

A left notebook—one

The politics of emigration

Charles Taylor

(from November 1956 to April 1957 Charles Taylor was World University Service representative with Hungarian student refugees in Austria)

For two months after the last shot was fired, they kept coming, 200,000 refugees, most of them young, many students, engineers, technicians, high-school teachers came across the frontiers, 2 per cent of the Hungarian population; and among them many of the "cadres" that the regime had so energetically tried to multiply in order to force the pace of economic development. The loss, not to speak of those killed and deported—is incalculable, speaking in purely economic terms.

A political emigration? Not in the accepted sense, but then in Central Europe everything had become politics, too much was politics for too long, and many weren't taking it any longer. Only a relatively small proportion of those who left, carrying a few possessions across the frozen, flat, wooded borderlands, dodging the Russian and Hungarian patrols, were actually fleeing from police persecutions and the fear of deportation. They mostly came across in November and early December. Behind them were the waves who were leaving because they'd had enough, because they wanted to go to America and have a chance to own a car sometime in their life, or simply because everyone else seemed to be going.

It depends what one wants to call a political refugee, but in some sense they were all political refugees. J. J., a student who was going overseas, was asked, as they were all asked at one time or another, "Do you ever want to return to Hungary if things change one day?" The answer was clear: "Every ten years in Hungary, there is a war or a revolution or an invasion. I want to live in peace." She spoke for a great number of young people. They were not leaving because they held some political creed, but because they wanted to be able to hold no creed if they so desired. Emigration was a blow for the rights of the apolitical.

Then there were those drawn by the myth of America. Propaganda is as effective in failure as it is in success. Its content can be rejected but its categories end up by taking hold. And so for many, Heaven and Hell still existed on earth, but the roles were inverted. The Rakosi regime had spent so much time and money telling them how miserable and oppressed the people of the United States were, that they were convinced that it must be paradise. But it wasn't only the regime. Relatives, long since settled there, wrote about their houses, their cars, their refrigerators. And then there was the Voice of America. For years the siren's Voice had been urging them—or so they thought—to quit their concentration-camp state, and come to the free world. To get to the U.S.A. was their single and only ambition. Nothing would substitute for it, and it would solve all problems. A political emigration? Perhaps not. But would they ever have come in such numbers without the propaganda duels of the cold war?

Among the students there were a greater proportion of political refugees in the strict sense. Many had been leaders or organizers in the Revolution. Their colleagues had been among the first to be rounded up, and they had escaped often by a hairsbreadth from the revengeful AVO. Sons of workers and of professional people, members and non-members of the Communist party, they had all fought and organized together, and they carried their spontaneous unity with them into exile. The various fractions among the older emigration—Horthyites, Monarchists, Green Arrow, wooed them in turn. Without effect. Not that they were particularly strongly anti-Horthy or anti-monarchist, but just that Horthy and the Habsburgs meant as much to them as Lloyd George and Stanley Baldwin to the average English student. They were pro or con—about 90 per cent con—but it was hardly a burning issue for them. "The old emigration groups are only interested in the past. They spend their time arguing whether it was better under Horthy or in the Empire. We're interested in the future."

And the future for them means a new Hungary. A socialist Hungary? The question is never put in this way. The first aim is for a free Hungary. They are not very clear what should come after that. The question is too remote, and it seemed secondary and unimportant, just after defeat. The issues are not sharp. After years of being in the "camp of socialism" and attending compulsory courses in Marxist-Leninism, the meaning of Socialism is less clear than ever. As for Marxism, they are neither for it nor against it. A series of formulae, which they disliked having to learn, but as a body of doctrine, it's dead for them.

As a practical programme, common agreement seems to exist on the following: maintenance of large-scale industry in the public sector, but permission for a private sector consisting of artisans and perhaps shop-keepers. The definite end to collectivization in the countryside. A multi-party democracy, appeal for economic aid from East and West and neutrality with a status like Austria or Finland.

But all this takes second place behind the major demand for national independence. They can no longer fight for it, but they can prepare for it. And to this end a period of study in the West seems to them ideal. Hungary is for them a Western power. To the extent that it is backward, it must learn from the West. It has nothing to learn from Russia.

