

# From East-West Balancing to Militant Anti-Communism

The Socialist International and the Beginning of the Cold War, 1947–1949

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## Introduction

In 1947 the International Socialist Conference (the provisional Socialist International) published an international journal under the name *Socialist World*. The parties involved believed the publication would appeal to a global audience of those favoring socialist policies. *Socialist World* did not have a long and glorious history—its seventh and final issue was published in 1949—but it nevertheless is an instructive case.

*Socialist World* is a vantage point for observing the European Socialist movement at the beginning of the Cold War in the midst of the rapid transformation that reshaped the world for decades to come. The fluidity of the period is reflected in the chaotic process of preparing and publishing the journal. The articles reveal the uncertainty of the Socialists trying to make sense of a world changing before their eyes. The publishing schedule failed to keep up with the pace of transformation. The journal's brief history can be divided into two periods, with the Communist takeover in Czechoslovakia in February 1948 as a watershed. Issues one to four were completed before the Czechoslovak coup, and issues five to seven were prepared after, with issue four being finished before the event but printed after.<sup>1</sup>

Periodicals cannot simply be used as a source for the facts and opinions they reported. Their production, reception, and connection to a larger

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1. Edward Thompson to Vilmos Böhm, 22 April 1948, in International Institute of Social History (IISH), Amsterdam, Socialist International (SI), General Correspondence Socialist World 1948, Box 455.

political and social context must also be studied.<sup>2</sup> Although these elements are usually harder to investigate, we can draw on the archives of the International Socialist Conference and prominent figures involved. As an institution, *Socialist World* was an instrument through which the affiliated Socialist parties tried to frame information and analysis and influence public opinion. As a cultural product, it was consumed by British and overseas readers. Finally, as a textual corpus, it serves as evidence not just of the ideas and attitudes the Socialists expressed but also of what they involuntarily revealed.

## Cold War and Socialist Internationalism

The dearth of studies on Socialist internationalism in the late 1940s is a result of the limited role Social Democrats played in traditional narratives of the origins of the Cold War. According to Donald Sassoon, foreign affairs were not a field of Socialist action but simply a source of constraints that Social Democrats accepted to bind themselves to the nation-state and pursue consensual policies as the price to achieve their domestic goals; thus, Socialist internationalism was meaningless.<sup>3</sup> Their agency is dismissed and their actions are reduced to adaptation to a hostile environment dominated by U.S. hegemony and bipolar tension. The role of West European Social Democrats, the argument goes, was to play the junior partner in the creation of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), to accept the “politics of productivity,” and to curb labor militancy and Communism.<sup>4</sup> The history of East European Social Democracy is reduced to its dismantling by Communist infiltration, terrorism, and conspiracy. “[A]s a result, their own ideological dilemmas and struggles to come to terms with the post-war reality have been at best ignored, at worst dismissed as irrelevant.”<sup>5</sup> Relations

2. Stephen Vella, “Newspapers,” in Miriam Dobson and Benjamin Ziemann, eds., *Reading Primary Sources: The Interpretation of Texts from Nineteenth- and Twentieth-Century History* (London: Routledge, 2009), pp. 192–200; and Adrian Bingham, *Family Newspapers? Sex, Private Life, and the British Popular Press 1918–1978* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2009), pp. 8–9.

3. Donald Sassoon, *One Hundred Years of Socialism: The West European Left in the Twentieth Century* (London: Tauris, 2010), pp. 112–113, 171, 239–240.

4. “But Allied pressure did not motivate U.S. action.” Melvyn P. Leffler, *For the Soul of Mankind: The United States, the Soviet Union, and the Cold War* (New York, NY: Hill and Wang, 2007), p. 79; and Charles Maier, “The World Economy and the Cold War in the Middle of the Twentieth Century,” in Melvyn P. Leffler and Odd Arne Westad, eds., *The Cambridge History of the Cold War*, Vol. 1: *Origins* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2010), pp. 44–66.

