

BRITAIN : PROSPECTS FOR THE SEVENTIES

(i) Monty Johnstone

POLITICAL predictions are hazardous. Never more so than in the increasingly complex world of today. One forecast can however be made with little fear of refutation : the seventies will be a decade of political and economic instability and of stormy struggles. All the indications are that Britain faces in them the sharpening of all the tensions that have been mounting in the sixties. These reflect, above all, the attempt of the Wilson government, in an era of technological revolution, to bolster up the increasingly shaky world position of British monopoly capitalism at the expense of the economic and social advances demanded by manual and professional workers.

The government can report success in promoting giant combines in industry and in achieving its aim of a balance of payments surplus (precarious as the latter may be in the face of a possible American recession). This has been achieved however at the cost of a slowing down in economic growth and a rise in unemployment rates, as well as an alarming erosion of popular support and growing conflict with what the Prime Minister calls the "new aggressiveness of organized labour". Overwhelming opposition, including strike action, from the trade unions and the widest sections of the labour movement forced the government last year to drop the penal clauses that it wished to include in its Industrial Relations Bill. The Labour leaders have however not abandoned their objective of anti-trade union legislation. They hope to clamp down on militancy and initiative at shop floor level by depriving the workers of the unfettered right to strike. They regard this as essential for making a British economy burdened with an inflated armaments programme and N.A.T.O. commitments "competitive" for entry into the Common Market.

Mr Wilson and his colleagues will, of course, continue to be assisted in curbing working class combativity by their allies in the **T.U.C.** General Council with their anathemas against "unconstitutional" strikes, as well as by the softselling of productivity deals.¹ However, the trade unions' move to the left, of which the emergence of left-wing leaders like Scanlon, Jones and Daly are an important reflection, means that they are able less and less to rely on the right-wing to produce the desired results in the way that Attlee could count on the Deakins, Williamsons and Lawthers who dominated the trade union scene in his **day**. Whatever government undertakes the task of administering

a capitalist Britain will, by the logic of its position, be impelled to seek recourse to measures of coercion against industrial militants whilst providing public assistance to big business. With the increase of state intervention along such manifestly class lines, economic and political factors will tend in the struggles of the seventies to become more linked than ever before.

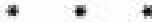
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The return of a Conservative government would considerably strengthen and speed up the prevailing trend towards authoritarianism. The massive Labour abstentions in by-elections indicate the very real danger of such an outcome in the general election. Its immediate effect would be to increase disappointment and demoralization in the labour movement. No one on the left should console himself with the comforting half-truth that such a disadvantage would soon be outweighed by Tory actions highlighting and clarifying the class issues and hence galvanizing more workers into action. Whilst it would indeed be likely to promote such tendencies, it would also foster counter-tendencies engendering the utmost confusion and appealing to the most backward and divisive racialist prejudices. The "gentlemanly" parliamentary Toryism represented by the flabby figure of Heath is in this decade liable to be superseded more and more by a racialist-Bonapartist Toryism, associated with the tough and sinister personage of Powell, directing much of its appeal to extra-parliamentary forces not associated with traditional Conservatism. The dockers' demonstration for Powell was alas! no stray impulse, but an indication of the support that Powellism is capable of mobilizing even from notably militant sections of the labouring population. British imperialist rule over coloured populations stretches back beyond living memory. It has left a substantial section of the working class with more or less deeply implanted sentiments of racial superiority. The threat should not be underestimated of a clever and unscrupulous right-wing demagogue like Powell riding to power by canalizing popular frustrations into such explosive reactionary channels. Fascist organizations like the National Front, with anti-coloured propaganda of an even cruder sort, would doubtless make their contribution to the creation of the appropriate climate. Nor should we overlook the capacity of the Tories to promote an anti-trade union, anti-student and anti-intellectual backlash. Profiting from a fairly widespread reaction against the "excesses" of the "permissive society", their backwoodsmen would whip up support for the repeal of all progressive social and educational legislation and for restrictions on "decadent" cultural trends. All this would create an atmosphere most uncongenial for Socialist, internationalist and humanist ideas.

