EDITORIAL

Conflict and Dependence

It is obvious that no society can endure unbridled conflict among its members. For a fairly stable state of affairs to prevail, conflicts of interest have to be resolved according to certain "rules of the game" which all accept, however reluctantly. The fact that matters are so resolved for some length of time may result in one group being placed at a growing disadvantage compared with the rest. Eventually, they may attempt to have the "rules" changed, by revolution if all else fails. If they succeed, the old social order will be overthrown and "play" will then be conducted according to new rules. Marx's vision of the rise of socialism following the demise of capitalism is the prime example of such a (fundamental) change.

Not surprisingly, this direct view of conflict, especially as it affects economic activity, is eschewed by the conventional schools. If a change occurs, from which some gain and others lose, the situation can be defused if the former can compensate the latter, thereby making everyone better off. In their rather euphemistic language, the new position is to be "preferred" to the old one. The notion of compensation lies at the centre of the welfare controversies of earlier decades, one of which centred on the relation between the level of real wages and protection. But even this sugar-coated treatment of conflict is left largely in the remoter realms of welfare economics. In the mainstream, debate and analysis are lullabied with the refrain: "everyone is maximizing what they are supposed to maximize". It requires no extraordinary insight to ask: *cui bono?*

The movement from a nation state to a world view presents no difficulties for most orthodox marxists. Quite the contrary, since the nation state is seen as an institution which serves as a prop to bourgeois interests. "Workers of the world unite" is clearly a universal appeal, going beyond national frontiers in its claim that the conflict between capital and proletariat transcends all else. Others, radical and non-radical alike, are not so sure. International inequality, as between states, and the mechanisms which sustain it pose awkward anomalies for the "universalist" view because they generate conflicts and collusions of interest which appear to cut right across class as it is conventionally defined. But whatever one's view of the crucial dimensions of conflict, colonialism is an objective historical legacy. This involved a relationship of dependence which has survived the formal transfer of political power from the imperial centre to the subject state, and its continued existence is one of the major mechanisms which both perpetuate international inequality and generate unlikely coalitions of interest.

We begin at the global level by asking: are the interests of workers in rich countries objectively opposed to those of workers in poor countries? Although this question differently posed, has received extensive conventional treatment in the factor price equalization debate, Arghiri Emmanuel has given it a (supposedly) Marxian twist in *L'Echange Inegal.* His thesis is here expounded and critically examined from a more orthodox viewpoint by Bernard Frank. Within the less developed countries, another difficulty arises if the position and role of their unionized (and comparatively highly paid) workforces are considered. Rafie Kaplinsky takes a close look at the labour "aristocracies" in Ceylon and Zambia, and comes up with heterodox conclusions.

The ultimate problem of dependence is how to get rid of it. Brian Van Arkadie provides an analysis of the nature of dependence in East and Central Africa, and of the role which the state sector might play in reducing its influence. Conversely, Peter Lloyd singles out the Yoruba of Nigeria to illustrate the process of elite formation in Africa, with its implications for increasing the extent of international patronage and internal conflict. Lastly, we turn to an aspect of aid. While the existence of aid points in general to a relationship of dependence, there is something special about technical assistance in that individuals play a large role as individuals. Percy Selwyn, fresh from two years as an adviser in Lesotho, examines one particular conflict which often crops up in this connexion - a divergence between the time horizons of adviser and the government advised.

To complete this issue, Anne McManus and Mick Moore, who are both working on the project, engage in a lively debate on the Village Studies Programme, and there is a review by

Mohinder Puri of the proceedings of a recent conference on the effects on the Third World, of Britain joining the EEC. The last words of the editorial, however, are left to two extracts from Hansard.(1)

> Discussing a proposal for a £10m British loan (Palestine and East Africa Guaranteed Loan Bill) Saklatvala (Communist) opposed it because, amongst other things, once built it would lead to competitive industries in the other country.
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> > "I want to know why the Government ignore the fact that this development, this training of native labour for industrial work, the African negro and the Jew and Arab of Palestine, is going to create further industrial rivalry against the workers of this country - where this is done we must demand that they are not just exploited, but are taken into the entire brotherhood of the industrial population of this country."
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> He therefore requested that the colonial workers' wages were equivalent and wanted 3/6 per 8 hours; otherwise this would lead to "a graveyard for our workers". (*Commons Debates*, Vol. 200, col. 2024/5, 7 December 1926.)
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> During the Committee Stage, Thomas Johnston (Lab) proposed a motion to the effect that no line be allowed connecting the proposed bridge across the Zambesi with the Tete coalfield in Portuguese East Africa because of possible competition with British coal exports. He was supported in this by George Hardie and David Kirkwood. In the division which followed, 91 were in favour, and 193 against. (*Commons Debates*, Vol. 200, col. 2393-2397, 9 December 1926.) Cf. also Johnston's speech on 1 December 1926 (Vol. 200, col. 1326), *et seq*.

CLGB

(1) Kindly supplied by Teddy Brett.