5. Anita J. Prazmowska, “The Polish Socialist Party 1945–1948,” *East European Quarterly*, Vol. 34, No. 3 (Summer 2000), p. 337.

between East and West European Social Democrats are often reduced to mutual incomprehension.<sup>6</sup>

Talbot Imlay has argued that this national framework cannot explain the intense involvement of Socialist leaders in Socialist internationalism and its influence on national parties.<sup>7</sup> The challenge to methodological nationalism has recently allowed a flourishing of studies on the Social Democratic transnational network and how it influenced policies, socialization, and the exchange of ideas from the 1940s to the 1970s.<sup>8</sup> This article contributes to the field by focusing on a seminal period when the network was still fluid and open to different outcomes.

The 1940s were a turning point for Social Democracy. War, reconstruction, and the nascent Cold War defined the environment in which Social Democrats would operate in the second half of the twentieth century. After Germany's surrender, Social Democrats were among the many who believed that the unlikely alliance of Western Allies and the Soviet Union would continue and be the foundations of a new world order. Socialists in Eastern Europe, Italy, France, Belgium, and Finland formed popular-front governments with the Communists. Even the anti-Communist Morgan Phillips, who was the UK Labour Party's General Secretary, hoped for understanding with the Soviet Union—"cooperation, or at least mutual tolerance."<sup>9</sup> When the International Socialist Conference was formed in May 1946, it included both pro-Communist and anti-Communist Socialist parties from Eastern and Western Europe.

Intensified international tension made this alliance impossible. Despite some reassurances in Yalta, Joseph Stalin could not accept any independence in Eastern Europe, because of the weakness of local Communists—as demonstrated by the Hungarian elections of 1945. The local countries, if left on their own, would never come under Communist rule. Coercion, subversion,

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6. Peter Heumos, "Einleitung," in Peter Heumos, ed., *Europäischer Sozialismus im Kalten Krieg: Briefe und Berichte 1944–1948* (Frankfurt am Main: Campus, 2004), pp. 13–17.

7. Talbot C. Imlay, *The Practice of Socialist Internationalism: European Socialists and International Politics, 1915–1960* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2017), pp. 10–11.

8. Brian Shaev, "Workers' Politics, the Communist Challenge, and the Schuman Plan: A Comparative History of the French Socialist and German Social Democratic Parties and the First Treaty for European Integration," *International Review of Social History*, Vol. 61, No. 2 (Spring 2016), pp. 251–281; Peter Van Kemseke, *Towards an Era of Development: The Globalization of Socialism and Christian Democracy: 1945–1965* (Leuven, Belgium: Leuven University Press, 2006); Matthew Broad, *Harold Wilson, Denmark and the Making of Labour European Policy* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2017); and Christian Salm, *Transnational Socialist Networks in the 1970s: European Community Development Aid and Southern Enlargement* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016).

9. Frank Roberts to Christopher F. A. Warner, 23 August 1946, in The National Archives of the United Kingdom (TNAUK), FO 371/56768-N10977.

and electoral fraud followed in Bulgaria in 1945, Poland and Romania in 1946, and Hungary in 1947. Behind the Iron Curtain—a term made popular by Winston Churchill in early 1946—the Communist takeover meant the persecution of Socialists or their forced fusion with the Communists. In turn, the Truman administration’s policy of containment required developing the Western occupation zones in Germany, giving military aid to Greece and Turkey, and offering economic assistance to Europe under the Marshall Plan. Western Socialists backed the U.S. policy and accepted the expulsion of Communist parties from the governments of France and Belgium—but not in Italy. At a meeting in the Polish village of Szklarska Poręba in September 1947, the Soviet Communist party (VKP(b)) and other major European Communist parties established the Communist Information Bureau (Cominform) to bring the European Communist movement under closer Soviet control. The purpose of the new organization was laid out in a keynote “Two Camps” speech by Stalin’s close aide Andrei Zhdanov, who asserted that the international system was “irrevocably divided” between the Communist world and the capitalist world. This theme was regularly repeated in the Cominform’s journal, *For Lasting Peace, for People’s Democracy*. VKP(b) officials encouraged Western Communists to intensify political and industrial struggle and East European Communists to consolidate their power, a process that culminated in the Communist takeover in Czechoslovakia

