

Wilson and the BLP—2 Years in Power

THE MOST SHOCKING thing about the leaders of the British Labor Party is their timidity. Heirs to a revolutionary tradition which seeks to abolish class distinctions and capitalist exploitation, Harold Wilson and his Cabinet continually bow down before institutions and attitudes which they should be either rejecting or reconstructing.

It is now more than two years since Labor was returned to power and the stench of MacDonaldism seems to be everywhere though in some ways this is not entirely fair to MacDonald since he was genuinely committed to the peaceful settlement of all international quarrels while Wilson supports the "Mad Bomber" in Vietnam and conjures up the ghost of Kipling with his fantastic talk about Britain's role "East of Suez." Ever since the July panic when the Prime Minister and his Cabinet decided they had no alternative but to accept the deflationary policies being demanded by the international banking community and the Mandarins of Whitehall, there has been a profound feeling of unhappiness and distress within the Labor movement.

It had been possible to argue that Wilson's slim majority prior to his smashing success this past March had inhibited him from pursuing a vigorously socialist program. But now with a majority of close to 100 seats in the House of Commons, there can be no excuses. Labor is entrenched in power with a solid majority for only the second time in its history. The Governments presided over by Ramsay MacDonald in the interwar period were minority regimes dependent upon Liberal votes. Only in 1945 did Labor have a decisive mandate and the tragedy of the Attlee administration was that it rapidly rotted away internally due to timidity and lack of revolutionary (a revolution need not be violent) zeal. For Western Europe in 1945 was ready for England to demonstrate that democratic socialism was a real alternative between

Stalinism and capitalism. Admittedly, the attempt to create a socialist Western Europe was made more difficult by the existence of large Communist parties which blindly submitted to the whims and fancies of the fanatically nationalist dictator in the Kremlin. But this was surely no reason for democratic socialists to go running into the arms of Washington.

With the exception of steel and road transport the Conservatives accepted the nationalization decrees of the Attlee government when they returned to power in 1951 for the beginning of their thirteen wasted years. The Attlee regime did little more qualitatively and quantitatively than to add a few bricks (with the exception of the National Health Service which deserves high praise) to the welfare state. Alas, the welfare state which can trace its origins back to the pre-World War I period is basically a neo-capitalist device aimed at preventing class conflict and socialism by requiring the wealthy to pay a small "ransom" to the "lower orders" in order to maintain the important levers of power in the hands of the property and money-holding class. Dorothy Wedderburn's comment in *The Socialist Register, 1965* "that the top 5 per cent of the population in Britain in 1960 still owned 75 per cent of the wealth" is a nauseating reminder of what British Labor has failed to do.

Now it is easy, of course, as one of a small contingent of American socialists to criticize this great mass movement which finds itself in power in one of the world's most important states, but it is precisely because of the latter reason that all democratic socialists have expected so much from Harold Wilson and his colleagues. Twenty years after the failure of the left in 1945-1947 and the setting in of the intellectual *rigor mortis* associated with cold war attitudes, there seems to be a real chance for a new beginning. It is this which President de Gaulle's

sophisticated foreign policy takes into consideration though domestically he is backward and reactionary. Wilson, on the other hand, has been a crude cold war warrior in foreign affairs and a confused manager of domestic matters who finds his recent panic package of July 20, 1966 condemned by left-wing socialists and right-wing Tories. Wilson suffers from the LBJ disease of wanting to invade the political center and to become a "consensus" leader who will ensure some twenty years of continuous rule for the Labor Party. Labor certainly needs a long period in office but this will only be meaningful if it sets out to fulfill the great ideals and principles for which democratic socialists have always fought.

