Applying the metaphor of a famous American doctor, she was to work in the laboratory of her own soul, and she used her new knowledge for the benefit of a special class of unfortunates.

At thirty-five she experienced an intense mystical-religious revelation. She sent an account of this to Dr W. Winslow Hall, M.D., in England, who collected the book *Recorded Illuminates*, and this was published in the magazine *Brotherhood*. She said: 'I was standing among pine trees, looking out at the sky, when suddenly "the heavens opened", as it were, and caught me up. I was swept "up" and "out" of myself altogether, into a flood of white Glory. I had no sense of time or place. The ecstasy was terrific while it lasted. It can have lasted only a minute or two. It went as suddenly as it came. I found myself bathed with tears, but they were tears of joy. I felt ONE with everything and everybody; and somehow I knew that what I experienced was Reality and that Reality is Perfection.'

What she called 'enhancement of spiritual life' followed, and some years later this spiritual longing sent her to California, where she studied under a Hindu Vedantist monk, who taught her 'the rudiments of Hindu meditation'. Eventually her literary power or will declined. Her faith involved denial of self. She lived austerely, and gave unlimitedly in goods and personal service, especially in prison reform.

My wife and she met by chance one night travelling to Auckland on the Limited, I think early in 1918. They sat together in a crowded second-class carriage and talked intermittently through the night. It seemed that Miss Baughan had come from Christchurch (at her own expense, one must assume) to follow up the case of an oft-convicted prisoner in Mt Eden. She had called on the Prisons Department in Wellington to get a permit for this man to publish stories. She had judged him a pleasant intelligent fellow who had got into scrapes because he enjoyed outwitting the police. He did not want the proceeds of his crimes, but the intriguing and plotting. Miss Baughan had persuaded him to turn his talent to writing detective stories as an outlet for this desire, and, armed with this authority from Wellington, she was going to Mt Eden to take charge of his authorship.

There is an interesting personal and literary link with distant days in Christchurch in Miss Baughan's part in the foundation of the Canterbury Women's Club. Some time about 1911, Edith Lyttelton ('G. B. Lancaster') passed through Christchurch, and three friends, Miss Baughan and the poets Mary Colborne-Veel and Jessie Mackay, arranged to meet her in a tea-room. They wished there had been a better place for such a meeting, and later began to plan

a small club for women interested in literature and the arts. To this end they invited a few friends, including my wife, to form an organizing committee. Margaret Stoddart, Edith Searle Grossman, and Mrs William Wilson were of the group. It is worth remembering that this old-established and influential club had its modest beginnings in the affectionate association of three writers.

In an obituary notice in the *Akaroa Mail*, Miss Baughan's very close friend Mrs Berta S. Burns, to whom I am indebted for the information about her spiritual revelation, and more, wrote that Miss Baughan 'had the most generous and brave heart I ever knew. And a delicious sense of humour. I think it will be the long and hearty laughs we enjoyed together over very simple things that will be my happiest memories of this great woman.'

ELSIE LOCKE

Looking for Answers

I

To struggle is the eternal law of life. Frederick Engels

ON A GREY day in April 1932, I stood on the pavement at John Court's corner, Auckland, watching for the first time a demonstration of unemployed men. Like every one else I was aware of an 'unemployment problem' which filled many columns of the daily paper. For that matter, I was unemployed myself, though I accepted this cheerfully as the consequence of my own recklessness in throwing aside an excellent position merely because it obstructed my chosen course of study. But what passed before my eyes was neither a personal nor an academic 'problem'.

There were, I think, ten thousand demonstrators, with no common characteristic except their shabbiness. Many bore the marks of their trade or background: the farmer, the navvy, the counter-hand, the carpenter, the tailor, the office executive, and those too young to have any occupation at all. Eight abreast, they came and they came and they came; scarcely any banners, no music, no shouting, just thousands of feet beating ragged time, thousands of faces diffident or philosophical or determined.

Behind me, the citizens gathered to watch the show. Some of them had jobs, or were married to husbands who had; some had none. Every conceivable shade of opinion fluttered in the conversation and in occasional shouts of derision or encouragement. They sympathized or they deplored, they applauded or they feared, they were genteel or uninhibited—but hardly any one was neutral.

Unexpectedly, in the sea of anonymous marchers there appeared one familiar to me. He was a somewhat boisterous and easy-going man who had spent a Christmas rush period working in the same shop as I had worked in when a schoolgirl; and he had shouted me an ice-cream sundae because I picked him the winning horse in a sweepstake. There he strode, glumness from head to toe. He glanced over, saw me, recognized me; then in a flash looked the other way, marched on and was gone. And the ranks, eight by eight, kept on coming. It seemed to me now that I might have known any of them. My father, my brothers, my friends, could have been among the ten thousand.

I do not think that it was the poverty of these men that shattered me, nor the knowledge (conveyed by two women in conversation near me) that threepenn'orth of rice was probably all that their families would eat on the day before they drew their miserable 'sustenance' from the unemployment bureau. I was not unacquainted myself with pinching and scraping and missing the odd meal. No—it was the injustice, the idiotic injustice, and the assault on the dignity of the human being that 'the unemployment problem' meant when translated into human terms and multiplied ten-thousand-fold. Every one knew that the shops were stacked with goods they couldn't sell, that the farmers with fourpence a pound for butterfat and sixpence a pound for wool were walking off their farms; that cotton was being ploughed under in America, coffee burned in locomotives in Brazil and oranges thrown into the sea from Spain.