The Czechoslovak coup was a shock to many in western Europe, far beyond the anti-Communist Right. . . . Most important was the feeling within the non-Communist western European Left—socialists and social-democrats—that Soviet expansionism and Communist militancy now were a direct threat to them and not only to the old elites.<sup>10</sup>

After the events in Czechoslovakia, the identification of Social Democracy with anti-Communism was no longer in doubt, even in neutral Austria and Sweden. The Labour government in Britain helped draft the North Atlantic Treaty, and other Social Democratic parties in Western Europe accepted it. The Italian Socialist Party (PSI), unwilling to break with the Italian Communist Party (PCI) and the Soviet Union, was expelled from the International Socialist Conference.

By examining the creation, management, and failure of *Socialist World* and the articles it published, my analysis here shows how European Socialists dealt with the onset of the Cold War and the contingent problems of

10. Odd Arne Westad, *The Cold War: A World History* (London: Penguin Books, 2016), p. 96.

international Socialist cooperation. The editorial process of *Socialist World* involved complex problems: soliciting and collecting articles, translating them into English, and stimulating the distribution of the journal in Britain and abroad. With no regular writers, the editors collected contributions from Socialists around the world. Contributors did not agree on the discourse to produce, and so the journal was contested ground for Socialists of different nationalities, who tried to reach a common understanding of the world situation through transnational exchange and multilateral negotiation. Socialists felt they belonged to an international community, and they sought regular contact with their foreign counterparts. This helped them balance their hybrid national and international identity. The articles of *Socialist World* tried to frame the concerns and ideals of the national parties in an internationalist way to make them acceptable to other Socialists.<sup>11</sup> The journal had a basic editorial line that adhered to the political line of the International Socialist Conference. At first, *Socialist World* served as an instrument of conciliation with the pro-Communist Socialists from Eastern Europe and Italy, but after February 1948 it unequivocally took a stance against Communism.

A survey of *Socialist World* gives a sense of the main topics of discussion, concern, and interest inside the Socialist movement in the early postwar years. The journal covered the Cold War and international affairs, the rebuilding of the Socialist International, colonialism, nationalization, and postwar reconstruction. Equally important, however, are the topics *Socialist World* was reluctant to cover.

The silences of *Socialist World* are important evidence for the study of socialist internationalism, particularly the problem of reconciling internationalism with government responsibilities and nationalist respectability. Avoiding embarrassment was the paramount goal of the Socialists in their interactions with their foreign comrades, but this limited the effectiveness of internationalism. Conservatives had traditionally used internationalism to charge the Socialists with being unpatriotic, and this accusation was still in use in the postwar era.<sup>12</sup> More practically, Socialist leaders feared that an international Socialist organization could commit the national parties to policies they did not agree with. Although binding decisions had never been imposed (nor could they be), declarations or symbolic gestures could be read as signaling a preference for some policy or another, as contradicting national policies,

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11. Imlay, *Practice of Socialist Internationalism*, pp. 2–3.

12. Rolf Steininger, "British Labour, Deutschland und die SPD 1945/46," *Internationale wissenschaftliche Korrespondenz zur Geschichte der deutschen Arbeiterbewegung*, Vol. 15, No. 2 (Spring 1979), p. 207.

and as raising uncomfortable questions, thus giving international legitimacy to minority factions that dissented with their national leaders.<sup>13</sup> What was “embarrassing,” however, was ambiguous and shifting, although the adjective was generally invoked to classify international activity that went against domestic priorities.