This group has formed a Union of Free Hungarian Students, which it hopes will group all the students in exile in all the countries to which they have emigrated. A great number of students support the U.F.H.S.—those who do not decline out of apathy rather than disagreement. The principal aims of the

ULR London Club

—autumn 1957

In addition to the main Club meetings, we shall organise a number of discussion groups. A general Club group will alternate discussions on **Contemporary capitalism** with discussions on **Marxism**. Six discussions on each subject.

Membership of either of these groups is 2s. 6d., from ULR Club Treasurer, 19 Carlingford Road, NW3

There will be five other discussion groups, which it is hoped will be permanent:

Town Planning

Education (in association with London area N.A.L.T.)

Contemporary capitalism—study group

History of the Labour Movement

Problems of colonial and ex-colonial countries

Each of these groups will meet once a month.

Membership of each of these groups is 7s. 6d. a year, to cover cost of duplicated information material.

If you would like to join one of these groups, write to ULR Club Secretary, 41 Croftdown Road, London NWS

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Union is to help Hungarian students to complete their studies—it tries to raise scholarships, to give information and advice. In order to carry this out the leaders are determined that it should remain a strictly non-political Union, and above all quite independent of any other emigration group, even those formed from the present emigration like the Council of the Revolution in Strasbourg.

It is not easy to be no one's political football. The U.F.H.S., trying to unite students in four continents, will be hard pressed for funds. As the wave of enthusiasm subsides, the generous contributions become fewer, and the political after thoughts attached to them become greater. The U.F.H.S. leaders have a very sound political sense, but they will need some good fortune as well.

The aid that was brought to the support of the Hungarian refugees was not from the West alone. Contributions came from Africa, Japan, India, Hong Kong. "The West" in the political sense did not always play the most conspicuous role, although this "West" was not entirely free from responsibility for the disaster and the ensuing fight. Years of "roll-back" talk had had their effect. The "freedom-fighters" were unequivocal about it—Radio Free Europe, the Voice of America had promised them aid if they rose. We shall probably never know what people actually said, and even if we did, we would find it hard to gauge the effect it had in the atmosphere of suppressed violence of these last years. Perhaps the logical implications of the broadcasts were quite harmless, but in a context of "roll-back" and "preventive war" talk, they took on a different meaning. The last minute adoption of a laudably 'correct' attitude on the part of the American government was not enough to dispel the cumulative effect of years of propaganda.

Then there was Suez. Maybe the Russians would have done the same, but the Suez adventure certainly weakened support for Hungary at a crucial moment. The Bandoeng bloc, so

important for Soviet foreign policy, was not alienated as it should have been and the Soviets had no reason to think twice. And Hungary was such a useful diversion for the Suez raiders, and after the defeat, such a useful lightning rod.

But not all the leaders of the political West were as anxious to help the refugees resettle as they had been to condemn their oppressors. The American government contributed generously to their maintenance in the camps, but emigration was a different problem. In Washington, the ailing President was willing and the Vice-President came himself to investigate. He spoke to the refugees, was photographed with their children. But the Congress isolationists were not interested. Why add to the existing unemployment, why break the sacred principle of quotas on immigration to the land of the free, who could say that the refugees weren't Communists anyway? The new year saw emigration to the U.S.A. cut down without warning to a trickle filled largely by relatives of American citizens and people with "Congress protection". But the refugees went on hoping. After all the President was in favour. It was impossible to explain that what the President wanted wasn't all that important. The struggles went on in Washington, and the makeshift policy creaked and groaned along for three months, until it stopped dead on April 1st—also without warning—and the border closed tight.

Individuals, groups, societies and foundations in the United States, Europe and all parts of the world contributed unstintingly, and the results were magnificent. But some legislators had been perhaps thinking for too many years in terms of world strategy, and from this point of view, the fate of a relatively small number of refugees is hardly significant. Strategic and human considerations don't easily mix as the Soviet Union has shown on so many occasions.

To the problems, even of a political emigration, it is better to seek non-political solutions.

An Appeal..

Our REVIEW—originally aimed at an initial circulation of 2,000—sold nearly 8,000 copies of its first issue.

Our London Club has been drawing an average weekly attendance of 200 since early April.

In the autumn, the Club will hold meetings in the main provincial centres—Claude Bourdet will speak on *Algeria and the French Left*, Lindsay Anderson and Karel Reisz will present the documentary programme *Look at Britain*.

It is no longer possible for us to organise the *Review* and the Club on a voluntary, part-time basis.

From early autumn we must have the continuous help of a full-time manager-organiser working in London.