I was alone between the surge of people on the pavement and on the street; alone with all that I had absorbed, from childhood, of the centuries-long fight for justice and freedom; and when the last of the ten thousand swung into view and passed me, I had asked myself the question which these men had silently flung at the watchers on the footpaths: Whose side are *you* on?

Whoever you are, and wherever you are going, I am going, too, I had answered.

I discovered that the working-class family with whom I had just moved in were strongly sympathetic to the unemployed. That

evening I asked them, among other things, who was leading these demonstrations, and received the quiet answer: 'Jim Edwards—the Communist.'

It was the first time I had heard a Communist spoken of not as a crank or a criminal, but as a hero. For that matter, it was the first time a Communist had been identified to me as a human being with a name to be used in homely conversation like any one else's name.

A citizens' meeting was called in the Town Hall to consider the unemployment problem. I could not go, being baby-sitter for my hosts, who went themselves. They returned late at night with an astonishing story.

The unemployed had again gathered at Quay Street and marched to the Town Hall. There they found the doors closed against them, although the hall was not full. The crowd became restive, Jim Edwards mounted on the balcony to address them—and suddenly there was a mêlée on the street. The newspapers (my friends predicted, accurately) would blame the unemployed and accuse Edwards of incitement. But the truth was that the police themselves provoked the fracas by striking down Edwards from behind when he was in the act of calming the crowd. Anyway, why *should* they be patient? A section had rioted, charging down Queen Street and smashing shop windows: those windows that sheltered the goods that owners could not sell and the workless could not buy. Many men and women had been injured in brutal baton charges and a warrant was out for Edwards's arrest. But Edwards had vanished.

Next day there was talk at the University and in the town of nothing else. People were taking sides passionately. I found that I knew the questions better than the answers. I hurried home burning for enlightenment, to be met at the door with a surprising announcement. Jim Edwards was in the house and I was not to breathe a word to any one.

Edwards sat by the stove, unmoving, his head swathed in bandages. He shook hands with me warmly. He was a big man, with eloquent eyes and a magnificent voice which had been trained for public speaking in the Salvation Army. I was told that he was evading arrest only until his wounds were healed, because the unemployed organization had no faith in fair play from the police or prisons.

As I moved about the room setting the table, I felt his eyes constantly upon me. The thought came to my mind: he is sizing me up. I am the only one in this home who is an unknown quan-

tity. When I go back after tea for my lectures, he will be wondering if I am talking.

I set myself my first test and passed it without blemish. Realizing that others might afterwards travel the same underground road, I said no word of this at any time—though I had many a private chuckle at the fantastic rumours that were circulating. The next day, Jim Edwards was taken away to a country hide-out.

The city raged with controversy as to who was responsible for the riots—the unemployed leaders, or the authorities and the police. In the course of many arguments I encountered a fellow-student who told me that he had been standing within a few yards of the Town Hall door on April 14, and that he had clearly heard Edwards say, 'Men, don't touch the police. Don't provoke them. Don't give them a chance to use their batons.'

I was overjoyed. I had found a witness completely unconnected with the unemployed movement, whose evidence could establish Edwards's innocence. True, when I suggested he should offer himself, the young man was shocked at the prospect of appearing in Court and lending aid to a disreputable cause. Undaunted, I hurried away to inform the lawyers that here was an independent witness to be subpoenaed. But it did not come to anything. The student denied, when approached, that he had ever said a word to me.

My sense of common decency was outraged. For no better purpose than his own respectability, this cowardly student was prepared to let a fellow-man go to jail unjustly and the unemployed be robbed of their chosen leader.

When Edwards finally gave himself up, was tried, and received a sentence of two years for inciting to lawlessness, my first lessons were complete. I believed passionately in justice and in the right of every man and woman to realize their potentialities, to live the full life. Our way of life was supposed to ensure these values, but it did not. We could have no faith in the courts, the newspapers, or the government. Unity and organization was the only source of strength for those who were disfranchised of the good things of life.

Avid for more knowledge, I asked my hosts where I could obtain it. I was surprised to be referred to the Friends of the Soviet Union. At first I was unimpressed, and after the first meeting did not return for some weeks. However, the F.S.U. was drawing crowded audiences every Sunday and bubbled with vigour and friendliness, in contrast to the scholarly detachment of the University cloisters and common-room. Gradually the spell of the Russian Revolution began to take hold on me. Were they not men like our own unemployed (but infinitely more wretched and abused) who had taken the law into their own hands in October 1917; founded a workers' state; resisted the hostility of the capitalist world; and even now, although still poor, were performing miracles of construction in 'a land without unemployment'?

An American journalist who visited Russia during the twenties had gone home with the cry: 'I have seen the future—and it works!' We, too, saw the future. It gave us a beacon, an ideal, in the light of which our efforts were part of a world-wide movement proclaiming fraternity, progress, freedom and peace. If voices from press, pulpit or lecturer's rostrum pointed to a divergence between these professed ideals and what really happened in the Soviet Union, we swept the evidence aside. Why should we believe those who already lied about the things we knew at first hand—the condition of the unemployed and their activities in our own city?

And so in the course of time, after much reading, discussion and soul-searching, my broadly 'left-wing' position crystallized. Leadership was needed, and there was an organization of workers dedicated to revolutionary leadership—the Communist Party. In September 1933, I joined this Party. By experiences individual and extraordinary, yet parallel and typical, the same road in greater or lesser degree was taken by many of the more spirited young people of the thirties.