Such obscurantist forces would certainly remain far from inactive under a Labour government. A Tory victory however would give them new confidence and opportunities to wage a successful offensive against progress on all fronts. Unlike a government of the Labour Party, the social base of which is the working class, a Conservative government would be a big business administration not responsive to labour movement pressures. It could be further expected to ride roughshod over growing popular objections both to entering the Common Market and to continuing to line up with the U.S.A. over Vietnam and world policy, as well as once again building up bases east of Suez.

In any case, a Tory victory would put the political clock back to where we were in 1951, when after disappointment with six years of Labour government the country had again to undergo the experience of Conservative rule before once more in 1964 recommencing the cycle of Labour promise, failure and disillusionment. I do not wish to endow this sorry process with some sort of metaphysical inevitability. Nonetheless the factors that have in the past forty-five years led to a swing from the Conservatives being reflected in a swing to the Labour Party would still appear to be present. There is no other party that seems capable in the foreseeable future of being accepted as a potential alternative government. Lenin was clearly overoptimistic in his assumption that the experience of *one* Labour government would lead the masses to support the Communists. Nonetheless I believe he was correct in principle to insist that the change in the views of the majority of the British workers, without which no Socialist revolution could take place, would *only* come about after they had lived through and drawn revolutionary conclusions from the insufficiencies of right-wing labour rule. It cannot, of course, be excluded that in this unpredictable age some kind of cataclysmic development might generate a mass revolutionary consciousness with extreme rapidity under a Tory government without again having to go through the experience of a Labour government. There is little however to suggest that this is *likely* to be the case and it would be foolish indeed for Socialists to bank on it.² It is much more probable that the tempo of advance towards Socialism, at least in the first part of the seventies, will be determined in no small measure by whether or not dissatisfied Labour voters can be won to come to the polls and a majority of the six million first-time voters convinced to vote against the Tories. This will not be achieved on the basis of a purely negative anti-Toryism, but to the extent that the election is fought around a programme of economic growth and social advance for the working people at the expense of big business interests and imperialist overseas commitments. To bring this about will demand that the main sections of the Socialist left devote themselves in the preceding months to working out and waging a united campaign around

a programme of this type. The effect of complying with the familiar pleas from Downing Street and Transport House not to embarrass the government in an election year by pressing pay claims and "rocking the boat" by pushing for left-wing policies is liable to be counter-productive. For the labour movement to fight the election on Harold Wilson's terms is to fight it with at least one hand tied behind its back.



The serious decline that we have been witnessing in the Labour Party's vote, morale and constituency organization has led some Socialists to conclude impressionistically that it can be written off as an effective force in the future. I believe the seventies will prove this to be a serious error. Unlike the traditional continental Social Democratic party, the Labour Party is still, by virtue of its trade union affiliations, the mass party of the working class. Although its periods in office have always been followed by a slump in its fortunes, as in 1931 and 1951, these have always revived with working class political interest.³ Experience has demonstrated the tenacity with which most politically interested British workers cling *bon gré mal gré* to the Labour Party. It bears out Lenin's well-known advice to revolutionary Marxists not to regard "what is obsolete to us as something obsolete to the class, to the masses".⁴ By-elections last year once again showed that discontent with Labour's record in office is reflected predominantly in apathy and the abstention of a high proportion of Labour voters. The Communist Party and other left-wing organizations which entered the field received disappointingly low votes.⁵ If, as I have argued, we are entering a period of sharpening class struggles we may expect this apathy to be dissipated and to find its expression in a revival of the Labour Party and a reactivation of its organizations.