THIS OBSERVER is not yet willing to accept the argument that Harold Wilson is another Ramsay MacDonald. He may become one and the danger is there but Wilson still deserves a small benefit of doubt though he needs to be pushed and prodded and never allowed to forget that he represents a movement which aims to transform—and not to administer—the status quo. The pursuit of historical analogies is a dangerous, though often useful, pastime but such comparisons must be used with great caution and differences—as well as similarities—carefully noted. MacDonald had little understanding of either political power or basic economics and was called upon to deal with a world financial collapse while lacking an absolute majority in the House of Commons. None of these statements is true today though England's balance of payments deficit and the desire to save the pound are very similar. And tragically, Wilson seems as ready to sacrifice the interests of the working man and to bail out the financiers and capitalists as was MacDonald in 1931. However, it is still too soon to deliver a final judgment and Labor's recently concluded Annual Conference at Brighton indicated its uneasiness but eventually granted the Prime Minister a one-year stay of execution.

It was ironical that Wilson's first major speech after the Annual Conference was

at the centenary celebration of the birth of Ramsay MacDonald. The Prime Minister performed a difficult and delicate task with great skill and even managed to demonstrate that he is not simply a political manipulator and that he does understand what socialism is all about and what the Labor movement stands for. In reviewing the origins of the movement in which MacDonald had given so much in the years before 1914 Wilson observed that the founders had been "men and women dedicated albeit for different reasons, to building somehow, sometime, but here, a new society out of the evils and ugliness and squalor of nineteenth-century industrialization, to ending for ever the inequality, the exploitation, the grinding inhumanity of man to man, they saw all round them."

Wilson, it should be remembered, resigned from Clement Attlee's government in 1951 along with Aneurin Bevan when they objected to Hugh Gaitskell's budget which placed rearmament before social reforms. And he was elected leader of the Labor Party over George Brown and James Callaghan after Gaitskell's death in early 1963 as the favorite of the left wing though he was also supported by some moderates who regarded the likeable but erratic Brown as an unsuitable potential Prime Minister. Wilson had been very much impressed by John F. Kennedy's election campaign in 1960 and he attempted to borrow some of the same techniques. Fearful that a fourth consecutive defeat might destroy the Labor Party, Wilson was determined to win back a significant portion of the middle class vote which has not gone Labor except for the election of 1945. This led him both in 1964 and again in 1966 to speak primarily in bland phrases and glib generalities and to play down his commitment to socialism. He also neglected the astonishing fact that some 30 per cent of the British working class votes Conservative and it might therefore have been better to attempt to win over both this segment of the working class and the middle class by a clear and precise explanation as to the advantages to be

gained by everyone in building a socialist Britain.

WILSON HAS CONTINUALLY TALKED of modernizing the state without really coming to grips with the problem of what desirable goals were to be derived from greater efficiency and modernization. Will a technological and scientific elite of managers, engineers and bureaucrats replace the aristocracy of finance, trade and capital as the new rulers while the bulk of their fellow countrymen remained in that traditional position of having their roles defined for them? Or does Wilson propose to use modernization as a means of achieving a more equal and a more just society in which economic and social democracy would be linked to political democracy? Socialists have never conceived political democracy to be an end in itself nor as simply a means whereby talented working class leaders and socialist intellectuals and politicians would climb to the top of the "greasy pole" and administer the status quo. Universal suffrage has always been regarded as the means by which the state and society could be reformed in the interests of all the people in an evolutionary manner. But the great changes which had been expected when the vote was granted to all men and women have not been realized. Robert Michels and others have warned of the tendency for tight oligarchies to develop in even the most popular movements and Michels suggested that socialists might come to power in a parliamentary democracy but never socialism. There is far too much truth in Raymond Williams's comment in *Views* that you cannot "play with managed constitutions and anti-popular military actions abroad, and hope for any genuine democracy at home. In fact, since taking office, Labor has done nothing to develop the movement towards an educated and participating democracy which is our first requirement."