It is fashionable now, in the cool fifties, to smile wisely about the naiveté of our generation (as if every creed and community hasn't got its own particular blend of naiveté and realism!). True enough, we did, in all countries affected, really expect that our efforts to set the world right could break right through the constrictions of historic processes with the beauty and finality of a plant which has germinated in an abandoned slab of asphalt. We were immersed in a sweeping movement, bursting with excitement and hope, continually shocked into further action by the paradox of poverty amidst plenty, by the framed-up trials of leader after leader, by the first Labour Government in New Zealand with its enthusiasm and stimulating new legislation; and also by events abroad, by the rise of Nazism in Germany, by the aggression against Abyssinia and China and Austria and Czechoslovakia, by the mounting preparations for World War II, and above all by the ruthless immolation of the Spanish Republic, for whose cause New Zealand nurses slaved and New Zealand volunteers died.

We came through with an ingrained solidarity and sense of

internationalism in which differences of colour, race and creed were only the variations which enliven humanity. We felt on our own backs, as if these things had happened in Dunedin or Napier, the wanderings of the 'Okies' made homeless by the Dust Bowl, the famines of China and India, the beatings of Belsen, the strafing of refugees on the road from Malaga, the bombing of Shanghai. True, the human being in it all did get lost sometimes in a forest of jargon and typescript and committee meetings. But when masses of people are pressing up alongside, it is not possible to be 'bushed' for long.

For me, too, there was the excitement of delving into the struggles of the past, either searching in books or sitting at the feet of old socialists who could tell me how mass movements come welling up out of the people's needs, and by what tactics they must be led to be successful. I was in love with history.

Scholars may sit in high places afterwards and analyse social movements and reveal their illogicalities, yet such movements would make no impact but for leaders and activists one-eyed enough to believe that on their particular cause depended the future happiness of the human race. To whatever degree our knowledge was true and our action wise and courageous, our impress upon society remains sound.

But the turbulent thirties ended, and its rebellious youth split up into sections going various ways, when war came.

Without warning, in August 1939 Stalin signed a non-aggression pact with Hitler, and war loomed up like a cliff in the mist—impossible to avoid. The thought flashed across my mind: Have we been betrayed? I swept it aside. I was a responsible official, Wellington District Secretary; we worked night and day with such colossal intensity that there was no time to spare for investigating a doubt. We had gone so far with the beacon-light of the Russian Revolution that in this crisis we had nothing else to turn to. We had already rejected reports of the Great Purges, and of the recrudescence of a Russian nationalism incompatible with the revolutionary fraternity of Lenin. We did not know, then, of the secret protocol to the Stalin-Hitler Pact which cynically and cold-bloodedly disposed of the lands of Poland and the Baltic States. So we readily found explanations, which satisfied ourselves if no one else, for the seizure of these countries and for the Finnish War; and we took up 'anti-conscription' with the zest of those accustomed to being 'anti', until the next odd twist of history was upon us.

After Hitler's invasion of Russia in June 1941, our situation was

indeed extraordinary. We enjoyed the luxury of our country and our cause being involved together in the one pursuit—the defeat of fascism. We were now whole-heartedly for the war effort. Since the Soviet was an ally, our pro-Soviet views were almost respectable. All kinds of stimulating prospects appeared to lie ahead as the outcome of British-American-Soviet co-operation.

Yet, underneath it all, I was restless. I hated the military spirit which we cultivated. What was to us a 'people's war', a kind of civil war against fascism which stretched across all national frontiers, was presented in Soviet propaganda as a patriotic war for the Russian motherland. What unsavoury developments were emerging beneath the surface of the heroic and self-sacrificing battle of millions of people to smash the fascist stranglehold?

We were not channelling the river of history. We were being swept along in it, up to our necks in its water, silt and foam.

II

Give me the strength to face a fact—though it slay me.

Thomas Huxley

16 August 1945. I stood in Latimer Square, Christchurch, in the sharp wind and sunshine, with the trees showing their first green tips, and people moving and massing around me with the unrestrained gaiety appropriate to this spring day. The procession now assembling was very different from that of 1932. It was V-J Day. Pacifist and militarist, capitalist and socialist, jingo and internationalist, and plain folk with no 'isms' at all, were united in rejoicing that the war was ended.

I too, with my small boys, abandoned myself to the light-hearted occasion; and walked home afterwards, with a sensation of being in a springtime of history; but with hope and apprehension tangled together, not knowing if the new growth would be a garden or a jungle.

At last, I thought, our arch-enemy fascism has been exposed and conquered. The prestige of our Soviet Ally and the reflected glory of Stalingrad have brought a certain glow of cosiness to our small band of Communists. But what of the atomic bombs which have brought such appalling consequences to two Japanese cities? What revolutions in the affairs of mankind will follow this technological and military leap into the unknown? Will the bomb serve to unite—or to divide?

And I thought: How unprepared we are!

I had spent most of my twelve years of membership in the Communist Party in official positions, with every unrelenting minute crammed with activity and study; but as marriage and motherhood had relieved that pressure, questions began to crowd in upon me.