Must such a revival perpetuate the traditional reformist hegemony and result in yet another Macdonald-Attlee-Wilson type of government? Deeply entrenched forces will certainly work in that direction. But why should we assume that their hold on the party is unbreakable? The fact that—despite notable jolts like Gaitskell's defeat at Scarborough in 1960—right-wing control has so far never been broken reflects in the last analysis the fact that reformist ideology has continued to hold sway among the British working class. Can Socialists regard such a position as immutable? It is impossible to believe that, when sooner or later the British workers develop a Socialist consciousness—and if they do not we shall never see Socialism—they will continue to allow their party to be dominated by its traditional type of right-wing parliamentary leaders. Certainly there can be no question of making such hard-boiled "neo-capitalist" politicians into Socialists. They can be expected to "fight, fight and fight again", using all the

tricks in the book, to prevent a genuine Socialist transformation of the party. The struggle will be a bitter one. We shall doubtless see the right-wing ensconced in the party apparatus and relying on the support of the Parliamentary Labour Party to resist the decisions of left-wing annual conferences. In this they will naturally be assisted by the undemocratic procedure whereby the party leader is elected by the party's M.P.s. These bulwarks are not however impregnable. The wind of change will also blow into the constituency selection conferences, leading to the adoption of left-wing parliamentary candidates to replace those of the right. In the course of these political struggles new left-wing leaders will emerge and gain in stature and appeal and new personnel will be chosen to transform the party machine. Although other variants are obviously possible, this seems to me the most likely perspective and the one for which Socialists should work.



The widespread Socialist consciousness that this transformation presupposes will not be developed spontaneously. Nor should we expect that the new left-wing Labour leaders, to whom we have looked forward, could be prevented from sliding step by step down the same slippery slope as so many Labour lefts before them unless they are equipped with a Marxist understanding of the nature of the state, class struggle, imperialism and Socialism." Some of the left-wing groups and journals that exist both inside and outside the Labour Party have a valuable contribution to make towards such ideological clarification. The bulk of them are however not Marxist (though most of them, of course, draw on certain elements of Marxism) and the history of the non-Communist left as a whole is one of fragmentation, diffuseness and disunity and the rise and fall of movements and campaigns. Although we may look forward to the most important of them working together for Socialist objectives—perhaps in something similar to the National Left-Wing Movement of the latter half of the 1920s—their heterogeneity would prevent them on their own from providing the firmness of leadership and clarity of perspective required. For this a Marxist political party is needed which can be involved in and give direction to the immediate struggles of increasing sections of the people, developing in the course of them the elements of Marxist understanding and a consciousness of the need for Socialist revolution.

Whilst there is talk in various circles of founding a new revolutionary party, such projects lack any basis in reality. The Communist Party is—like it or not!—the only organization in Britain that can seriously aspire to fulfil such a role. With its 30,000 members organized in over a thousand branches—just under a fifth of them factory branches—it represents far and away the largest organized Marxist

body. Despite fluctuations it has over the half century of its existence preserved a stable national organization and played a part in the British labour movement out of all proportion to its size. Its influence, which it would be foolish to exaggerate, is felt particularly through the *Morning Star* and the part played by its members in the trade union movement and in the leadership of industrial struggles.

On the other hand, there are serious obstacles to the growth of the Communist Party. Many workers elect Communists as shop stewards because they see them as the best fighters against the boss. But in their great majority they vote against these same Communists if they stand in parliamentary or local elections, above all because they identify them with the restrictions on personal and political freedom that they see in Russia and other Socialist countries. In addition, there are many Socialists who, whilst more and more prepared to work with Communists, regard their party as being too greatly committed to centralism and too little to democracy in its internal life and too bureaucratic in its methods to enjoy their support. These reproaches do have a basis in reality, but one which stems from the Stalin period and which has in recent years been increasingly eroded. This process is likely to go further in the seventies, making it easier for Socialists who agree with the broad lines of its policy to join or rejoin it.