Concerns about such matters reflected the larger phenomenon of the nationalization of Socialism. In the decades after its birth, the European Socialist movement underwent a radical transformation from its origins as a protest movement of the subordinate classes against capitalist exploitation. Although Socialists had once envisioned various courses of action to achieve political results—for example, general strikes, building counter-society organizations, or violent insurrection—Socialist parties by the second half of the twentieth century had converged on one model: reformist social democracy committed to liberal democracy, anti-Communism, and state-centered solutions. In the new perspective, only national governments could take effective measures. Political parties and movements served only to formulate policies and win elections. As Harold Wilson said in 1963, there were three kinds of socialist parties: the parties in government, the parties with the potential to be in government, and the parties not mature enough.<sup>14</sup>

The nationalization of socialism also affected the Socialist International. The idea that class identity was stronger than nationalism was the foundation of traditional socialist internationalism. The Second International, born in 1889, had the stated goal of stopping the wars started by the ruling class, but in 1914 it collapsed as Socialist leaders and workers rallied to the cause of national defense. The new Labour and Socialist International (LSI), born in 1923, tried again to defend peace and stop the advance of fascism but became paralyzed by division. After a slow agony throughout the 1930s, the LSI collapsed in 1940. Having failed to avert two world wars, Western Socialists changed their worldview, coming to appreciate deterrence by superior power and military alliances (e.g., NATO) as the only guarantees of national security and peace.

Unable to be an agent for peace, the role of the Socialist International had to be radically revised. At the end of the Second World War, John

13. As Bevan said, “We are not committed to that resolution because resolutions have to be adopted by the Socialist parties of the member states before they become instruments of national policy. But nevertheless we did state our position and as the resolutions were drafted by the British delegates we are to some extent committed to them.” *Labour Party Annual Conference Report* (London: British Labour Party, 1957), p. 180.

14. Guillaume Devin, *L'Internationale Socialiste: Histoire et sociologie du socialisme international (1945–1990)* (Paris: Presses de la Fondation nationale des sciences politiques, 1993), p. 292.

Price—a trade unionist close to Ernest Bevin and the British Labour leadership—drafted a plan for practical internationalism.<sup>15</sup> Price recognized that the Socialist International could not directly intervene in international affairs and could not give orders to the national parties, as the Communist International did. An international organization also had no good reason to impose disinterested internationalism on the selfish national parties. Price adopted the liberal internationalist assumption that legitimate national interests were not inherently incompatible, arguing that harmonization would bring the greatest good for everyone. The failure to appreciate this self-interested cooperation was the result of inadequate information about international affairs and faulty communication of legitimate aspirations and concerns.

The task of the Socialist International was to collect and exchange information, in addition to fostering the interest of Socialist leaders in international affairs. Price's approach was elitist. Whereas traditional Socialists believed in the instinctive internationalist spirit of workers, Price assumed that the masses and even the majority of leaders lacked adequate consciousness to appreciate the international dimension of most political problems. The masses could be mobilized only around highly emotional issues and, even then, only for a short time. Episodic gestures such as boycotts against aggressive countries had little value. Manifestations of international solidarity or the celebration of international recurrences (May Day or International Women's Day) served only to remind the apathetic masses of internationalism. Only the national governments could intervene in international affairs and exercise regular influence on events. Therefore, Socialist leaders should act through their governments, which required them to be seen as "fit to govern" by electors. The Socialist International envisioned by Price would cater exclusively to Socialist leaders by providing them with a regular flow of information, by exchanging opinions, and by holding regular meetings with the Socialist leaders of various countries. To ensure that Socialist leaders in government could make informed decisions, the organization was to be a forum encouraging frank discussion about common problems. Price gave priority to internal communication. Communicating information to the public, he felt, was a responsibility of the national parties and publicity inhibited frank discussion.

However, the Socialist International was not simply a forum. It offered private opportunities for Socialist leaders to be frank without fearing

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15. Ettore Costa, *The Labour Party, Denis Healey and the International Socialist Movement, Rebuilding the Socialist International during the Cold War, 1945–1951* (Cham, Switzerland: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018), pp. 145–148.

embarrassment, but the Congresses of the Socialist International and the Conferences of Socialist Leaders were often well-publicized events intended to increase the prestige of participating leaders and to serve as public rituals affirming ideological commitment and the unity of the movement.<sup>16</sup> It was difficult to dispel the common assumption in Socialist culture that the role of the Socialist International was to be a public symbol and the mouthpiece of the world movement.

