

Letter From London

Stanley Poss

IT'S HIGHLY UNORIGINAL but also pretty unavoidable to observe that England in the 60s seems to be balanced uneasily between its own special brand of socialism and the Tory Government's attempts to dismantle what's left of the welfare state. The dons' world of translating Plotinus in the booklined studies of 2,000 year old houses still exists but it's even more peripheral to the country as a whole than in the past. It, and the other Englands it represents, is being squeezed between the labor and business establishments, and I don't suppose its passing will be mourned by many, most of whom in any case are more or less wholly preoccupied with living on barely adequate salaries in the midst of increasing social dislocations.

This has been a record year for strikes, one on the average of every 50 minutes or so, according to one calculation. Even post-war Britain has seen nothing just like it, and I imagine few would laugh now at a revival of "I'm All Right, Jack," the sardonic Attenborough-Sellers-Terry-Thomas film whose blandly savage comedy turns on labor disputes. In fact, there's been nothing like it since the General Strike of 1926, as several commentators have chillingly observed. I arrived in the middle of a dock strike last July which was closely followed by a hugely expensive and prolonged dispute in that part of the auto industry that supplies wheels and axles. Other unions picked up the grievance and car production stopped while the imports poured in and the balance of payments became even more deranged. There's an astonish-

ing proliferation of unions here compared with the Continent, one very good reason why the whole unhappy familial structure is so precariously poised. The agitation of one strand dislocates the whole web.

The car workers finally got most of their raise in September and the autumn began hopefully, its sunny days lulling forebodings. Then it hit the fan again when the "dustmen" (trash and garbage collectors) and some other local government workers in dirty jobs went out for a month in October. They wanted their basic raised from about £15 (\$36.00) per week to £17. They weren't exactly asking for the moon, the public was to a degree with them, out of guilty consciences, I suppose, and the strike was very widespread, with such consequences of pollution and health hazards as you may imagine. In fact the dustmen of the Royal Borough of Kensington, the last to return to work on 23 November, have still refused to clear away any rubbish not in dustbins, and the sacks are piled in elegant Belgravia and Lennox Gardens and Wilton Crescent, which readers with long memories may recall as the scene of the old Graham Greene-Carol Reed film, "The Fallen Idol." Along the way, as it were, newspaper distributors went out for a week, and there were skirmishes with airport employees.

Now, as you have likely heard, it's electricity. The nationalized power service employees have decided they've been patient long enough—for four years—and are "working to rule," that is, just within the letter of the law while taking maximum advantage of

a pedantically construed definition of work conditions. Widespread blackouts have been the result. Northern Ireland has had to cut off supplies to industry, her condition is so acute (only four large grids in the country), while "Power cuts affect a third of Britain as industry gets warning of shutdowns," according to yesterday's *Times*. Additional front-page headings: "Prospects bleak for today" and (my favorite) "Hour of fury in Commons." Today we learn from the General Secretary of the electrical trades union that a solution is no nearer, the leaders of the unions involved having rejected a plea from the Secretary of State for Employment to arbitrate their claim. The Queen's tea was lighted by tapers yesterday and Parliament carried on with candles and storm lamps ("Out of the gloom came what sounded like the voice of Mr. Neil Marten, demanding to know whether candles came into the category of fire-arms").

The workers have asked for raises of 20%; Heath's government, which regards itself with some justice as bearing a mandate from the voters to halt inflation, was thought to be committed to no more than 10%, though today Senior Ministers are reported as having serious doubts on the possibility of holding that line. Now along with all this the Tories are introducing a sweeping Industrial Relations Bill which, depending on one's point of view, is designed to "end the chaos of labor-management relations" or to open the door to policemen as personnel officers, blacklegging, the general destruction of the unions, and fascism. The Bill is a complicated document but there's no doubt that it would drastically reduce union autonomy. For instance, it stipulates fines of up

to £100,000 for unions found to be in violation of its provisions.