This is the only way to maintain the *Review* and the Club at their present levels.

It might make it possible to expand the *Review* into a quarterly—an urgent need.

This *Review* has no angel.

We were able to launch it because four hundred people sent £250 in answer to our appeal.

We did not want to renew our appeal to you.

We did not intend to appeal again.

- **But we still need £150 to cover the full costs of launching the *Review*.**
- **And we now need a regular additional income of £600 a year to maintain a manager.**

Two economies are possible.

We could go back to the poor quality paper used in the first issue.

We could cut back drastically the number of pages in each issue—though with a mounting backlog of articles and discussion material we don't want to do this.

These are the only possible economies.

They're not very desirable. And, even if made, they would still not give us anything like the sum needed to maintain a manager.

Can you help us

- **by sending us a donation**
- **by guaranteeing us a regular annual donation**

The exceptionally high mortality rate among journals of the Left is due as often to lack of money as to lack of new ideas.

We do not think this *Review* will die for lack of fresh material.

It is threatened by lack of money.

Can you come to our aid?

STUART HALL GABRIEL PEARSON RODERICK PRINCE RALPH SAMUEL CHARLES TAYLOR

Donations should be made payable to Universities and Left Review and should be sent to Universities and Left Review Development Fund, Magdalen College, Oxford.

Politics of town planning

With our cities choked by the mindless building of the nineteenth century, it is natural that a main concern of architects and town planners is to check the characteristic twentieth century proliferation of ugliness and anti-humanism: subtopian development. The new version of atomised living, it is increasingly felt, shares some of the defects of the old—even if its characteristic construct is the semi-detached ribboned estate rather than the rows of back-to-backs. "Housing"—as the recent study of the suburban rehousing of Bethnal Green serves to remind us—is not enough. And yet it would be tragic if the rising anger at the character of our urban life was confined within a movement which, with the *Observer*, saw *outrage* in concrete lamposts rather than in the immense blighted areas which remain the dominant characteristic of our large cities and conurbations.

It is the overwhelming merit of the movement launched by the Association of Building Technicians that it focuses attention upon both the new and the older forms of blight; that, for the cause of the constant assault upon aesthetic and community standards, it looks to the structure of town planning, urban landownership and the building industry.

The slums

The housing problem is still, predominantly, a problem of old housing. The 1951 census provided some of the statistics of blight. Out of 141 million households nearly 7 million had no fixed bath of their own; over 3 million shared or were entirely without a water closet; nearly 2 million shared or were without a kitchen sink. The 1953 White Paper on slum clearance showed nearly one million houses scheduled as slum properties—a figure which gives some indication of the much larger number of fundamentally unfit dwellings: it does not include those houses which, though unfit, could be made fit "at reasonable expense." Our first concern must surely be with the terrible inadequacy of the plans to end this situation (at the time of the survey, Liverpool, with 43% of its dwellings condemned as slums, expected to patch 5,600 houses, demolish 7,000, leaving over 75,000 until after 1960). Our second concern should be that the redevelopment of these areas should be comprehensive—Coventry, Plymouth, Birmingham, Lansbury are still exceptional in the pattern of post-war building. Our third concern should be that the scale, character and style of new building should embody a vision of an integrated community structure.

A prerequisite for all this is to break down the wall of inertia, complacency, negative controls, economy and private landownership which stands in the way of comprehensive development. Labour's plan to take into public ownership the majority of rented dwellings is an immense advance. And yet there is still no informing vision of a socialist town planning policy: of radical and comprehensive renewal of our cities; of the massive diversion of investment to create cities and living conditions commensurate with the industrial wealth of this country. And occasionally on the left—as in D. L. Munby's recent Fabian pamphlet, *Home Ownership*—there is the unfortunate assumption that the rate of new housing has reached its highest possible level, and that Labour's main concern, therefore, is the ownership and distribution of existing housing resources.

Conservative economic policy has pressured down the scale of new town development. But even in the most favourable political context new towns, as Graeme Shankland argued in our first issue, are an inadequate solution to the problems of overspill and overcrowding. Socialists must welcome the re-focusing of attention upon our "dead centres," for it is here that the imperatives of contemporary town planning are most obviously in contradiction with the economic and political context within which planning takes place; it is here that the efforts of town planners and of the Labour Movement must be integrated.

