

plored and applied to an existing capitalist society; here *Monopoly Capital* falls short quite seriously. The results of such an analysis might also contain some surprising insights. In short, much work remains to be done.

That, we may conclude, is after all the most important conclusion to be drawn from the *Grundrisse*. Because this work underlines the deficiencies of the earlier economic writings and throws into sharp relief the fragmentary nature of *Capital*, it can serve as a powerful reminder that Marx was not a vendor of ready-made truths but a maker of tools. He himself did not complete the execution of the design. But the blueprints for his world-moving lever have at last been published. Now that Marx's unpolished masterwork has come to light, the construction of Marxism as a revolutionary social science which exposes even the most industrially advanced society at its roots has finally become a practical possibility.

## from The May Day Manifesto

STUART HALL, RAYMOND WILLIAMS,  
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Rarely has a description of one political culture been so stunningly accurate a description of another. If England has a "new capitalism," American capitalism is still "newer." If England lays aside the "cockaded hat of the colonial governor" only to advance all the better her economic interests in the "ex-colonial world," it is the aggressive skill of the American multinational companies which has proved the superiority of the new modes of international exploitation. If England's two-party system becomes in effect a one-party system in which differences are restricted to the domain of fiscal technique, this is a hundred times truer of the American two-party system. (Whence, in part, the rise of Wallace populist fascism.) If the prosperity of radical democracy in England requires the transcending of electoral-parliamentary means, the argument holds a fortiori for the United States.

A bit more than half the full text of the May Day Manifesto is excerpted below, including the beginning and the end. (A revised version was issued by Penguin too late for inclusion here.)

FOR NEARLY EIGHTY YEARS, the international labor 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 is breaking under prolonged strain, a Labour cabinet orders what it calls a new generation of military planes, as if that, now, were 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 labor 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 labor 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 rationalizations, however ingenious the passing reassurances, 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 recognize 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 specialized 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.

### 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 piecemeal 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, paralyzed 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 organized, rapid expansion. An essential part of this strategy has been the containment and ultimate incorporation of the trade-union movement. An essential prerequisite 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 stabilize 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 organization, 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 prestructure 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 rationalization, 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 stabilization 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-maximization 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 labor 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 labor’s power to bargain freely about wages. This involves another important transition. For in the course of this rationalization 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 over-all management of the economy by fiscal means. It must tailor the production of trained manpower 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 favor of these bargains, and take on the task directly—as it did in the seamen’s



strike—of intervening to whip labor into line behind the norms. In relation to labor 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 postwar economy. The second promise is that a stable system will be more efficient and productive, and that, so long as it works, labor will win its share in return for cooperation. When productivity rises, it is suggested, labor shares in the benefits. On the other hand, when the economy slows down, labor 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 labor 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 for equality: they are arrived at by cal-

culating 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 leveling 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 favor of the planned contentment of organized producers and consumers.

## MODERNIZATION

In the early 1960's, 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 horizon. 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, defense, and foreign policy, and the social services in 1964: "Yes, we can borrow, that's where thirteen years of Conservative rule have brought us. You can get into pawn, but don't then talk about an independent defense 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 redefined—first, in terms of "the scientific revolution," then in terms of "modernization." Many of the crucial shifts of emphasis and meaning took place within the context of that term, "modernization." But what did modernization 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 labor. 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 modernization as an economic panacea, we have to see it in its real context: as not a program but a stratagem—part of the language and tactics of the new capitalist consolidation.

Modernization 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. Modernization 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 modernization generates. The discussion about "modernized Britain" is not about what sort of society, qualitatively, is being aimed at, but simply about how modernization is to be achieved. All programs and perspectives are treated instrumentally. As a model of social change, modernization crudely foreshortens the historical development of society. Modernization is the ideology of the never-ending present. The whole past belongs to "traditional" society, and modernization 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." Modernization 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 the consensus, or as if, by some process of natural law, we all benefit equally from a rise in productivity. "Modernization" is thus a way of masking what the real costs would be of creating in Britain a truly modern society.