In the evolution of the International Communist movement in recent years the British Communist Party has found itself more and more alongside parties like the Italian in its adherence to a pluralistic concept of Socialism clearly differentiated from the monolithic "model" to which the Soviet and a number of other parties adhere. It welcomed the "Czechoslovak Spring" of 1968 and condemned the invasion of that country (a stand confirmed by an almost 3-1 majority at its national congress last year). Its executive has decided to promote discussion and analysis of the deeper questions arising from these events and the whole question of democracy in Socialist states both in the party's organizations and in the pages of its theoretical journal, *Marxism Today*. The same trend is reflected in its long-term programme, *The British Road to Socialism*, which differs in two important respects from the "Soviet model". Firstly, it rejects a one-party system and envisages freedom under a Socialist government for democratically organized political parties, including those opposed to Socialism, to maintain their organization, publications and propaganda and to contend for the people's support at elections. Secondly, although it believes that the Communist Party has a vital role to play, it does not seek for it an exclusive position of leadership in the united labour movement that it foresees developing in action against monopoly capitalism and taking the country to **Socialism**.[†] The party's aim is not to capture power

for itself but to establish a Socialist government based on a Socialist Labour and Communist majority in Parliament and backed by mounting extra-parliamentary struggles. Backed by the power of militant popular organization in the factories, mines, offices and universities, such a government would break the power of monopoly capitalism and its state. It would build up a new democratic state machine under the control of the working people and reconstruct the economy along Socialist lines with workers' participation at all levels of management. This revolution would be carried out peacefully, if possible, but force would be used to overcome any violence offered by a capitalist minority.⁸

The Communist Party has been faced since its formation with the difficulties imposed on any revolutionary party in a non-revolutionary situation. This has meant that, aside from all its many subjective weaknesses and mistakes, there have always been objective limits placed on its potential growth. There should however be important forces at work in the seventies to break down such restrictions. Whether or not the party will match up to such new possibilities will depend in no small measure on its ability to appeal to a much greater part of the critically-minded young people taking part in the movement against the Vietnam war, the apprentice struggles and the student revolt. Many of them do not at present belong to any political group. Others, including some of the most active, are at the moment attracted by one or other of the small "leftist" organizations,⁹ the lack of realism of whose claims to leadership and revolutionary expectations many of them are likely sooner or later to perceive. If it is to grow, the Communist Party, suffering from an ageing membership¹⁰ that has declined by 6 per cent in the last two years, vitally needs a transfusion of such new blood. On the other hand, the age structure of its membership and the weight of certain of its past traditions restrict its capacity to recruit them. To break out of this vicious circle will demand a sustained ideological offensive on the part of its most forward-looking members to remove the last residue of Stalinism from the party. This will entail stimulating more independent thinking and lively political curiosity and debate in its ranks¹¹ and reorientating the style and direction of its work with a view above all to influencing and recruiting from these sections of youth. The work of such a Communist Party would strengthen the development of the Labour left, whose decisive victory could again open up the possibility of the Communist Party working inside a centrally-structured Labour Party as an affiliated organization.

Despite a growing dissatisfaction with capitalist society, those in Britain today who have any consciousness of the desirability of replacing it by a Socialist society constitute a small minority. Even those

who have any clear understanding of what Socialism means are relatively few. Socialists are therefore faced not only with the task of making an up-to-date analysis and exposure of capitalist society. They need also, and much more than they are doing at present, to work to show Socialism as a preferable form of society both in terms of living standards *and* of freedom.