Public ownership of urban land

Urban renewal is inhibited, above all, by the tremendous cost of land, and the intensely competing business pressures for urban land use. Westminster City Council—to take a single instance of the difficulties facing all urban authorities—had to pay £500,000 for 4½ acres needed for its Pimlico Housing Scheme. The extravagant cost of urban land sites combines with the sites famine to encourage piecemeal development and the patching up of inadequate working-class housing. High density development is fettered and de-humanised by the lack of space for adequate community facilities and green areas. In London, high land costs force many of the largest council housing schemes into the smog-infested

areas along the main railway routes. Under the 1947 Town Planning Act, as Thomas Sharp has recently pointed out (*Journal of the Town Planning Institute*, May 1957), local and regional authorities have predominantly *negative* planning functions. They have a supervisory and permissive control over the general character of new building: they cannot create and determine the character of really large development areas. Urban renewal on a generous and adequate scale surely demands the public ownership of all urban sites. A control of land use which stops short of nationalisation must leave in existence the pressure of business interests (however muted) and must leave the cost of radical urban renewal at its present, prohibitive level. Public ownership of urban land sites is surely a minimum requirement of a socialist town planning policy.

The large number of small jobbing concerns in the building industry fulfils certain functions which a centralised industry could not fulfill. But large-scale development involves some rationalisation of the industry and the elimination of the larger building concerns whose high or "fixed" tenders are the nightmare of every local authority. A massive expansion of the Direct Labour Building departments would help to make urban renewal less capital-intensive.

A corollary of this would be to bring under public ownership the building materials industry, with its price rings, high degree of monopoly and inadequate organisation.

Labour policy

Nationalisation of urban sites; nationalisation of building materials; expansion of Direct Labour schemes—these are three means of cutting the costs and increasing the scale of urban development. But the savings would obviously be quite insufficient to provide the necessary increase in building investment. A considerable diversion of the nation's investment is necessary if we are really to renew our cities. Conservatives will argue, with the *Economist*, that building levels are already too high, and threaten to increase the dangers of extended inflation. Others may argue, with C. A. R. Crosland, that ultimately the rate of building must depend upon the general rate of growth of the economy, that any diversion of accumulation into building would make still more precarious our economic situation. And yet the evidence is abundant that once minimum housing standards have been reached, rate of growth does not automatically produce new building where it is most needed: it is a characteristic of any pre-socialist society that accumulation predominates over consumption. A socialist housing policy would recognise that housing is as much a social service as health or education, that investment in housing is an essential first call upon the nation's resources—regardless of the diversion of investment it may involve. In *Homes of the Future* the Labour Party recognises housing as fully a social service. It is necessary, now, to see the full implications of this recognition, and to elaborate a policy which can show just how relevant socialism is to our most critical social problem.

RALPH SAMUEL

Provincial Readers

we are arranging a series of meetings in the main provincial cities for

Claude Bourdet

editor of *France Observateur*.

Claude Bourdet will speak and answer questions on

Algeria and the French Left

He will speak in English.

The meetings will be held in late September and early October.

If you can help us to organise the meeting in your town, please write to us as soon as possible

ULR CLUB

Letter from South Africa

*The writer is a young South African student
She prefers for obvious reasons to remain anonymous*

I was happy to be going home to Johannesburg, so happy that my inevitably growing necessity to return swelled into excited anticipation. Disconnected scenes shifted across my mind. A large, gracious avenue, streaming with slow traffic glittering in the sun, an African stripped to the waist and bent over a jack-hammer boring a hole in the road, his powerful body shaking with the violent vibrations, and beaded with sweat; six other team workers to his left shovelling a mound of glistening tar with rhythmic motions, stressing each difficult gesture in their low, heavy chant; the series of stately, modern bridges connecting the city in direct arteries to the outlying suburbs framed by the sky scrapers and green patches which receded into the city centre and stood out against the horizon, and to the far right the goldmines, steep, pale, yellow, flat-topped hills, shining in the sun. And the people I seemed to carry about with me, and the bitterness and the gaiety that filled the air at once; the pursuit of money, and the universal rawness, the touchy extremism on the point of social justice; and then the violence and insolence of the illiterate white lout sanctioned by his near kin, the jack-booted and irresponsible police of the power State.