We claimed that, by studying the laws of social change and the facts of social life, we could appreciate the necessary course of events and guide that course for the benefit of the working people, and ultimately of all mankind. In practice, during the thirties and the war years, we had reacted to rapidly-developing situations without having the time or the knowledge to relate what we did to longer perspectives. With the issues of the slump, the advance of fascism, and the war already past, to what realizable aims would we direct our energies? While humanity's international agenda high-lighted the problems of peace, of the raising-up of former colonies, and of food for increasing populations, where did we Communists in New Zealand stand? We continued to react to events in habitual ways which had little meaning for the now more prosperous workers, or for the young people. We were part of the biggest political movement ever known, yet in relation to New Zealand life we stood apart, not acclimatized, and we could not place all the blame on external factors.

Five months later, a long illness took me to hospital and gave me a long-awaited boon: time. Time to read, to think, to reflect, and to be a simple person among people, unweighted by obligations.

I decided to take a fresh look at my beliefs.

By the time I emerged into the placid air of New Zealand and the world-wide chills of the Cold War, my socialist ideas had been stripped of enough dogma to make them supple. I had pondered much over the approach of Marx and Engels to history. 'Communism is no doctrine, but a movement,' wrote Engels, 'and proceeds not from principles, but from facts.' I had looked calmly at a good many facts concerning Communism itself.

In proportion as the stimulus of local militancy decreased, the New Zealand Communists leaned more heavily on the international character of the movement—a character that was moulded, by common consent, largely in Moscow. But what sort of 'norm' was Soviet socialism? No new social order springs pure and perfect from the ruins of the old. The impact of socialist ideas and methods on the life of Russia—a former Empire in no way 'typical', but unique—had brought, as they must, a compromise between the new order and the old. The socialization of production in a country which urgently needed to be modernized, industrialized and educated had yielded brilliant results; but the aim of socialist democracy—a freer and finer relationship between human beings, through which 'every cook must learn to rule the state', had gone down before the reassertion of ingrained traditions; and the welfare of the international working-class was seen through the prism of revived Russian nationalism.

The compromise of a planned, nationalized economy with an autocratic political structure was natural enough in all the historic circumstances. But the methods and outlook generated in this extraordinary country were trumpeted forth as the essentials of socialism for the entire world! And some of them ran directly counter to socialism in the British tradition—to the very inspiration that had brought me to the movement—to the belief in justice, opportunity and a full life for every one! Would we not always be shunned and feared so long as we denied, glossed over or attempted to justify the abuses against the minds and bodies of men which grew like an evil disease over the new society? Would we not be failing to apply our socialism properly to New Zealand conditions, so long as we gave ideological allegiance to the administrators of a social system in many ways more primitive than our own?

Here was a 'contradiction' if ever there was one. From the life that throbbed around us we must draw our daily inspiration—not from texts, or from remote and unfamiliar institutions, or from myths. If we could do this, and recover the liberal traditions of British socialism, our devoted and well-knit band of activists might yet point the way towards a finer future for New Zealand than to drift along as a well-favoured outpost of capitalism and a satellite of the American power-bloc.

I did not regard such an independent and critical position as incompatible with friendship and support for the world's first socialist state, and for the soon-to-be-victorious revolution in China. In fact, my sympathy and admiration for the Soviet people grew with my view of their society as having human and not superhuman proportions. What did trouble me deeply was the situation of the Central European countries upon which socialist systems had been imposed—for only Jugoslavia had made her own revolution. These régimes, lacking mass support, relied on repression even more than the U.S.S.R., and such an unstable foundation surely could not endure.

By 1950, the Cold War had frozen up like an Antarctic winter. With the H-bomb race providing more and bigger weapons with which to destroy civilization, the policies of our country on the one hand and our party on the other appeared equally out-dated

and reckless, since they were based on concepts of national interest which could not survive such a war. It was not enough to go round shouting 'Peace!'

Every Communist bears forever the stamp of the time during which he received his initiation. Remembering our feverish search for facts and for workable methods in the thirties, I brought my discoveries to the Party, confident of my argument and expecting at least to be listened to in a receptive manner. Using no illustrations that were not obtained or confirmed from Soviet sources, I tried to show why we must relax our voluntary allegiance to Soviet political guidance, dissociate ourselves from repression and obscurantism, and base ourselves firmly on our own socialist tradition, seeking all possible meeting-points with other leftists. We were already engaged in drawing up a new programme for New Zealand socialism; and I thought this could be done realistically only if we could look at our country and the world through eyes cleared of the mist of myths.

How little I had absorbed the Stalinist climate! I should have sensed it on that morning in 1948 when I remarked mildly to a Party official, with respect to the Cominform's expulsion of the Jugoslav Communists: 'I'll reserve judgement till I hear Tito's side of the story'—and was answered with a brusque, 'If *they* say he's wrong, then he *is* wrong, and you've got to accept it!'

These were times that called to faith, not questioning. I committed the supreme crime: I *did* question. Furthermore, though I did not realize it, I was attacking at the very point that had become the core of Party life: the absoluteness of centralized authority in ideology, policy and organization. In consequence, the officials could not even examine fairly the evidence I produced, for the raising of the challenge, quite apart from the nature of it, was impermissible.

Now I was regarded as a menace within the camp: a petit-bourgeois influence which had to be dealt with, by limiting in every possible way my communication with other members; by appealing to my loyalty; by diverting my energies into innocuous channels; by directly or indirectly linking my views with those of the 'class enemy'. At meetings and conferences I had the impression of being like a player in a team to whom the opposing captain has assigned a 'marker' to counter his every stroke.