Second, "modernization" 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 . . . The style of planning which Labour adopted is not even a



means by which the economic drives of capitalism can be modified by some over-all framework of social priorities; it is "indicative" planning, the dovetailing 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 centered 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 labor 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 criticized 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 modernization. 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 maneuvered. The task of the leading politicians is to build around each issue by means of bargain and compromise a coalition of interest, and especially to associate the large units of power with its legislative program. 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 maneuver within existing limits. Every administrative act is a kind of clever performance, an exercise of political public relations. Whether the maneuvers 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 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 rationalization 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) . . . 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 crystallizes 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 organize and rationalize 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 modernization. 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 crystallize toward 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 modernization 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

judgment illustrates how the new capitalism dismantles older political ideas and values, confuses and fragments the labor 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 organized 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 organized capitalism needs a strong, centralized trade-union movement with which to bargain. It seems easy to turn around 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.

## 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 significant development is the emergence of the international company. Throughout the 1950's and 60's, the large corporations in the United States, as well as Western European and Japanese economies, have been



increasingly "internationalized." 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 among the already developed industrial countries. More than half the private investment income flowing into both the United States and the United Kingdom 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 internationalization 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 United States 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 West-

ern 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-publicized 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 internationalization 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 United States, 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 Unilever, 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 defense 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 defense 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 over-all 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 United States in foreign markets, the impact of military spending—the so-called “defense program”—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 defense contracts to the stability of the corporation, is a well-publicized and established fact. Defense expenditure is undertaken to service the United States’ global

role in “the defense of the West.” But the “West” is not just a political idea, 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,” centered in the Soviet Union and China, and with “wide-spread subversion” throughout the Third World. It is not necessary to argue that the United States’ imperial role throughout the world can be wholly explained by reduction to economic factors. What does seem clear is that a parallelogram of forces, which include internal and external economic forces, the military program, 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 worldwide 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 to 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 “Africanized”—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, defense 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 ambiguous 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 world 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 "underprivileged" 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 "underdeveloped" land. Yet others, taking up the description, can see it as the duty of a developed country to help the underdeveloped 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 realized, as is undoubtedly the case, that the gap between the 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 labor 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 Unilever, by gold, by oil, by rubber, by uranium, by copper; by aircraft carriers, 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 on 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 is 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, accepting 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

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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 on terms which ensure its continued development as a satellite economy. Great efforts are made, in bargaining and in political maneuver, 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 "peace-making." 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 peace-keeping force, the political maneuver.

## **POLITICAL MANAGERS OF THE WORLD**

What was once a relatively specialized 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 programs 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 nationalization, 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 neocolonialism was a pariah: Indonesia after a massacre of its communists was suddenly a promising country, deserving a favorable 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 "favorable," 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 of the infrastructure—roads, dams, power supply—also, incidentally, services and makes 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 programs set in motion which are 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 bourgeois 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 justified 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 realize 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 centers of violence in the contemporary world, all now precisely where the poor of the world are trying to win their independence, to know that it is not only exploitation we are seeking to end; it is also, in our time, the main cause and source of war.

## THE COLD WAR

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 coexisted with the complicated process of political struggle between socialism and, on the one hand,



liberal capitalism, and 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 postwar years have been deeply confusing. For socialists in Britain, the actual progress of Russian communism, under severe pressures—internally, in the rapid flight 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 recognized 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 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 the 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 World War II, 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 electoral 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 reinstatement 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 labor movement has been painfully slow to recognize 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 civilization 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 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 toward 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 programs, by direct political intervention, and by extensive counterrevolutionary 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 "nonalignment" seemed to have a relatively stable and meaningful value. In fact, the West remained the final arbiter as to what kinds of nonalignment 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 regimes, what kinds of economic reforms, 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, nonalignment 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 nor domestically secure in their foreign policy options." As Conor Cruise O'Brien put it: "Instead of thinking of a nonaligned Third World, it would be more realistic to think in terms of a worldwide capitalist economy of which the supposedly nonaligned 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 polarized, as their fragile independence is eroded by economic weakness vis-à-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 anticommunism. 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.

## THE LABOR 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 toward preparation for 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 election 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 organizations.

Instead we say:

- (1) 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.
- (2) 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.
- (3) 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.

(4) 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. Centered 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 where 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 bureau-



cratic 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; to be 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 organization: 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 organizations 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 organizational 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 organizations 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 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 remodeled 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 centralizing 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 socialism of the immediately coming generation, an emerging political process, rather than the formalities of a process that 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 with our situation. We invite their active support.