Most international organizations dealing with international issues (e.g., international institutions and non-governmental organizations) have little or no power to intervene directly. One way to act is by mobilizing national public opinion to pressure governments—ideally in coordination with other countries. But unless an international agency has a mass organization to spread its message, access to the media is a prerequisite for effective action. Another way to influence international affairs is to encourage informal dialogue and socialization among the elite members of rival countries.<sup>17</sup> In this case, media scrutiny is a liability not an asset. The Socialist International swung between these two models.

Introducing the first issue of *Socialist World* (June–August 1947), Socialist veteran Philip Noel-Baker stated two goals for the journal. National debates over the effectiveness of Socialist policies often referred to the success or failure of similar policies in other countries. The first goal of the journal was to share experiences and thus allow Socialists to take the achievements of their foreign comrades as a model and, conversely, to offer the public a justification for the failures of Socialist counterparts in other countries. The second goal was to foster reciprocal understanding, preventing mistrust and nationalist sentiments. “There can be no true co-operation and understanding without knowledge, which must not be confined to experts, but must be widely disseminated in the rank-and-file of the Socialist movement in all countries.”<sup>18</sup> The assumption was that public communication and the involvement of the masses would be more effective than confidentiality in building familiarity and trust. In devising *Socialist World* as a magazine for the wider public, its founders saw no contradiction between propaganda and confidentiality.

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16. Devin, *L'Internationale Socialiste*, pp. 311–318, 351.

17. Dalia D. Kaye, *Talking to the Enemy: Track Two Diplomacy in the Middle East and South Asia* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND National Security Research Division, 2007), pp. xi–xix, 8.

18. Philip Noel-Baker, “A Message by the Rt. Hon. P. J.-Noel-Baker,” *Socialist World*, June–August 1947.



## Creation of *Socialist World*

After the inglorious death of the LSI, not many Socialists were keen on resurrecting the old International. This was especially the case in the British Labour Party.<sup>19</sup> The parties aspiring to govern did not want any embarrassing commitment; disagreement was strong over the issue of Germany and cooperation with the Communists. As a temporary solution, Denis Healey, then international secretary of the Labour Party, convened the first International Socialist Conference on 17–19 May 1946, inviting only the Socialist parties operating legally. He excluded the exile groups and the German Social Democratic Party (SPD) but included the pro-Communist parties of Eastern Europe. The delegates decided that the Conference would meet twice a year and set up a permanent office, the Socialist Information and Liaison Office (SILO), to keep contacts between the parties and exchange information. The German Jewish Socialist exile Edith Loeb was put in charge as administrative secretary.

At the next conference (8–10 November 1946), the delegates decided to publish a quarterly bulletin of around 50 pages to keep all parties informed about Socialist activities in other countries. The SILO would publish an English edition that was to be circulated to the other parties, which could publish a local edition in their own languages.<sup>20</sup> Whether the role of this bulletin was to exchange information and opinions among the members of the organization or was to serve as a press organ for the wider public was not made clear. Hence, when the time came to put this commitment into practice, SILO's consultative committee decided to publish two bulletins: a monthly bulletin that included confidential material and was circulated only to party headquarters; and a quarterly bulletin that included non-confidential material. The expected cost was around £2,000 per year.<sup>21</sup> The second bulletin was clearly meant to be a magazine for the Socialist public. In March 1947, the consultative committee decided to produce a new magazine called *Socialist World* and hire Edward Thompson to assist with editorial duties.<sup>22</sup>

The first year of *Socialist World* was not successful. In September 1947, Loeb wrote that orders from the member parties had been disappointing, and

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19. Imlay, *Practice of Socialist Internationalism*, pp. 282–284; and Costa, *Labour Party*, pp. 151–158.