The support given by Wilson to Johnson's aggression in Vietnam has been disgraceful and can only be explained by the sadly orthodox economic policies which have left the Prime Minister de-

pendent upon financial assistance from the United States. And the East of Suez commitment was undoubtedly encouraged by the White House which does not want the world to see that it is now the only imperialist state in Asia and has succeeded to the legacy of Britain, France, the Netherlands and Japan. A sizable reduction in her overseas obligations would go a very long way toward solving Britain's balance of payment difficulties though the psychological adjustment required to accept a smaller role in world affairs has not yet been made by all Englishmen. The nineteenth century was the British century. The twentieth is not but this need hardly be regarded as a great catastrophe since the creation of the first genuinely socialist society could be more lasting and more significant than the Empire which was born in the last century and died in this one.

Wilson's weakness and vacillation in handling the Rhodesian rebellion has been a case study in organized hypocrisy and could lead to the break-up of the multi-racial Commonwealth—a most important and useful grouping of states despite the lack of any major formal commitments to one another. The Prime Minister has reneged on pledges which he made about Rhodesia while Labor was still in opposition and appears ready to make almost any kind of face-saving bargain with the Smith regime. Wilson completely miscalculated about the effect which economic sanctions would have and it now seems clear that the quick dispatch of British troops when the rebellion first began would have toppled Smith and his government with very little bloodshed. Once again it was timidity with the use of political power and the procrastination of the past year has made a satisfactory solution that much more difficult to achieve. We need only ask ourselves what would have been done if 200,000 blacks were denying basic human rights to four million whites. Britain also fears the loss of her economic holdings in the Union of South Africa if she condemns the policies of that racist regime though her chief delegate to the United Nations, Lord Caradon, may be

considering resignation due to the Cabinet's unwillingness to pursue a more progressive policy in support of justice and humanity in the Southern half of Africa.

BUT IT IS WITH RESPECT to domestic politics rather than in foreign affairs that the government faces its most serious challenge and the attackers and supporters are often composed of very strange bed-fellows. Labor inherited an economic mess when it came back into office in 1964 although the basic weakness of the British economy was present throughout the inter-war period and could even be detected in the late 19th century. Britain must import food and raw materials and these items can only be paid for by exports or by sending gold abroad. Unfortunately she has not been able to export enough to pay for both her imports and her overseas military expenditures. This means a chronic balance of payments deficit and the possibility of a run on the pound—one of the world's key reserve currencies. Since 1945 there has been general agreement that British industry was not always as efficient as it might have been, that British products were often priced too high for the world market and that British trade unions were sometimes guilty of restrictive practices.

Two of Wilson's first acts on becoming Prime Minister were to set up a Department of Economic Affairs under George Brown and a Ministry of Technology presided over by the general secretary of the Transport and General Workers' Union, Frank Cousins. (Cousins received a leave of absence from his union post and was elected to the House of Commons.) Imports were promptly cut by the imposition of a surcharge and Brown set out to draw up a detailed plan designed to facilitate the growth of the British economy and to obtain voluntary agreement from both management and labor to hold down wages and prices. The "Plan" which he produced last year was disturbing to all socialists since it seemed much more concerned with regulating a capitalist-oriented market eco-

nomy than with socialist planning. It called for a 25 per cent increase in Britain's national output between 1964 and 1970 but it was not designed to give the Government effective control of the economy so that social justice for all would be guaranteed.

The Cabinet seemed to think that it was well on the way to meeting the commitments of the "Plan" and was able to rejoice over Labor's electoral triumph in March which seemed to herald decisive public support for its policies. James Callaghan, Chancellor of the Exchequer, had been responsible for the introduction of several progressive tax measures and the Government did not expect any major economic setback during the summer. Then—entirely unexpected—the Cabinet found itself dazed and reeling when the run on the pound began in mid-July shortly after the Prime Minister had, in effect, accused his critics of being "Nervous Nellies."