Even my concrete images were too abstract. On the plane the first reality deepened and blocked these shadows in. I was sitting next to a business man, back from an extensive American visit, a solid square man in a dark, pin-stripe suit with bright, hard brown eyes and rimless glasses. His manner was very slow and very precise. He had seen me talking to a Cape Malay student who had joined the plane at Khartoum. He was suspicious, antagonistic. He asked my name, what I was doing, where I lived in Johannesburg. I watched him piece together the information, race, background, economic status, likely attitude; and then he heard I was a student. That clinched it. He shot me a straight look: a too-English accent, a Jewish name, a student out of the country; his face hardened, he broke his roll in silence, he shot a glance at the Cape Malay. I felt like a lamp-shade already, and thought of 1933.

The Cape Malay had no need to think of '33. He was wondering what to do when he disembarked. He had been away studying for six years. I reminded him about the separated transport, waiting rooms, public entrances and that he couldn't enter any cinema, theatre, restaurant, public-house or hotel for a meal or a lodging, and that he should be very careful about whom he addressed in the street. The man was a Hindu; he took everything with quiet, somewhat intimidated resignation. He said he thought he knew someone he could stay over with. What really worried him was work—how to utilise his training as a teacher.

What do you know about

The Bukharinist London Bureau

The

Streatham Revolutionary Concentration

The Glasgow Leninists

The S.S.B.S.I.S.L.P.

The Haverstock Hill Socialist Club?

Watch the next Left Notebook
for the first of a series of
charts and descriptions about

The Left Dissenters?

There are twelve and a half million Africans in South Africa needing education. The Bantu Education Act limits training to what is necessary to fit the African for his place in a European-dominated society. These people are not to be educated because the Bantu is not to be allowed to gain any economic stability. Segregation without the denial of minimum educational facilities would not be sufficient to inhibit the African. Social and intellectual development would still take place; the African would improve himself; the African could compete. The Government is sometimes logical; the Government is unsentimental; the Government is supreme.

"I got that man off his charge to-day," a friend of mine, a city advocate, tells me, "on the extenuating consideration that he had never been in prison yet, at the age of 40." I was home again. When thousands of men are thrown into prison for as little as failing to carry a pass after 6 p.m., it certainly was remarkable: like the judge, I was impressed.

I asked after a friend, a European, I wanted to see again. My companion looked up casually from his drink. "Oh," he said mildly, "he's in prison—must I really go and see him."

It was the Treason Trials. For the African, prison is an accepted commonplace but white men too are getting used to prison and to fear. To be marked, to be banned, to be in prison, or to be a prohibited person, to be a social outcast is a mark of integrity and sacrifice.

What struck me most was the huge increase in lawlessness—uncontrolled gangsterdom and brutality on the one hand, and the crudest police state methods of political administration on the other. Whatever the Nationalist principles of government are, their exponents have not created an even moderately secure social life for anyone.

On the contrary, they offer severe intimidation for most. I asked for news of the boycott, to use in this article. I received a flood of injunctions from friends and family alike, not to be a fool, not to stick my neck out: "It isn't worth it, you know, it will do nothing." That is the cliché: we are all scared, dead scared, and we can do nothing.

The Bus Boycott has in fact developed into the biggest test yet of the Nationalists' power to govern. The Minister of Transport, Mr. Schoeman, has interpreted it as an organised effort on the part of the African National Congress to test its strength, effected through the intimidation of innocent Africans. He appealed to "all the tens of thousands of law-abiding natives" who were not in favour of the boycott to repudiate their leaders who, he said, were not interested in the natives' welfare, but only in furthering their own political aims.

The Government finds itself unable to protect these "tens of thousands of law-abiding natives." The question has to do with housing and street lighting, stable family life and respect for law, education, opportunity for advancement, and the formation of a social conscience. Here it touches the root of the whole apartheid policy which insists on impermanence and instability.

The boycott is indeed the only effective channel of resistance left, and it is achieved by the most extreme hardship. It is a sign of the economic and social plight of the non-European citizens of South Africa. Because it is so important and so powerful, the cabinet is, of course, determined to smash it, together with all the "misguided public sympathy." The police blitz of the 9-mile "boycott-route" was called off in the face of the widespread public outcry against brutal police intimidation of European cars offering lifts to the resisters. More direct methods were swiftly substituted. Thousands of Africans have been arrested in the first of a series of mass arrests. The Police Powers Bill has made it illegal to photograph police officers, even when they are committing illegal acts; it also enables the police to withhold seized documents from the court, whether or not they are necessary to prove the innocence of the accused.