Having failed, I felt trapped. Believing that to condone or conceal evil is to share in the commission of evil, I was being made accomplice to the hypocrisies, cruelties and injustices which were rife under the shadow of the ageing Stalin. Had this been the whole

picture, no choice would have been necessary. But our movement's original purposes still asserted themselves, too. At the ground level, where the needs of trade union, workplace or locality were concerned, the old methods—'listening to the workers' and interpreting and guiding their aspirations—were still in evidence. I liked and admired my comrades, with their stalwart toughness and ready spirit of selfless service. Their advocacy of world peace was passionate and sincere. Communists of the same calibre were bringing new hope to millions in China and throughout Asia, because their Communism was allied to real needs and movements. It was too soon to say that we could not do likewise.

'When I get disgusted with my own side,' said a friend to me one day, 'I take a good look at the other side. I soon come scurrying home.' And it was true that we could look at the state of the world from any one's angle and ask, 'Who is blameless?' and receive no answer.

No: I was already committed: I was not prepared to loosen my political loyalties, with which a hundred personal loyalties were intricately woven. Here, where I already belonged, was the place for my own small effort towards changing the world. I felt very much alone: for Party rules forbade, under the heading of creating factions, any expression of doubts or criticisms outside formal meetings and procedures. I could not turn back. I could only go on searching.

One evening I began reading the published reports of the Lysenko controversy. Many of Lysenko's biological theories and his methods of over-riding his opponents made depressing reading, as did the subservience of his former critics—until it flashed across my consciousness that this was not subservience at all! No! These 'self-criticisms' were charged with ingenious double-talk.

I doubled up with delighted laughter. So Russian Communists, whose pioneers had used every imaginable trick to outwit the Tsarist censorship, were at their old devices again! What I saw in the Lysenko discussions I began to see elsewhere. Surely the pressure for reform was mounting—not *against* socialism from those who would destroy its achievements along with its failures; but from *within* the movement itself, everywhere!

I was convinced that this must be true of every country in the world; for Communism had its original roots, not in the worship of states and leaders, but in the demand of common men for an abundant life, for justice, for liberty; and so long as these needs were denied, men and women would arise to fight for them.

I was no longer alone. With this bid for a rebirth of humanistic socialism, I consciously aligned myself.

When in 1953 Stalin died, the expected 'thaw' did indeed set in with exhilarating rapidity. True, its significance was not seen by those of my comrades who had perceived nothing in the Soviet that needed radical change. But even these could not resist the impact of the Twentieth Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union in February 1956. Stalin was exposed for the lawlessness, cruelty, and intellectual poverty of his twenty years' dictatorship. Quite distinctly, Moscow was saying to all Communists abroad: Do not repeat these errors. Choose your own road!

It seemed that the hour of the rebel-reformers had come. Certainly my own status and that of other critics began to change, since several of our heretical ideas had the blessing of Moscow itself. The light was switched on, and many a dark corner was flooded with light.

In my joy and hope, I accepted these changes as lasting, and Stalinism—the coercive control of a movement and a state by a small closed circle of leaders—as dead wood that was steadily to be cut away. When the peoples of unhappy Central European countries began to assert themselves, to correct abuses and to deal with their little Stalins, I applauded. When Polish workers demonstrated for bread on the streets of Poznan, I saw healthy signs in their traditional militancy. When the Poznan courts heard openly what the people had suffered at the hands of the secret police, and set the rioters free, I was buoyant with relief. I did not know how many powerful men were dismayed and frightened. I did not expect that the light would be switched off again so soon.

III

Were you there when they crucified my Lord?
Were you there when they crucified my Lord?
Oh sometimes it causes me to tremble, tremble—
Were you there when they crucified my Lord?

24 October 1956. 'Here is the News. . . .' I silenced the kitchen clatter and hurried to the radio. For days the broadcasts had headlined Poland: Gomulka's victory over the men who had jailed him and thousands of innocent people; and the revolutionary assertion of his country's independence through the ousting of Marshal Rokossovsky, symbol of Russian power. We had heard Gomulka's call for democratization and an end to lies, and the

response of the crowds in the streets who deliriously shouted, 'It's spring in October!'

Now Hungary had taken the cue. Students of the Building Industry Technological University, working all night, had drawn up Sixteen Points; and on 23 October, 'Work in Budapest stopped. Every one went out on the streets weeping. People read the points and rushed home, or to their factories. Every stenographer and every typiste did nothing but copy these things in their offices. Every one was talking about it: in conversation, over the telephone, the news spread in a few hours and all Budapest became an ant-hill. People pinned the Hungarian national cockade to their clothes, and a really fantastic miracle occurred. . . . About 100,000 A.V.H. spies, informers and stool-pigeons had been planted in the life of the nation and forced to supply information. On the morning of this day, for the first time, some one had dared to say openly that the Russian troops should leave Hungary . . . .

'This was what gave us unity, and the point at which the net in which the A.V.H. spy system had been holding us was broken. No one asked in the street, "Who are you?". . . . Every one could be trusted, every one had a feeling of complete unity, because the entire system based on lies collapsed in a moment on the morning of the 23rd October.'

This vivid picture (printed much later in the United Nations Special Committee Report) was what I saw behind the calm words of the B.B.C. news-reader. This was activity which I recognized from long familiarity—and because I knew what the Hungarians were rebelling against. On the day far back in 1949, when I read the verbatim report of the trial of Laszlo Rajk, who was executed after confessing to 'treason' with the Titoites and the Imperialists, I had wept for an innocent man betrayed by his own comrades. When Rakosi only a few months before admitted some responsibility and resigned his position, when Rajk was 'posthumously rehabilitated' and ceremonially re-interred, these were but dramatic signs of a deep corruption; of a gruesome caricature of what we understood by a socialist government, with no claim to power apart from Russian military backing.