Ten years ago most Communists believed that by the sixties the Soviet Union and other Socialist countries would be tangibly demonstrating such advantages. We based ourselves on the respective annual industrial growth rates of the latter half of the fifties, which had averaged over ten per cent in the Soviet Union and under two-and-a-half per cent in the U.S.A., and the fact that in the previous decade Russia's industrial output had increased from less than 30 per cent to more than 60 per cent of America's. We therefore accepted and propagated the claim of the 1961 Programme of the Soviet Communist Party that "in the current decade (1961-70) the Soviet Union, in creating the material and technical basis of Communism, will surpass the strongest and richest capitalist country, the U.S.A., in production per head of the population". Hitherto it had been possible only to point to the more impressive *rates* of growth under Socialism of previously backward countries. Now, we reasoned, the peoples of Western countries would be much more easily won for Socialism because they would see its material advantages in *absolute* terms. Moreover we were confident that this economic superiority would foster the continuation of the process of democratization and "de-Stalinization" highlighted at the Twentieth and Twenty-Second Congresses of the C.P.S.U.¹² The Soviet Union and other socialist countries would become open and fully democratic Socialist societies on the way to achieving the material and cultural abundance of Communism.

I do not believe that this perspective was *in principle* mistaken. It is now however quite clear that it was conceived in an oversimplified rectilinear form and that its timing was grossly overoptimistic. Although impressive economic advances have continued to be made, the sixties saw a slowing down in the rate of advance, particularly as far as labour productivity and agriculture are concerned, whilst the U.S. annual growth rates have been more than double the low levels of the late fifties. Moreover, for reasons that require separate analysis, the process of democratization have been held up and reversed through the rear-guard actions of Stalinist forces, which also succeeded in stifling Czechoslovakia's shortlived attempt to provide an example of Socialist democracy in an advanced industrial country. Certainly the planned economies of the Socialist countries will continue to secure important economic achievements, though they will also have to cope with a number of very acute problems that they have accumulated through an

overextending of their resources and through bureaucratic practices. Doubtless we shall also see further challenges to the undemocratic governing Clites in a number of these states. There is little basis however for confidence that in the seventies they will yet be able to act as "models" for Socialism capable of revolutionizing thinking in the West.

Revolutionary developments in Italy and France may provide a more effective positive influence. Both these countries have the strong Marxist tradition and mass Marxist parties lacking in Britain. The events of May 1968 and the last months of 1969 have shown the deep crisis in which monopoly capitalism finds itself there in face of a militant working class and student unrest. If their powerful left forces can overcome the barriers to unity and agree to campaign together on programmes of Socialist advance, they may in this decade bring about social transformations which profoundly influence the political life of this country.¹³

Whether or not such developments do come to our aid from across the channel, the case for Socialism will be strengthened in this Age of the Computer. Socialists will be able to show public ownership and democratic planning and control of the country's ever vaster productive units as the only human and rational alternative to increasing alienation under monopoly capitalism. These arguments should increasingly ring a bell not only among the traditional working class but also among students, technicians, professional workers and intellectuals. The growth in numbers and social importance of these sections of the population will continue to gain momentum with the development of the scientific and technological revolution. The class characteristics of an increasing number of them will come further to approximate to those by which Marx defined the working class, with whose organizations they will more and more find their interests linked.¹⁴ The heightened interest in Marxism that we have witnessed in the sixties, above all in the universities, can be expected to spread to wider circles seeking to comprehend the increasing complexity of their society. Study groups, debates, forums and seminars, embracing Socialists of various organizations and of none, should act as a stimulus to research and the production of more serious Marxists analyses. Trends in recent years do offer hope that British Marxists may capture the ideological initiative in the 1970s just as right-wing Labour "revisionists" like Crosland set the tone for the 1950s. To do so adequately however will demand greater tolerance and a genuine dialogue-between Marxists of different tendencies and opinions in the realization that no one possesses a monopoly of Marxist "truth".

Few are those today who would, like a well-known British Marxist at the onset of the **sixties**, affirm that "never before has the course of human history been so plainly charted in advance or become so clearly visible **ahead**".¹⁵ True, Marxists can claim to have forecast more of the main trends of social development than anyone else. But, from Marx on, they have been noticeably fallible when they have tried to predict the **time span** or the form in which these would assert themselves. Moreover, with every passing decade, problems have grown more complex, the crosscurrents more confusing and the number of variables greater.