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The African continues patient, and growing rapidly in political consciousness. Insolence and brutality on the part of white civilians I have now seen countered. A man will strike back when he is pushed or hit off the pavement by some offended European, a bitter crowd will collect, feeling runs high—but in the charge office it must all come to nothing.

Now ten thousand people walk nine miles six days a week from their compulsorily segregated homes to the city. They leave at 3 a.m. to return at 9 p.m. They are still walking. The Government is desperate to smash the boycott. It is the first issue of the South African scene to-day, marking a new stride in the African struggle, and the most formidable challenge to the apartheid state.

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Universities & Left Review Club

Much of the recent discussion on socialism and the intellectuals has focused upon a double lament at the "anti-intellectualism" of the Labour Movement, and the alienation since the war, of intellectuals from the Left. If to-day socialist rethinking is suspect, the reason must be sought in the character of much recent socialist theory. For many years it was the Communists who made the greatest claims for socialist theory in the Labour Movement; but British Marxist theory on many critical points was only a deterministic series of propositions set in spurious theoretical form*. If this discredited theory for many of the thirties generation of intellectuals, I think the Labour Movement's suspicion of theory stems rather from the trend of much Labour re-thinking—with the important, but recent, exception of the work of Peter Shore and John Strachey—to refine away, ultimately to reject, the fundamentals of socialism.

One of the hopeful recent indications that socialist theory can be rehabilitated and revitalised for both intellectuals and the Labour Movement has been the sustained audiences at the U.L.R. London Club—a weekly average of two hundred since early April—and the youthful character of the attendance.

The splendid support which both Club and *Review* have received reflects a renewed awareness of the importance of socialist theory, of re-thinking, of socialism "taken at full stretch, as relevant only in so far as it is relevant to the full scale of man's activities." It reflects, too, a growing conviction that socialism imposed from above—whether by the halting and timid legislation of a Cabinet, or the ukase of a Party elite—is false socialism. To present either as socialism, realised, is increasingly seen as a libel on the socialist tradition.

The large attendance at the Club is helping to form coherent attitudes subversive of the tired orthodoxies of the Left—Stalinism and Welfare Statism. Large audiences create their own problems: there are not many senses in which the meeting of six hundred which heard Isaac Deutscher could be called a "Club discussion." But the real problem for the Club is not so much size as the proper function of our discussions. We are trying to create a limited area of contact between the generation of the thirties and the generation of the fifties. We are trying to represent some of the fundamentals of socialism in ways which show their relevance to contemporary Britain. And we are trying to link "re-thinking" about two quite different political traditions—the narrowly empirical and the dogmatically theoretical. In a sense, the experiment has succeeded. The composition of Club attendances reflects pretty faithfully these dominant concerns, dividing up fairly evenly into young people, whose first political commitment came with Suez and Hungary; active Labour Party, Fabian Society and I.S.S.S. members; Marxists and ex-Marxists; academics; specialists coming for a particular speaker and subject. But in a sense, not less significant, the Club cannot yet be successful. Ultimately the ferment on the Left, of which the Club is one reflection, must produce a commitment to a new quality of socialist thought, stringent in its critical standards, total and dynamic in its scope, vivid in its appreciation of contemporary British reality. But coming from such widely differing political milieu, our re-thinking initially is above all a reaction *against* different kinds of ideological commitment. And so the problem is not that we have such different answers but, predictably, that at times we are not really discussing the same questions at all.

One obvious way to diminish this will be to avoid taking the big, the strategic subjects in one session, at one stretch. In the

* / agree with some of Edward Thompson's remarks in this issue, but I think it significant that his examples of British Marxist creativity are all on "off-centre" subjects: the English Revolution of 1640 or ancient Greek society. The crucial test is surely on subjects such as contemporary capitalism, socialism and democracy, etc. Here, majority British Marxism has been extraordinarily unproductive.

present mood a discussion on, for example, socialism and the intellectual can easily degenerate into a discussion about politics, about everything. Again, so immediate and so violent is the left-wing emotional reflex to discussion of Marxism and the Soviet Union that at large meetings it is almost impossible to avoid the confrontation of tired slogan with weary counter-slogan. We want to channel this polemic into smaller study and discussion groups, and into material that will appear in the *Review*.