Now, as Gomulka had said of the workers of Poznan, 'the working-class gave the Party a painful lesson by going into the streets and shouting, "Enough of this! It cannot go on this way any longer!" '

A few days later, when the fighting which broke out after the demonstrations had died down, and the new Prime Minister Imre Nagy was calling, 'You have won—stop fighting!' it was clear that

the 'new course' Communists, including Nagy himself, were the prime makers of the revolution. However confusing the scene might be—and what revolution has ever been tidy?—its activists were workers, intellectuals and youth, in whom, according to our best Leninist traditions, our faith must be placed. Something new would now emerge, some combination of socialized industry with political democracy; for when the masses are on the move, none need fear counter-revolution, which breeds not on hope but on frustration. Interference from the West, out-of-tune with Hungary's mood, could scarcely be effective either.

Yes, Hungary stood in the forefront of our whole movement, but this brought me apprehension, too. The tanks which had moved towards Warsaw—? the tanks reported to be coming over Hungary's borders afresh? Would the Russian leaders hold to their promises of respecting Hungary's independence—or would they crush a 'new road' which challenged their assumed supremacy and threatened to take Hungary out of their power bloc into neutrality?

Millions like myself waited frantically for the answer. We felt so near; and we were so powerless.

November 4 in New Zealand was a warm, sunny Sunday evening. We came in from the garden to hear the B.B.C. news. In Budapest, on that bleak winter dawn, the massive might of the Red Army was hammering on the Parliament Buildings and on Radio Free Kossuth which had broadcast its last dramatic appeal:

'Help Hungary! Help the Hungarian people! Help the Hungarian writers, students, workers, peasants and intellectuals! Help! Help! Help!'

The challenge of these words was as direct, to me, as the tramp of unemployed feet on the streets of Auckland. Those machine-guns were as real as the batons raised against our Auckland demonstrators. Appalled, desperate, knowing that Moscow had struck not only at Budapest but at the humane regeneration which had flowered within the most powerful political movement of our century, I turned to the only answer I knew.

No one could help the Hungarians by military aid, for the shadow of the H-bomb towered above all. The world could only stand by, while Hungary proved, by her stubborn resistance, that freedom meant more than life; while her workers proved, by one of the longest and toughest strikes in history, that the so-called Workers' Government of Kadar was a sham. But it appeared to me that one thing might have stayed or moderated the Soviet hand—a protest of mass dimensions from the other Communist and Workers'

Parties of the world. We who were 'inside' had a clear duty to declare our solidarity at once with the Hungarian people.

From all over the world the voices of protest began to rise. One-fifth of the British Communist Party, one-fifth of the French party, afterwards split away, while a further proportion remained, still protesting, inside. But it was hopeless. Officials corrupted by bureaucracy apart, the great majority of honest Communists had never seen the rot within their beloved socialist world. Though they spent long hours studying revolution, they had failed to perceive a revolutionary situation in the classic definitions of Lenin: when the old rulers could no longer rule in the old way, the state disintegrated, and new forms of mass organization—complete to Workers' Councils resembling the original 'Soviets'—came to the fore. Though they loved to organize demonstrations, they did not recognize their kindred demonstrating on the streets of Budapest. They could not understand how a people's revolution could be on one side and the power of the Soviet Union on the other. They put their hands before their faces and echoed the cry, 'Counter-revolution!'

The cleavage was complete—as it had once been in 1917, the year of the Russian Revolution. We who had sought and struggled for a democratic reform of our Communist movement had also been raked with machine-guns. Never again would we give one shred of support to the machine-gunners. To the people of Russia, of Poland, of Hungary, yes. To every forward step, every positive reconstruction, yes. To peaceful and friendly relations, yes. But to lies and tyranny, whether political, military or ideological—never. We had joined in order to fight oppression, not to assist in it. Now we went out, asking in anguish—Why? Why? What next?

IV

While there is a lower class I am in it, while there is a criminal element I am of it; while there is a soul in prison, I am not free.

Eugene Debs

It is traditional in the Labour and Socialist movement that the cause of any man wrongfully imprisoned, especially for activity on behalf of his fellow-men, becomes the cause of all—and in important cases, of international concern.

When I first became active, the Sacco-Vanzetti case was fresh in memory. The Tom Mooney case was in full swing. Soon we were to fight for the Scottsboro Boys, and help wrest the Bulgarian

leader Dimitrov from the hands of the Nazis after the Reichstag Fire Trial. One of the petitions to which I put my name demanded of the Horthy Government that they should 'release Mathias Rakosi'. There was a special organization, the International Labour Defense, with a New Zealand version called the Civil Defence League.

It did not occur to us then that prisoners of our own side might be calling for help, or indeed that a socialist system could possibly have victims of deliberate injustice. Therefore, when Old Bolsheviks who had been swallowed up in the purges of 1935-8 were writing to their tormentor, Stalin, still crying out 'I trust! I believe!'—nobody heard, nobody acted. We brushed aside exposures of the purges as malicious inventions of the enemy.