So far, the Trades Union Congress has taken the position of lobbying and parliamentary opposition but it may be forced into a much tougher line very soon as a result of a Communist-led series of demonstrations and 24-hour strikes. There was a meeting of 10,000 at Speakers' Corner, Marble Arch yesterday, and police were on duty outside Parliament to prevent any attempt to storm the buildings (more than a thousand demonstrators entered the House to lobby M. P.s). Industry was severely disrupted—no national newspapers, docks at a standstill, car production severely curtailed—in this country-wide political strike, which may have brought out as many as 600,000 (the organizers' estimate) or as few as 200,000 (the employers' figure). The Government's estimate was 350,000. In any case, even though the TUC could claim that more than 95% of the trade unionists did not heed the call to down tools, the strike hit hard, and is likely to gain momentum as debate over the Bill proceeds. And if the TUC leaders see their influence usurped by the militancy of the strike organizers and are forced into intransigency themselves, then the stage will be set for a general strike.

BY COMPARISON STUDENT PROTESTS are pallid. The most recent event worthy of the name took place last spring at Cambridge when some undergraduates athletically protested a reception of Greek officials at the Garden House Hotel. The police intervened and there were scuffles and eventually a riot which, though tame enough by our standards, did involve a fair amount of destruction and some injuries. The students were identified,

prosecuted, and given heavy sentences, one of which involved seven years' prison, now under appeal. On the other hand a recent fracas at the London School of Economics involved the rights of students vis-à-vis the endless streams of cars that cross "their" street, an issue of rather less than international import, so it may be that English students are learning at last to cultivate their gardens with all the singleminded dedication a Reagan or an Agnew could wish. Other notes from academe: a lefty Birmingham sociologist, Richard Atkinson, has been the center of a disturbance in the Midlands turning on the hoary questions of academic freedom and the University's role *in loco parentis*. Atkinson was offered an appointment which was then vetoed because "he was not compatible with the other members of the department." A boycott of University lectures was supported by two-thirds of the students and a group formed to provide funds and facilities for Atkinson's own lectures. He has said he intends to act as if he were a member of the staff; the University has said no facilities will be made available to him and his lectures can only be regarded as extracurricular.

Finally, there's the Home Secretary's attempt to deport Rudi Dutschke, convalescent in England since late summer and presumably defused. He has been living with his family at Clare College, Cambridge, where he was given a fellowship; his dissertation was to deal with the Marxist critic George Lukács, a Hungarian whose prestige here is considerable. Maudling, the Minister involved, wants Dutschke expelled under the Undesirable Aliens act and has served a Deportation Order on him. His case, now under appeal, is certain to become historic, in view of Britain's tra-

ditional hospitality to outsiders of eccentric persuasions.

WHAT ELSE? Heath seems confirmed in his intention to sell arms to South Africa's navy in order to meet what the Tories regard as a Russian threat to sea traffic off the Cape. Never mind that even the U.S. finds no real basis (the lights just went out again) for this alleged threat; never mind that the sale threatens the existence of the Commonwealth: the arms are going to Vorster's government, though Heath is quick to add that the sale in no way implies approval of apartheid, a policy abhorred by both him and his party. I was pleased to see that *The Times*, which regularly runs special reports on foreign countries, published its supplement on South Africa as planned, though Vorster's regime withdrew thirteen columns of advertising when it learned that the supplement was to contain ads from anti-apartheid groups.

On a less dramatic level, the level of the daily, in fact, I might mention that many consumer items turn out not to be available, public services (except for transportation) are, well, not exactly ramshackle but not exactly spot-on either, telephoning often turns into a major undertaking (it's next to impossible to send a wire or get a call in to British Rail or the Home Office), the roads are unbelievably crowded (62.5 vehicles for each square foot of road, someone figured out) and unbelievably fraught with difficulties, and there is considerable inefficiency and sheer muddle, that sturdily indigenous layman's counterpart—obverse counterpart—of the pragmatism characteristic of British philosophy. The Home Office's treatment of my request to be allowed to stay for a year, for instance, was well

up to the best Middle Eastern standards of water-treading non-response. It kept my passport two months, in spite of frequent and increasingly abusive letters, and finally sent it back stamped "Stay not to exceed 30 November 1970." So I may be going when Rudi does.