To establish standards of relevance in the re-thinking debate should be a long process. It demands a dimension of tolerance, generosity and patience which has often been lacking on the Left. But for us there are encouraging signs that this should be possible. The very great improvement in our later discussions—on working-class culture, on African nationalism and on comprehensive education—suggests that re-thinking may already be having a cathartic effect.

Sometimes—especially for recent ex-Communists—re-thinking is seen only as a sort of moral cleansing. Yet, if it does not, alongside this, help to produce new insights into the way to a democratic and egalitarian socialism in Britain, it will not be very much use either to the re-thinkers, or to the Labour Movement as a whole. We hope that in certain limited directions the Club study and discussion groups can link the themes of re-thinking to the priorities of Labour action.

Town planning group

The town planning study group aims to synthesise the work of town planners, architects, sociologists, economists and councillors in an attempt to recapture and carry forward the radical vision of the early post-war period. Somehow the different studies which would produce a socialist town planning policy—study of land tenure, building industry structure, community needs—must be integrated. *Homes of the Future* extends the social service principle to the greater part of Britain's housing. But it is not yet a socialist policy. It is concerned in the main with the proper maintenance, distribution and rent levels of existing housing facilities, not yet with radical urban and regional renewal, and the economic sub-structure necessary to achieve it.

Education group

Of all the themes of socialist policy, education has received perhaps the most careful thought. Yet many well-discussed problems need review in the light of comprehensive school experience. There are pressures which work to limit the scope of comprehensive education, to absorb the comprehensive into the existing tripartite structure, to measure their success by how far they fit in as a fourth type of school, to accept them only where large schools are recognised as essential. Many teachers believe that the comprehensive are inhibited from acquiring a truly comprehensive quality of education by size, and by the carry-over of older educational standards (at Kidbrooke, for example, there are eighteen separate streams). And then there is the great debate on the implications of the Leicestershire scheme. These are among the subjects that will be before the education study group—a group which will work in association with the I.S.S.S. teachers' group and the London area of the National Association of Labour Teachers.

Labour Movement history group

In the history of the Labour Movement the synthesis between the concerns of the academic and those of the Labour Movement has been almost entirely the work of G. D. H. Cole. Unfortu-

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nately, with the exception of Cole's giant output, we have no recognised school of Labour Movement history—no centre to equal the Amsterdam and Feltrinelli institutes, no journal around which standards of labour historiography could be developed. Whole areas of Labour history, as John Saville points out in an article to be published in the third issue, remain unstudied—for instance, the local and community roots of the trade union movement. Lacking cohesion, Labour Movement historiography also lacks integration with surrounding academic disciplines. And this backward academic development is matched by a very low level of popularisation. We hope that our Labour Movement history group can provide the nucleus for a society of Labour Movement history, more ambitious, more wide-ranging in scope and possibilities, with a regular Review or Bulletin of Research. Meantime, some of the material of the group will appear in U. & L. R. documents and articles.

Contemporary capitalism

The Club discussion groups on contemporary capitalism and on Marxism will be concerned with general orientation rather than with the collection of study material.

The articles in the review and the discussion group on contemporary capitalism can help to focus a coherent alternative to those, on the one side, who see the future of socialism as the search for egalitarian aims within a fundamentally inegalitarian structure, and to those, on the other, whose ideas assume a social structure which has long ceased to exist. A socialist analysis cannot ignore the extent to which British capitalism has been "reformed" in a welfare direction; nor, unless it is anti-radical and apologetic in tone, can it confuse such reforms with the surpassing of capitalism itself. It will not be very helpful if Left socialists continue to counter Crosland's arguments with the charge that they are "not socialist": Left arguments must be underpinned by a more com-

elling documentation and argument. Propaganda for socialism has been desperately weakened by that most persuasive hangover from the thirties: the argument against capitalism which rests not upon its wrong priorities, anti-social ethos, and fetters upon rate of growth, but upon its imminent and inevitable collapse. The case for socialism must start by analysing capitalism as it exist today.