After the revelations of Krushchev at the Twentieth Congress, of Gomulka's government, and of freed Hungarians like Dr Edith Bone, there is no excuse for those who claim they do not know. Secret police methods of torture, frame-up and political murder, and the technique of misleading millions of people with the 'big lie' and thought-control, are vicious under any political system, whether the perpetrators be the Nazis, the Stalinists, or the French colonels in Algeria.

Perhaps Janos Kadar was sincere when he said, in a broadcast of 11 November 1956, that 'the real reason for the people's movement must be sought in the serious faults and crimes of the Rakosi clique. . . .' Perhaps he was sincere when he spoke of coming to terms with Imre Nagy and the just demands of the revolution. But since then, more than 20,000 Hungarians have been imprisoned, interned or executed, and the roll has been crowned with the execution of Imre Nagy, Pal Maleter and two others after a secret trial.

The published statement of the Court which condemned Nagy is a self-damning document. For it admits clearly two things: that the revolution was not foreign, but Hungarian and inner-Communist in origin; and that the 'white terror' which lynched secret policemen and a few Communist officials, and which was a major excuse for intervention, accounted for only 234 victims—surely evidence not of unbridled counter-revolution, but of great restraint in a country where many times that number of people had suffered innocently and helplessly at the hands of the hated A.V.H.

This return to Stalin's methods, at least in those areas where the authority of Stalin's successors rests upon force and guile, poses the question: are protests of any use?

Dr Edith Bone in *Seven Years Solitary* wrote of the improvement

in her situation when the British Embassy in Budapest intervened concerning her imprisonment. In 1957 two famous writers, Tibor Dery and Gyula Hay, had their death sentences commuted to life imprisonment after representations from writers abroad. Concern of fellow-intellectuals over the fate of Professor Georgy Lukacs, distinguished literary critic and Marxist philosopher, who strongly influenced the liberation movement and was among the Nagy Group abducted to Rumania in November 1956, appears to have had some effect, for Lukacs is living quietly in Budapest.

If this tally appears unimpressive against the terrible record of unbridled revenge and suppression, let it be remembered that most protests have come from sources regarded by Communist leaders as hostile. The Left, the traditional source of the cry for justice, has been confused by its own disunity, its illusions, and its fear that even cautious questioning may play into the hands of anti-Soviet protagonists of the Cold War.

Why should we be concerned, they ask, when political victims also cry out from Portugal, Spain, Algeria, Cyprus, Kenya, against the injustices of 'Western civilization'; when the United States in Guatemala, and Great Britain in British Guiana, have similarly suppressed political change that did not suit them?

Somewhere in Hungary is a woman called Julia Rajk. When her husband Laszlo Rajk was executed in 1949 outside her own prison cell, she was torn from her five-months-old baby son and kept for five years without a word of him or of her friends reaching her from the outside. Freed at last, she played a leading part in the Petofi Circle where she openly denounced Rakosi as her husband's murderer, and appealed for democracy and decency in the movement to which she still adhered. After Nagy's execution she was reported to be on trial—and then silence descended.

I cannot think of the plight of Julia Rajk without thinking: it might have been me. It might have been any of my friends with whom, for twenty-three years, I worked for the Communist road to freedom. I have helped to create her situation through allowing the principles with which we set out to be trampled under. While Julia Rajk is in prison, I am not free.

V

The unchanging thing in socialism is the abolition of the exploitation of man by man. Wladislaw Gomulka

Twenty-six years have gone by since the unemployed of Auckland

marched past me and flung their challenge at my feet. Today I can look out from my windows to a scene as peaceful and prosperous as any in the world. I know that this is an exception. The men and women have never stopped marching, and humanity is more restless, more demanding than ever in its history before. Not a day has passed but somewhere the tramp of feet has accompanied the cry, 'Give us our rights!' Often it happens that the marchers are betrayed and a new oppression fastened upon them. But there can never be an Orwellian 1984, a total oppression. Always voices are raised, always thinkers are asking 'Why?'

How did Communism, whose aim was always to liberate man, become a seed-bed for tyranny?

The terror of the Stalin era can be partly understood (though not excused) in terms of the conditions under which Russia set out to modernize, industrialize and educate her community of nations. Backward, largely illiterate, and surrounded by enemies, the Soviet peoples responded to their leaders' call and rose within a generation from the economy of the wooden plough to the economy of the jet aeroplane. Harsh times, harsh methods; and at the end, the material conditions in which future democracy may flourish.

But this is only a part of the story. Why have persecution and inquisition become ingrained in party life in countries whose background is quite different? The reasons must be sought in the theories embraced by them all.

The first fatal flaw is in the concept of the 'monolithic party' —party of a single will—with the organizational structure of 'democratic centralism' to uphold it. The limits of party democracy and discussion are determined by the central core of leaders, and any attempt at effective opposition is 'factionalism'. This system gives unanimity of action but no guarantee that the action will not be misconceived and misdirected—and no means of correcting it. Stalin held a one-man dictatorship for twenty years: 'democratic centralism' had no machinery by which to unseat him.

The truth is that human life is far too complex to be fully assessed or to be encompassed in a 'single will'. Only in times of intense revolution can strictly centralized leadership be acceptable to all, or military parallels be valid for 'the class struggle'. The tendency will always be towards installing a narrow group of leaders who revolve in the circle of their own fixed vision. In the final analysis the group will yield to the single leader. The élite will tend to become removed from the realities of life, since correcting influences cannot be admitted without endangering the whole structure. There is increasing 'clericalization'—'whenever an instit-

ution, no matter what it is, becomes an end in itself rather than a way of serving the ideal which gave it life.'