Wilson had already lost Frank Cousins by resignation early in the month over his economic policies and he now almost lost George Brown (recently made Foreign Secretary as a reward for staying on) as he completely repudiated Brown's "Plan," the Labor Party Platform in the recent election and his own past statements. The Mandarins in the Treasury and the international financial community seemed to have won for the Prime Minister, in an incredible *volte-face*, accepted deflation, unemployment and a compulsory freeze on prices and incomes though not on dividends. The Labor Party Manifesto had stated: "The level of economic activity in the community must be sufficient to provide jobs for all. Labor has always insisted that this can and will be ensured through intelligent management of the economy." And a few days before the election the Prime Minister who had condemned the "stop-go" policies of Selwyn Lloyd in 1961 reiterated his opposition to such tactics:

The only method the Tories knew of fighting the crisis they brought on the country was deflation leading to unemployment and short-time working. . . . These financial technocrats who domi-

nate the Tory Party had no thought, no compassion, for the families driven to live on the Tory dole. Nor did they think of the large number of families whose standard of living fell because of the drop in their earnings caused by deliberate policies which could only lead, and did lead, to short-time working. . . . The Tories faced with crisis, real or imagined, have only one remedy, ten men running after nine jobs.

It is now expected that as a result of the July package, unemployment may reach 700,000 this winter though the Chancellor of the Exchequer had originally estimated that there would not be more than 470,000. And even worse, the Government now seems prepared to accept a permanent unemployed rate of 2 per cent. Many Conservatives are not unhappy about such a prospect and *The Economist* seemed to think that Labor was finally attaining maturity by accepting the "very sad, but possibly very sensible" view that it must "run the British economy with a permanent maneuverable pool of up to 2 per cent unemployed, which means with a permanent pool of close to half-a-million idle people." One only hopes that the editor of *The Economist* who penned that sentence may himself become a part of the "permanent maneuverable pool."

The left wing of the Labor Party has been quite justifiably up in arms over the Government's decisions and many moderate trade unionists have joined them as they fear an attempt is being made to destroy free collective bargaining. On the other side of the political spectrum the Confederation of British Industries has ended its honeymoon period with Labor as it fears the ultimate implications of the freeze on prices and Edward Heath (leader of the Conservative Party) hammered away on the bogus "freedom and liberty" theme at the Annual Conference of the Tories. While Heath seems to be finally on his way to establishing himself as the Conservative leader, there is a very good chance that if he loses a second election (not until 1970 barring some kind of catastrophe) he will be dumped for Enoch Powell—a more sophisticated version of Barry Goldwater in domestic matters

though he does want to cut overseas defense spending. Powell actually believes in such things as laissez-faire, competition, winners and losers and a hierarchical society. The Conservative Party may yet pass through a Goldwater trauma. Heath is much too intelligent for such weird romanticism in the 20th century and accepts the fact that we live in an age of collectivism. But he wants it to remain capitalistic collectivism and not socialistic collectivism and sees British entry into the neo-capitalistic Common Market as a definite step in this direction. The meaning of Toryism has been spelled out very precisely by one of its most skillful apologists, Peregrine Worsthorne, an editor of the *Sunday Telegraph*, who has, at least, the redeeming virtue of revealing all his cards and demonstrating just as clearly as possible what socialists find most abhorrent about contemporary Western society. In his pamphlet *Conservatism Today*, Worsthorne concluded that conservatism means "arguing the case for property, privilege, inherited wealth, private education, for all those aspects of a social system enabling the few to live in a superior style which cuts them off from, and raises them above, the mass."

HOW THEN ARE THE DEMOCRATIC SOCIALISTS to assess Harold Wilson's handling of the British economy? Is it possible that something useful for the cause of socialism may come out of these panic measures? That is the argument of both the *New Statesman* (an excellent socialist weekly news magazine) and R. H. S. Crossman, a brilliant socialist intellectual who has just been promoted to the Leadership of the House of Commons after having done a fine job as Minister of Housing. The magazine and the politician emphasize the powers which the prices and incomes legislation give the Government over the economy and correctly note that socialists must not be caught in the position of demanding a form of laissez-faire for trade unions if a positive attempt is being made to move from welfare-statism to socialism. The *New Statesman* argued on September 23rd that the prices and income legislation was "the first faltering attempt" to