20. Denis Healey to the parties of the International Socialist Conference, 15 November 1946, in IISH, SI, Box 47. Cf. *Labour Party Annual Conference Report*, London, 1947, p. 18.

21. Minutes of the Consultative Committee Meeting, 12 December 1946, in IISH, SI, Box 47.

22. Minutes of the Consultative Committee, 7 March 1947, in IISH, SI, Box 47.

that the journal would have to be discontinued unless orders increased.<sup>23</sup> The consultative committee agreed to try to boost circulation, but in December 1947 SILO acknowledged that the English edition of *Socialist World* was not a commercial success and that the Labour Party could not continue to bear the financial loss.<sup>24</sup>

What saved *Socialist World* was the Communist takeover in Czechoslovakia. Not needing to keep under the same roof anti-Communist and pro-Communist Socialists anymore, the period of democratic socialism's paralysis and ambiguity came to an end. The Cold War simplified political options to a binary opposition that encouraged activism and militancy. Although the operations of SILO and *Socialist World* had been disappointing, optimism dictated that a complete overhaul and a new sense of direction would help to fulfill their mission.<sup>25</sup> As Thompson said:

The future of SILO will not be decided until the Vienna Conference—if then. At present, it seems that we just go on as before, without much direction. I expect that “Socialist World” will appear—nobody has said that it will not—but I shall not be surprised at anything.<sup>26</sup>

The Vienna Conference (4–7 June 1948) expressed once more the commitment to publish *Socialist World*, including in a French and German edition. The journal was given an editorial board of well-known Socialist journalists: Victor Larock, editor of the Belgian Socialist newspaper *Le Peuple*, Louis Levy, London correspondent of the French Socialist newspaper *Le Populaire*, Michael Foot, editor of the leftwing Labour magazine *Tribune*.<sup>27</sup> The board discussed many options to relaunch *Socialist World*, including distributing it in Austria, increasing its size, including a summary of the activities of the

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23. Edith Loeb to the parties of the International Socialist Conference, 20 September 1947, in IISH, SI, Box 47.

24. “Minutes of the consultative committee meeting of the International socialist conference, Sixth meeting,” 26 September 1947, in Labour History Archive and Study Centre, People’s History Museum, Manchester (LHASC), Labour Party Archive (LP), International Sub-Committee, Minutes and Documents; and Circular 77, Notes of Agenda, 23 December 1947, in IISH, SI, Box 47.

25. Martin C. Bolle, “Statement of the activities and finance of the Socialist Information and Liaison Office and the Sub-Committee of Comisco in charge of it,” 27 May 1948, in IISH, SI, Box 47.

26. Thompson to Nus Moldovanu, 20 April 1948, in IISH, SI, Box 455, General Correspondence Socialist World 1948.

27. “Report to the National Executive Committee on International Socialist Conference, Vienna, June 4/7 1948,” in LHASC, LP, International Sub-Committee, Minutes and Documents, 1947; and Circular 103, Meeting of the Committee of the International Socialist Conference, 3 June 1948, in IISH, SI, Box 47.

member parties, and publishing a survey of Communist activities.<sup>28</sup> After publication in Austria proved impossible, the editorial board and the secretary of SILO argued that, given the long distance and the dilated time of mail delivery, it would be difficult to continue a regularly published international journal like *Socialist World*. They suggested scrapping the enterprise and replacing it with a newsletter and single-issue pamphlets. Comisco—the new executive committee of the International Socialist Conference—approved the editorial board’s recommendations in December 1948.<sup>29</sup> The seventh issue of *Socialist World* (December 1948–February 1949) was the last.