Marxism

To many younger socialists, Marxism presents itself as an ideology whose language is so divorced from its original social context that the whole approach is suspect. Yet over and above the failures of Marxism—both as a political ideology and a general theory of society—it remains the only widely held socialist philosophy which attempts to include within its conceptual framework the whole of social activity. With the ending of the cold war and the disintegration of monolithic Marxism, the polarisation of socialists into Marxists and anti-Marxists shows signs of ending. A variety of interpretation now exists among Marxists: there are those who believe that, shorn of its authoritarian Stalinist overgrowth, Marxist method remains substantially unimpaired; and there are others who believe that it is necessary on many points to go "beyond" Marxism—as Norman Birnbaum argues in an article to be published in the third issue—and on others to reject it. Strachey's *Contemporary Capitalism* shows that non-Marxists are no longer ready to reject Marxist method outright—a rejection which, in the past has often prefaced the rejection of the need for theory. With many Marxists now agreeing, with Deutscher, that their arguments must be developed "in such a way that their validity does not depend upon any specifically Marxist assumptions" the way is now perhaps open for fruitful dialogue on the subject.

RALPH SAMUEL

A left notebook—five Two louder boos

After Stuart Hall's comments on the unpleasant contemporary significance of George Scott's autobiography, *Time and Place*, I was very glad to see that, by way of reply, *Truth* (the weekly edited by Mr. Scott) devoted a page to attacking our first issue. I take it that the review by Mr. John Prescott (why don't *Truth* publish notes about contributors instead of deploring our use of them?) was intended as an attack, although Mr. Prescott's clinching argument—an accusation of primitiveness—read somewhat oddly.

"Another depressing feature," he wrote, "is its sentimental attachment towards socialism. . . . It all sounds rather like the Roundheads on Putney Heath in the middle years of the Civil War to me." An odd insult—for the Putney Debates of that earlier Good Old Cause produced some of the finest prose in the language; and Colonel Rainboro's ringing declaration that "*the poorest hee that is in England hath as much right to land as the greatest hee*" has a good deal more contemporary relevance than the editor of *Truth* would care to admit.

The mastodon

Perhaps I am making rather heavy weather of a reply: it is, after all, rather nice to be called *passé* and primitive by *Truth*—the only weekly which was genuinely enthusiastic about Eden's war in Suez (and as a result, lost their one brilliant journalist—Bernard Levin, who now writes Taper's column in the *Spectator*); the only weekly which for its main political spread has to borrow the political correspondent of the *Daily Mail* (his poor attempts to reach the minimum standards of weekly political columns produce 'funnies' like diaries of Nordic travellers, replete with the use of 'funny' initials—A. Bevan, H. Macmillan—Sudeten Welshmen, etc.); the weekly whose few holiday small ads, project terrifying images of the upper-middle class holiday: "*Ingerville House, Anstruther, Fife; in the heart of golfers' paradise, under the direction of Peggy and Alec Balls; cooking by 'Aunt' Payne is one of the amenities guaranteed.*" or, more briefly, "*fVinkton Lodge Hotel, Lt.-Col. and Mrs. Whicher.*"

A rapid glance at four weeks' issues of *Truth* showed it

- calling for a "*realistic understanding with Franco's successful regime,*"
- discovering, on May 31, 1957, the importance of *Vital Statistics* (their heading) in films and advertising;
- demanding, until Dr. Jagan had been crushed, the postponement of elections in British Guiana;
- proving itself the only weekly which will still print a Jewish-Communist Conspiracy letter (I suppose, remembering *Truth's* unsavoury reputation during the war in Palestine, that a paper gets the readers it deserves).

The elite

Truth has one 'progressive' attitude—it is against the Public Schools. Some critics have argued, unfairly I believe, that this is because his non-Public School background is the one point in Mr. Scott's childhood which he cannot renounce. But this is blatantly ungenerous—because a glance at a recent *Truth* article on Kenyan education will show that the paper holds in a principled way to the idea of an *elite* of ability rather than an *elite* of birth or race (to argue against *elites* of any kind would only serve to show how irremediably primitive one's ethos was). Significantly, a main charge of *Truth's* anti-Public School writer is that they inculcate a false modesty—an accusation which certainly could not be levelled against some non-Public School recruits to the Establishment. Of course, there are no theoretical reasons why one shouldn't write one's autobiography at the age of thirty, but *Time and Place* affords some pretty cogent empirical ones. Here is the one angry young man who writes not to depict the conflicting loyalties produced by the upward mobility of contemporary capitalist society, but to delight in the elite-producing mechanism. A future generation may conclude that *Time and Place* is the characteristic apologia of a prototype contemporary careerist. They will, of course, be terribly mistaken. All the same it is odd to hear the book described as sensitively depicting the dilemmas of to-day's younger generation.

RALPH SAMUEL