But for comic relief, the Government has laid on two jollifications for the season, a postal coding system of Byzantine complexity and decimilization of currency, effective in February, and already causing panic among the Brits, many of whom, I can't help feeling, have still not mastered the wonderfully asymmetrical system of shillings and pence. The natives make nearly as many mistakes in change as I do, I find, and many shops require their clerks to confirm the correct change for any note larger than one pound (\$2.40) with a supervisor. On the other hand, though the militants of the right-wing National Front are trying to oust their moderate, a nephew of G. K. Chesterton, and make the organization less a joke and more of a force like the N. P. D. in Germany, none of the Party's ten candidates in the general election received more than 1,600 votes, and the Party itself is estimated to have no more than 7,000 to 8,000 members, though for all that it's still the largest organization of its kind in Britain since Mosley's group in the 30s. And BOAC was to fly a house martin to Nigeria to join its fellows after it was mauled by a cat and missed the migration, except that it was let out of its cage at Heathrow Airport, where it had been kept under "constant watch," for the benefit of photographers, flew into a window and broke its neck, whereon we all do mourn. So I suppose there'll always be *some* kind of England.

WITH IT ALL I'm delighted to be here, though I'd have to add that living on an American salary, even though halved, has a lot to do with enjoying the amenities of life in a country which hasn't had a political assassination since anyone can remember. England is wonderful, if you have any money at all. You can see a couple of Pinter plays for 12 shillings (\$1.45); have a pint at one of the infinitely attractive pubs, and filled with Bitter and *gemütlichkeit* saunter through the labyrinths of the Temple reenacting scenes from *Great Expectations* without being rolled. Or you can stay home and see what's going on with Mathieu and his friends in "Les Chemins à la Liberté," a stunning BBC television production of Sartre's trilogy that's been running nearly three months—one showing and a repeat each week—and has just gotten into "La Mort dans l'âme," the third volume. (English telly is so good you have to be on sabbatical to take it all in.) Or you can just stare out the window and watch the twilight snag itself in the oak branches and listen to your hair growing white, reasonably certain that tomorrow will bring no horrors though it may bring plenty of discomforts.

ALL QUITE DIFFERENT FROM HOME, especially Reagansbad, that is, California, the latest atrocity from which concerns my college, Fresno State. Readers of this journal may recall my analysis of the events on that unhappy campus last year [*]. A new president was eventually appointed to replace Acting President Falk, under whose authoritarian regime the troubles occurred, and he began the term by making mollifying noises and de-

[* *Lawn Ordure at Fresno State*," Vol. VIII, no. 2.]

claring himself to be for freedom but with responsibility attached. About when the counter-revolution seemed to have bottomed out things blew again. President Baxter had appointed hardliners to all the administrative posts, and then, not content with 95% control of the campus, moved against the few remaining holdouts by firing the English Department Head and his Assistant from their positions, an unprecedented action, and dumping outright some thirteen other members of various departments (*not* PE, Nursing, Business, Agriculture, Industrial Arts, or Education so far as I've been able to learn) who were evidently suspected of harboring libertarian sentiments. Four of the thirteen were in fact given "terminal contracts" (lovely phrase) but it comes to the same. The official reason will probably be overstaffing, or some such.