These tendencies are not absolute. They are corrected whenever, and to the extent that, Communist activity is allied to genuine human needs, and when people are stimulated to action by their own experience regardless of doctrine. The national liberation of Jugoslavia, the rebirth of China, the great post-war strikes in France, are examples of an impetus so profound as to thrust bureaucracy aside.

Can man apply scientific method to social change, in order to guide the course of contemporary history? The attempt to do this is the whole point of Marxian socialism. However, scientific conclusions can be drawn only from adequate and accurate data and hypotheses. Karl Marx and Frederick Engels were well aware of the limitations which must always qualify a scientific approach to sociology. Engels wrote:

> The sovereignty of thought is realized in a number of extremely un-sovereignly thinking human beings; the knowledge which has an unconditional claim to truth is realized in a number of relative errors; neither the one nor the other can be fully realized except through an endless eternity of human existence. . . .

The second fatal flaw in the Communist position is in the confusion of this limited and relative knowledge with what are assumed to be absolute and universal truths. Asserting their right and duty to determine the course of history according to their own appreciation of historical necessity, the Communists proceed on their hypotheses as though they are unchallengeable laws.

A monolithic party with the conviction that it possesses absolute truth can be a powerful factor for human advance when it is right—and a colossal danger when it is wrong. Believing itself to be the guardian of human destiny, it must inevitably regard as 'anti-human' any challenge to its central 'truth', however much criticism it may accept as to the methods of exercising that 'truth'. The outsider may be forgiven his confusion, for he is still a potential follower to be won. The insider who points to the naked body beneath the Emperor's garments of self-deception is the real traitor who cannot be forgiven. Since his course (in terms of the Party's concepts) is anti-human, what does it matter if his treatment is inhuman, if he is persecuted, humiliated, intellectually blackmailed, tortured? By destroying him—this is the logical conclusion—the guardians of humanity have protected humanity.

In this context it is clear why Communist organizations, despite

their maxim, often truly applied, of 'faith in the masses', yet breed bureaucrats out of men and women who set out with the highest motives. I have been on both the inflicting and the receiving ends of bureaucracy, and I know the prolonged and difficult effort that is needed to get free of its tentacles. In my earlier days as a dogmatic official my comrades tried to correct me, but could not themselves get down to the root, which was that same 'clericalization' producing a priesthood of leaders serving out their 'absolute truth'. Such leaders may wish to 'listen to the masses' but cannot possibly hear any notes which conflict with the majestic harmony they are busily dispensing. In the end they cease to listen. The human being is a piece to be fitted into the jigsaw puzzle, and if he unfortunately insists upon bulging in the wrong places, so much the worse for him. The ultimate end of this evolution is a Rakosi or a Gero, who could walk about on a volcanic Hungary ready to erupt and still not guess what lay beneath their feet.

It is argued in defence that the Stalinist form of Communism did get the results, in the development of the Soviet Union into a major world power with impressive standards of living, of education, of culture, of science and of technology, with China following suit; and that under the given conditions, tight coercive control (despite its abuses) was 'historically necessary'. Certainly, in countries like Britain which have liberal institutions of law and government, an adequate foundation of nationhood and well-being was first reached through autocracy. But this very theory of 'historical necessity' implies that Stalinist methods will function only in temporary and exceptional conditions, which are already past in Russia, and which do not exist in countries like our own which have advanced far under capitalism. Further, it runs directly counter to the central Marxist thesis that by understanding the course of events, men can make their history. It pictures men and women as expendable units in a vast process beyond their control and requiring their impotent resignation to the most shocking brutalities.

The early socialists believed that persuasion, experience, and a fine vision of the future would win over the masses who suffered under the old order. That freedom can be as powerful an incentive as material goods, that community interest can appeal over and above individual self-interest, that men can be stirred by moral goals as well as by power and prestige, are often forgotten, although in our own times Mahatma Gandhi and Vinoba Bhave have again demonstrated that such principles can be successfully applied to the transformation of society.

Socialism is concerned with the aim of men to become *whole* men, living in a society where individual and collective needs are in harmony; where the producer receives his due share of the product, and plays his full part in the administration of community life. This is inconceivable without intellectual and personal liberty. Today, in the U.S.S.R. and in the world-wide movement so deeply influenced by Soviet experience, the crying need is to reassert this aim, and to find common ground with other schools of socialist thought and action whose measures of success, failure, experiment and discovery also have significance. This is necessary not only for humane reasons but because the concentration of power in the hands of a narrow clique must tend to retard social change and adaptation.

Bold thinking and vigorous discussion are ahead if we are to snap out of complacency and out-dated attitudes, and fit ourselves for life in the atomic age.

Commentaries

VANCE PALMER

Australian Letter

NOW THAT our immigration policy has been working for over a decade, people are beginning to speculate on what its long-range effects are likely to be—socially, politically, and culturally. I suppose there is a similar impulse in New Zealand. Many of the economic effects here are obvious enough. It would probably have been impossible to have carried out some of our larger projects, such as the Snowy River Irrigation Scheme, without a supply of controllable labour, and if there has been waste in the process (men of various skills set to driving trucks) such temporary maladjustments could hardly have been avoided.

But, allowing for the material benefits of the new immigration, what are its indirect results likely to be? Moving about the country one gathers impressions and tries to sort them out, but it is hard