"reconstruct the economy on rational, scientific principles" but warned that the Government would fail unless it "moves forward on a broad front, enabling it to intervene in all transactions which have a major influence on our economic performance: not just wages and prices, but profits, share prices, land sales and ownership, investment and management policies. And to do this we must also transform our statistical services and revolutionize our civil service." After Labor's Annual Conference, the *New Statesman* commented on October 21st:

In July, ministers adopted price and income regulation as one of several desperate expedients to stop a panic outflow of sterling. They discovered—to the delight of some, the consternation of others—that they had in fact set their feet on a long, arduous road which could eventually promote socialism in this country. . . . Indeed a social wage policy (unattainable without such regulation) ought to be one of the two main features of a social democratic society. The capture by the public of the economy's commanding heights by a process of selective nationalisation is essential to the long-term management of the economy; only thus can a socialist government be master in its own house and control the vital process of investment. But public ownership will not by itself bring about a fair wage structure. And a fair wage structure is probably more conducive to human happiness than any other single aspect of our economic life.

Labor's left has been expressing its doubts and objections in *Tribune* and some thirty members abstained when the vote on the compulsory section of the prices and income legislation took place in late October. Twelve Labor Members of Parliament wrote to the *New Statesman* on October 28th in order to reject its favorable interpretation of what the Government was attempting to do.

You claim once more that the wage freeze is a step towards socialism, although admitting that the government do not know what they will do after the freeze. You further accuse 'a section of the Left' of 'setting its face

against public economic management.' But we have always advocated wage-planning as an essential feature of a planned, publicly managed economy. What we object to is a wage freeze in a mostly unplanned economy managed by private profit-making enterprise.

After weighing the evidence against the Government, this observer is left with the unsatisfactory Scottish verdict of "Not Proven" as he is, as yet, unable to reach a decision of either "Guilty" or "Innocent." It would appear that Harold Wilson is entitled to the year of grace which Jennie Lee requested at the Brighton Conference and the National Executive of the Labor Party did succeed in carrying most of its major resolutions in support of the Government though not always by large majorities. The Executive was defeated, however, when the Conference passed resolutions calling for work sharing rather than unemployment, demanding a cessation of U.S. bombing in North Vietnam, and insisting that Britain cut her overseas military commitments. Unfortunately the Prime Minister—who had demanded that the decisions of the Annual Conference be respected when they supported him in his fight with Hugh Gaitskell—now indicated that he would continue to "govern" and would not necessarily be responsive to the wishes of the Annual Conference. He had best be careful when he next condemns the Conservatives for lacking party democracy.

DURING THE COMING YEAR the Labor left—in Parliament and in the country—needs to exert a never-ceasing pressure upon Harold Wilson and his Cabinet in order to force them to prepare long-range plans of a definitely socialistic nature which they will be prepared to implement when the period of freeze and severe restraint comes to an end next July. One of Wilson's major weaknesses is his tendency to govern from one crisis to the next without really considering the goals toward which he is moving. And the Government must be made to understand its obligation to those who become temporarily unemployed because of its policies.

Adequate funds must be made available to those who lose their jobs and extensive re-training facilities set up to aid them in acquiring new skills. One wonders, at times, if George Bernard Shaw was not correct when he urged equality of income for everyone and Fourier was certainly right when he advocated that those who perform the most objectionable tasks which civilized life demands should receive correspondingly large rewards. But above all the leaders of British Labor must renew their contacts with the great mass movement they represent. This should be facilitated by the fact that Richard Crossman has just been put in charge of reorganizing the electoral machinery of the Labor Party. Crossman has written with great perception of the successes and failures of the Attlee administration and concluded that one of its gravest defects was "the breakdown of the Government's relations with the rank and file of the labor movement." There had been "a crisis of confidence" between "the Labor Establishment—politicians and Trade Union leaders alike—and their active supporters throughout the country." The Attlee government "faced with a tacitly hostile Establishment in Whitehall and an actively hostile press in Fleet Street" ought to have "felt the need for a politically conscious and politically educated rank and file." After the electoral sweep of 1945 "the party machine should have been instructed to organize a nation-wide crusade of workers' education so as to give the rank and file the feeling that they were needed by the leadership, not merely to man the electoral machine, but to create that pressure of active Left-Wing opinion required to combat Tory propaganda." After reading Peregrine Worshtorne's disgustingly accurate description of what Conservatism means today we might all do well to reflect upon words uttered by Richard Rumbold, a 17th century political agitator who was eventually sent to the scaffold: "I am sure there was no man born marked of God above another; for none comes into the world with a saddle on his back, neither any booted and spurred to ride him."