The demotings in the English Department were executed thus: the Acting Dean of Humanities, Baxter's appointee, handed letters of dismissal to the two men, Eugene Zumwalt and Roger Chittick, then, while they were parsing the few short sentences in their letters, called in the campus police, who had been just outside the room. They "rushed in," according to report, sealed the doors to the Department office by removing the knobs and inserting bolts with metal plates attached to 2 x 4s. The secretaries were removed from the office and Zumwalt and Chittick told they might not enter it. Policemen were stationed on the roof of the building, "apparently as a precautionary measure," a guard was left inside with a walkie-talkie to maintain communications with headquarters, and two student cops were left on sentry duty outside each department door to ensure that no enemy of the people sneaked in

to read Trollope. The Dean, an ex-band man from the Music Department, refused to talk with newsmen afterwards, but a "college spokesman" (the PR man) said it was all "normal procedure when a new administration takes over." The Dean is now Acting Head of the Department. No reasons were given for the dismissals, but Zumwalt is known for his liberal views and Chittick, whose social conscience is equally active, is suspected of being a Christian as well.

I know them both. They are supremely competent, generous, humane, and fair-minded men, tireless and dedicated teachers, marvelous human beings. They embody intelligence and commitment and sheer decency. (I have to say this though I know that such encomia sound suspiciously like the Boy Scout oath: they just happen to be true here.) Though demoted, they are tenured and "apparently will remain at the campus as professors." This unexpected large-mindedness apparently signifies the Administration's willingness to concede, however reluctantly, that persons of a liberal or Christian persuasion do in fact come within the ambit of permitted eccentricities at Fresno State, though naturally they must be disenfranchised from holding office. Take what hope you can from that.

Postscript, January 16

APART FROM SUCH politically irrelevant events as the sinking of three ships in two weeks in the Piccadilly Circus of world shipping, the English Channel, the most significant news of the last few days may be the postal strike set for January 20, the bombing of the house of the Secretary of State for Employment, the confirmation of

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Zionism After the June 1967 War

Emmanuel Farjoun

SINCE THE JUNE 1967 WAR, the political and ideological atmosphere in Israel has taken a tremendous leap backwards. The political leadership has revived (in Hebrew, at least) the slogans of early Zionism: More Jews, more territory, more colonies and settlements in the newly occupied areas. At the same time, the hypocrisy of the government's claim that ours is a defensive war and that our only aim is peace has become increasingly obvious. In the last election, the Labor party ran on an "unwritten platform" that outlined its expansionist plans, unwritten because it would have caused unfavorable world attention had it appeared in print, but well known in Israel itself. For example, in November and December 1970, M. Begin, leader of Gahal, published a series of articles in *Ma'ariv* which accused the Labor party of betraying its "unwritten platform" by joining the Jarring peace talks, which are based on the acceptance of pre-1967 borders.

The war boom that followed the 1967 campaign has helped reconcile much of the Israeli public to this new-old ideology, but some cracks are starting to appear in public opinion in spite of the pressure of the beleaguered garrison mentality. Those who carry the heaviest burden of the war, the high school and university students, have started to ask questions. They have demonstrated against the colonization of the Hebron area. When Israel forbade the important Zionist leader, Nahum Goldman, to talk with President Nasser, they sent letters to the government questioning its sincerity in seeking peace. In the Fall of 1970, SIAH (Israeli New Left) members organized demonstrations in support of the Palestinian struggle against the monarchy of Hussein and for the first time in Israel's short history, they proposed to fly the Palestinian and Israeli flags side by side on the university campus. They then renamed a campus building after Jarash, an important Palestinian stronghold in Jordan.

All this is undeniably modest, and may well remain so for a long time to come. Nevertheless, the Israeli press and government officials are worried, if not by the extent, by the scope of the doubts. The youth are concerned, not with local grievances or campus problems, but with broad policy questions. They are perplexed and angered by the strange complicity of Israel and Zionism in the genocidal war of the U.S. against the peoples of Southeast Asia. Taking seriously the Zionists' claims of humanitarianism, they are outraged to learn that their Prime Minister, Golda Meir, was the only government leader in the world who congratulated Nixon on his Vietnam policy speech of November 3, 1969 which, according to her, "contains much that encourages and strengthens free-