There can be little doubt, however, that we shall witness sharpening conflicts around the demands of industrial, white collar and professional workers, tenants and students; campaigns for peace and disarmament and a new foreign policy; actions in support of the rising liberation movements of the Third World and against imperialist wars like that waged by the U.S.A. in Vietnam. That much is clear. What is much less-sure is what their outcome will be within the lifetime of the present decade. Will they, as in the **sixties**, remain multifid, fluctuating and lacking in central theme and direction? Or will it be possible to unite these various forces in a new "historical bloc", based on the working class and guided by Marxist leadership, that threatens the very foundations of monopoly capitalism? There is no talisman which has only to be discovered to effect such a long-sought transition. Both objective and subjective factors will play their part. The most important among the latter, it seems to me, will be the extent to which Socialists succeed in hammering out a common strategy of advance to Socialism and in uniting their efforts to win the labour movement for it.

Next year we shall be marking the centenary of the Paris Commune, that "glorious harbinger of a new society" (Marx). It is one of the ironies of our time that Western Europe, the home of this first workers' government, still lives under capitalism. No longer the free-enterprise capitalism of Marx's day, but a capitalism in its imperialist stage, which acquired a new lease of life through its exploitation of the colonies. With the revolt of their peoples, imperialism has been forced to resort to the veiled methods of neo-colonialism, which in its turn is more and more threatened by rising national movements. Pressed from all sides and with reduced room for manoeuvre monopoly capitalism demands authoritarian solutions. Within Western Europe giant international corporations, seeking to consolidate their position, pose an increased threat to democratic liberties and institutions. In struggling to defend their interests against these common enemies, the labour movement in Britain and the politically more advanced working class organizations of France and Italy will be forced more and more to work together. Capitalist Britain will no more be able in the

long run to immunize herself against contagion from such Marxist contacts and such revolutionary developments as we may see on the continent than from the fluctuations of the capitalist world economy. Sooner or later the country where the world's first labour movement was born will also be drawn into the mainstream of Socialist development. The seventies may well see decisive steps taken along this road.

NOTES

1. Some six million workers are already covered by productivity agreements which are spreading with great rapidity. They are designed to offer apparently attractive material inducements to workers to give up hard-won rights at shop floor level and to restore prerogative to management. They represent the most insidious method of eroding Britain's exceptionally strong workshop organization and to change the role of the **240,000** shop stewards that head it from militant lay leaders responsible for negotiating wage rates to supervisors of company agreements. Unfortunately not a few otherwise progressive trade union leaders like Jones and Scanlon have made the mistake of negotiating such agreements.
2. A world economic crisis of the old type is hardly very probable. But even if we postulate its possibility, the experience of Germany from 1929–1933 shows that such occurrences are capable of leading to extreme reactionary, just as much as revolutionary, results.
3. The experience of the writing off of the Labour Party by the Communist Party of Great Britain during the ultra-left "Third Period" (1928–33) of the Communist International, should serve as a caution to those who draw similar conclusions today. Thus, when the Labour Party lost two million votes in the 1931 general election, R. **Palme Dutt**, representing the viewpoint of the majority of the Communist leadership, was to conclude: "The workers have lost confidence in the Labour Party, and seek elsewhere. . . . The old Labour movement is dying. The workers' movement, the independent workers' movement, is rising." (Daily Worker, London, 5 November, 1931)
4. V. L. Lenin, *Collected Works* (Moscow-London, 1966), 31, p. 58. Emphasis in original.
5. I do not conclude from this that it is wrong for Communist candidates to stand for **Parliament**, but only wish to stress the need for a realistic appraisal of the situation. The Communist Party has, in my opinion, to take advantage of the heightened political interest at election times to put up its candidates in certain carefully selected constituencies as a means of developing its Socialist alternative to Tory and right-wing Labour policies.
6. I readily admit that such an understanding does not of itself provide a failsafe guarantee against opportunist degeneration. The example of John Strachey (to go no further afield) makes that much clear. However, the context to which I refer in my text is not one of isolated Marxists under pressure to adapt themselves to a reformist leadership and a **reformist-minded working class**, but of a **full-scale Socialist transformation** of the Labour Party and of the outlook of a majority of British workers.
7. The **British Road to Socialism** (Third Revised Edition, London, 1968),