POSTSCRIPT

December 7, 1966

TWO VERY IMPORTANT decisions have been made—one by Harold Wilson and one by Ian Smith—since this article was completed in the early days of November. Wilson, formerly numbered among the opponents of Britain's entry into the Common Market, has agreed—with pressure, no doubt, from George Brown and Labor's new Crown Prince, the Home Secretary, Roy Jenkins—to re-open the Common Market negotiations which General de Gaulle torpedoed in 1963. It would appear that the Cabinet—not knowing what to do with the economy after the freeze—decided that this might give the impression of vigorous and thoughtful men and women reaching a profoundly important decision. A similar desire to avert hard decisions led the Macmillan government to seek an escape by leaping into Europe in 1961. It is true that the Common Market could be turned into something useful for the people both of Europe and the world—but not in its present neo-capitalistic form.

But is Harold Wilson's conversion to be taken seriously or is it another example of opportunism and gamesmanship? It seems unlikely that Wilson will be prepared to make the concessions demanded by France though one of these—an end to the "special" Anglo-American relationship—could almost cause this observer to support Britain's entry into the Common Market. And Wilson will travel *with* Brown to the Capitals of the six Common Market countries early in 1967 to explore the situation further. It appears as though Wilson wants to keep a tight rein on the impulsive and strongly pro-Common Market Foreign Minister. It may be that Wilson is simply trying to "dish the Conservatives" by robbing them of one of their major campaign planks whether he succeeds or fails.

The second important decision was Ian Smith's "No" to the arrangements which he and Wilson had worked out in the Churchillesque production staged on H. M. S. Tiger this past weekend. The Prime Minister arrived back in England convinced that he had arranged a satiric

factory solution to a problem which he had called his "Cuba." There were no resignations from his Cabinet and while complaints might be expected from the left-wing of the Labor party and many members of the Commonwealth, Wilson could console himself with the belief that the agreement stayed within his "six principles"—the most important being that there must be "unimpeded progress to majority rule."

Wilson made it clear on his return to England after the Tiger talks that Smith must have his "Yes" or "No" communicated to London by 10 A.M., Monday morning, December 5. He talked tough because he was confident that Smith would reply on time in the affirmative. But 10 A.M. came and went with the Rhodesian racists quarreling among themselves. It was apparent that the neanderthals in the Rhodesian Cabinet were winning out though the British government—forgetting their deadline—waited with pathetic hopefulness. Eight hours behind schedule, the "No" arrived.

A few hours later the Prime Minister spoke in the House of Commons in an atmosphere of hushed expectation and excitement which reporters had not felt since the Suez fiasco ten years ago. On the following night Wilson explained the situation to the English people in a brief talk and acknowledged the extent of the concessions which had been planned if the Tiger Agreement had been accepted by Smith. It was unique, he admitted, that Rhodesia was to have been granted independence before majority rule.

Smith is now arguing that he and his Cabinet had agreed to the constitutional arrangements guaranteeing Wilson's "six principles" but that they could not agree to the procedures provided for the four-month transition from rebellion to legal-

ity. This is utter nonsense. The essential difference has nothing to do with procedure. The heart of the matter is that the majority of white Rhodesians are not prepared to see "unimpeded progress to majority rule" in their lifetime.

