complicity, the lies of war; to be in any or all of these places and conditions, and to connect, to explain, what is actually happening, so that ordinary people

can begin to take control of it.

Older definitions have failed, and with them the traditional agencies of socialist change. The political machines have sought to expropriate us of our political identity: we have no alternative but to withdraw our allegiance from the machines and resume our own initiatives. We are now in a period of transition, in which we will seek to unite socialists, whatever their present affiliations, in new common forms of organisation: for education; for propaganda; for international discussions; for mutual consultation and support in all active campaigns and interventions. We say that we must improvise for ourselves the kinds of organisation appropriate to our own communities and our own work, while seeking at all times for ways of uniting them in a common strategy.

In this necessary process, we mean, like our opponents, to keep our options open. The existing party structure is under great strain, and the pressures can be expected to increase. We do not intend to make any premature move, which would isolate the Left, or confuse its actual and potential supporters. At the same time, we mean what we say when we declare an end to tactics and to allegiances which are wholly enclosed within traditional organisational forms. If our analysis is right, then socialists must make their voices heard, again and again, not only in committee rooms and in conference halls, but among the growing majority of the people who feel no commitment to these forms. Already thousands of young men and women who share many of our objectives and whose internationalist conscience and immediate personal concern are more alert than those of their predecessors and elders, stand outside the Labour Party and refuse to give it the kind of allegiance it demands. Other existing organisations of the Left represent, in many cases, the same hardening shells of old situations, old bearings, and old strategies. What matters now, everywhere, is movement. To those who say that there is no future without changing the Labour Party, we reply that we shall only change it by refusing to accept its machine definitions and demands, and that the real change required is so large and so difficult that it can only come about as part of very much wider changes of consciousness, and as a result of manifold struggles in many areas of life.

We shall generate our own pressures, on the system as it now stands. But there will be other kinds of pressure, that we are taking into account. The attempt to absorb the Labour Party and the unions into new capitalism, in any permanent way, will bring the movements to breaking point, sooner or later. Already, relations between the official Labour Party and the unions are under great strain. And behind these developments, a remodelled Conservative Party, of an aggressively new capitalist kind, is getting ready to take over when the present Labour Government has done the necessary preparatory work.

Meanwhile, the important development of nationalist parties in Wales and Scotland is itself a response to the centralised politics of the system, and adds a new variation. If Britain joined the Common Market, there would be a radical crossing of political traditions and affiliations, out of which change would certainly come. As things stand now, and can reasonably be foreseen, the formal party-political structure is not stable. Further, though the major parties will do all they can to prevent it, there is a strong and increasingly unanswerable case for electoral reform, to make representation more faithful to actual voting. Looking ahead, we see many possible opportunities for the recovery of active democracy, and it will be our duty as socialists both to respond to these opportunities and to make new ones.

The period will be confusing and testing, but we believe that by making a position clear now, we can take an effective part in a realignment of British politics. What we are defining is a socialism of the immediately coming generation, an emerging political process, rather than the formalities of a process that is already, as democratic practice, beginning to break up and disappear. We are looking to the political structure of the rest of the century, rather than to the forms which now embody the past and confuse recognition of the present.

This manifesto is intended to begin a sustained campaign. It is of course a challenge, and it asks for a response. There are thousands who share our general analysis and who stand in our situation. We invite their active support.

We welcome the publication of this Manifesto, and support the political and educational campaign it inaugurates.

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The Manifesto: the next stages

(i) Discussion of the manifesto, in every available kind of national and local meeting and organisation. If you or your organisation want to arrange this, with speakers, please let us know. Please let us know also the detailed results of these discussions.

(ii) Detailed statements of policy, in particular fields; of a programmatic kind, developing our general case; of a service kind, in the course of particular campaigns. If on any issue, national or local, you or your organisation want to link your case with the manifesto, please let us know.

(iii) Discussions of the manifesto with existing Left political organisations, of every kind, for the further definition of analysis and programmes, and for all possible active cooperation.

(iv) After this period of discussions and detailed work, a National Convention will be convened from all those in sympathy with the general aims of the Manifesto, for the purpose of further defining its policies, and promoting their implementation.

(v) Immediate approaches, through the Manifesto, to new left organisations in Western Europe and Scandinavia, and in the United States.

(vi) Discussion of the development of political relations between new left organisations, in advanced capitalist societies, and related and allied movements in other kinds of society.

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