- pp. 6, 52. The Communist Party is the only organization that has worked out and published a long-term programme outlining its perspectives for the advance to Socialism in this country.
8. *Zbid.*, pp. 50-53.
 9. Lenin referred to anarchism as being not infrequently a kind of punishment for opportunist sins. (Lenin, *op. cit.*, p. 32.) Similarly, one might see in the growth of "leftist" groups in the past period the Communist Party's punishment for not facing up sufficiently boldly or sufficiently quickly to new problems that have developed, especially since the Twentieth Congress of the C.P.S.U. in 1956, and for a certain loss of revolutionary dynamism. The effect of such groups, directing much of their activity against the Communist Party, may in fact prove to be to advantage. By forcing many of its members out of an ideological somnolence and making them recognize, analyse and debate many problems that they had previously neglected, the "leftists" may, with dialectical irony, be stimulating it into making the very change needed to promote its growth in the seventies. If so, from the Communist standpoint, they will, like Goethe's Mephistopheles, prove to be "ein Teil von jener Kraft, die stets das Böse will, und stets das Gute schafft"!
 10. This is reflected in the ages of delegates at Communist Party national congresses. Whereas in 1938 only 17 per cent and in 1948 19 per cent were over 40, by 1959 the figure had risen to 39 per cent and reached 52 per cent in 1969. In his closing speech at the 1945 congress Harry Pollitt, urging that the party should see that in its recruiting "special attention is given to winning the young men and women of this country to Communism", referred to the low average wage of delegates as "a splendid and inspiring thing". At the five congresses between 1943 and 1948 this fluctuated between 32½ and 34 years. (It is no longer given in congress credentials reports.)
 11. This does not mean, in my opinion, dropping the principle of democratic centralism. Without it the Communist Party would tend to degenerate into a debating club rather than being able to develop as an effective revolutionary organization whose members fight for democratically-taken decisions. The whole question is where to lay the stress in the practical interpretation of this highly elastic concept. If there prevailed in the past (quite mistakenly, in my view) a belief that internal political controversy needed to be carefully circumscribed in order not to "divert" from public campaigning, the party's growth in the period ahead requires a special stress on precisely the freest development of much more fundamental debate among Marxists both inside and outside its ranks. Both within a Marxist party and in a Socialist society such debate is the best antidote to bureaucratic leadership and intellectual ossification.
 12. The international dktente that would favour this process would, we believed, be promoted by the Socialist countries proving their economic superiority by producing over one-half of the world's industrial output. Between 1955 and 1960 their share had increased from 27 per cent to 36 per cent (compared with 17 per cent produced by the same states in 1937) and even such a critical and perceptive observer as Isaac Deutscher accepted that they would reach 51 per cent by 1965. (I. Deutscher, *The Soviet Seven Year Plan*, London, 1959, p. 4.) In fact their share only advanced to 38 per cent, at which it has now stood for several years. Marxists have always been prone to error when they have extrapolated in this way from ascending growth curves. Thus, on the basis of the steady increase

in Social Democratic votes since 1877, Engels at the end of his life expected to see a Socialist government in power in Germany on the basis of a majority to be obtained between 1900 and 1910. (F. Engels, P. and L. Lafargue, *Correspondence*, Moscow-London, n.d., III, pp. 399-400.)

13. There can be little doubt that, if the Italian Communist Party were to play a leading role in a Socialist transformation in Italy, this would react favourably on the prospects of the Communist Party in Britain.
14. The growth of white collar and professional workers' trade unions, some of which have affiliated to the T.U.C., shows that this process has already begun.
15. R. Palme Dutt in *Labour Monthly*, London, January, 1960, p. 1.