According to the agreement which Wilson made with the Commonwealth Prime Ministers in September, Britain will now take the lead in requesting selective mandatory sanctions at the U.N. All concessions made to the Rhodesian regime are supposed to be cancelled. But once again timidity would seem to be the order of the day as Britain does not wish to include oil for fear of antagonizing South Africa and thereby jeopardizing her extensive investments and trade with that unhappy land. It seems likely that South Africa will continue to aid Rhodesia though she does not want a confrontation which would find most of the world arrayed against South Africa, Rhodesia and Portugal Angola and Mozambique). It might be well, however, to consider whether a confrontation is not desirable sooner rather than later. Delay and procrastination may only lead to a more terrible catastrophe. It may still be possible to salvage something from the noble dream expressed by Nelson Mandela when he was sentenced to life imprisonment for his political activities in the Union of South Africa in 1964:

During my lifetime I have dedicated myself to this struggle of the African people. I have fought against white domination, and I have fought against Black domination. I have cherished the ideal of a democratic and free society in which all persons live together in harmony and with equal opportunities. It is an ideal which I hope to live for and to achieve. But if needs be, it is an ideal for which I am prepared to die.

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Peronism: An Argentine Phenomenon*

BEHIND THE COMPLEX shifts in Argentine politics, the struggle of factions and personalities, the bitter-end feuds of small left-wing groups, is the Peronist Presence: the powerful 4-million strong CGT (General Workers Confederation), the 10 years (1945–1955) of "Popular Government," the multiple clubs and informal associations, the sense of being a "part of the nation" with all that implies in terms of personal independence, aggressiveness and self-confidence among the working classes. The fact is that eleven years after the overthrow of Peron, the Peronist "myth" still holds sway over the majority of the working class, and probably a majority of the voters. In the 1965 elections, despite government restrictions, Peronism obtained about 43% of the total vote which equalled the combined total vote of the next three highest parties. That is why the military and its parliamentary allies do not permit a plebiscite calling for the return of Peron.

The strength of the carry-over from the past is rooted in the material and psychological benefits gained by a high percentage of the Argentine masses. Also, the Peronist movement remains strong because it is not simply against the status quo (it is not a protest movement) but is grounded in the experience of the Popular Government. This difference with almost all other Latin American national popular movements is important for understanding the persistence of the Peronist "mystique." Unlike those analysts who focus attention on the personal aspects of the movement, many workers feel that Peronism means jobs, stability, security, status, organization and economic improvement. What charisma Peron does have for workers is largely a result of

his ability to publicize effectively positive achievements. There is nothing mysterious about that.

The contradictory elements of Peronism—a mix of conservative paternalism and an aggressive popular mass base—have been noted by some observers. To be sure, this is due partly to the fact that the Revolution of 1945 was carried out largely, though not totally, from above. But more important for its long-term effect was that what started above took hold below. The post-1955 Peronist movement has been, *par excellence*, a movement from below—the occupation of industries, political strikes against repressive military governments or military controlled civilian governments. The continued strength of the trade unions and the appeal of Peron suggests that what was at work (whatever Peron's intentions), was not just government imposition of organizational forms to control the workers, but the creation of organizations consisting of the majority of industrial workers, capable of defending their interests after the Popular Government fell. The years following the overthrow did not see the disappearance of Peronism, assuming for the moment that the trade unions and the movement depended on the *Patron* or the State. On the contrary, Peronist organizations withstood military persecution and emerged stronger than ever since they provided benefits and protection to their members which other organized forces were unwilling or unable to provide. At least in the short run, they served the interests of the working class.

But if one cannot equate a national popular movement like Peronism with Fascism, neither can one disregard the abrupt and sometimes brutal methods used by Peron to deal with his opponents. The corporative elements in the Peronist ideology ("Justicialismo") present certain similarities to Italian fascism. Even today, trade union differences are occasionally

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