### **The Management of *Socialist World* and its Editorial Line**

The management and content of *Socialist World* are worthy of scrutiny because they reveal the contemporary features of the European Socialist movement. *Socialist World* employed no regular journalists. The editorial staff of two, Loeb and Thompson, presumably wrote only the unsigned “Notes of the Quarter” and “Reviews” for each issue. Their main job was to edit the contributions from the national parties and individual writers, turning them into articles. In the first year, many articles were specifically written for the journal, either on spec or at the journal’s invitation, although *Socialist World* was “frightfully poor” and “did not pay anything.”<sup>30</sup> Later, *Socialist World* was mainly assembled from articles taken from other sources, a sign of the lesser involvement of the parties. Some articles were translations from other publications, such as the Austrian *Zukunft*, the Norwegian *Verdens gang*, the French *Populaire* and *Revue socialiste*, and the English-language bulletin of the SPD. The Dutch Socialist Gerard M. Nederhorst had transcriptions of two of his speeches published.<sup>31</sup>

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28. Circular 117, “Report by M. C. Bolle (Holland) on Activities since the Vienna Meeting of Comisco (3 June 1948),” November 1948, in IISH, SI, Box 47.

29. Circular 121, Comisco Meeting, 3 December 1948, in IISH, SI, Box 47; and Circular 122, Publications, 17 December 1948, in IISH, SI, Box 47.

30. Loeb to Henry Osborne, 23 July 1947, in IISH, SI, Box 454, General Correspondence 1947.

31. Thompson to Oscar Pollak, 29 January 1948; Thompson to Willem Thomassen, 30 January 1948; Thompson to Leon Blum, 12 June 1948; Thompson to Thomassen, 16 June 1948; Thompson to Guy Mollet, 26 August 1948; Thompson to Haakon Lie, 26 August 1948; Thompson to Pollak, 11 September 1948; Thompson to Pippa Harris, 30 October 1948; and Heinz Putzrath to Thompson, 10 November 1948—all in IISH, SI, Box 455, General Correspondence Socialist World 1948.

Although a wide variety of nationalities were represented in *Socialist World*, gender diversity was non-existent. No signed article bears the name of a woman, although Loeb was coeditor and must have written part of the “Notes of the Quarter” or “Reviews.” This reflects a period when female participation in the leadership of the Socialist movement was at a low point. Although prominent women had been among the pioneers of Socialism, the movement as it became more respectable adopted the biases of bourgeois society.<sup>32</sup> Prominent women leaders were much more common among the older generation (Angelica Balabanoff, Isabelle Blume, Anna Kéthly) than among the new.

*Socialist World* was not just a magazine with a political agenda but the media branch of the International Socialist Conference. First and foremost, it served as an instrument of internal communication, describing the conferences and the development of the International Socialist Conference.<sup>33</sup> It also hosted internal debates. Although the British Labour Party wanted to keep the International Socialist Conference an informal organization, the Belgian, Swiss, and French Socialists wanted a full restoration of the International. The second issue of *Socialist World* (September–November 1947) published the arguments that the leader of the Belgian Socialist Party, Max Buset, had presented at the Zurich Conference (6–9 June 1947).<sup>34</sup> For issue four (which appeared in March 1948, after the Communists seized power in Czechoslovakia), Loeb staged a debate on the rebuilding of the Socialist International, presenting one article in favor and one against.<sup>35</sup> Vilém Bernard, a leader from the right wing of the Czechoslovak Social Democratic Party (*Československá sociální demokracie*, ČSSD) and editor of the Czechoslovak Social Democratic weekly, wrote against rebuilding the Socialist International as a centrist organization, arguing that informal cooperation was better suited to the different conditions in which Socialists operated. The basis of Socialist cooperation was (1) recognizing the autonomy of individual parties amid the deepening division of Europe and (2) avoiding encouraging the mistrust of Communists.<sup>36</sup> The Austrian Oscar Pollak—editor of the Socialist newspaper

32. Sassoon, *One Hundred Years of Socialism*, p. 412.

33. “Notes of the Quarter,” *Socialist World*, March–May 1948, pp. 3–6; “Notes of the Quarter,” *Socialist World*, June–August 1948, pp. 2–4; and “Notes of the Quarter,” *Socialist World*, December 1948–February 1949, pp. 2–3.

34. “Stenogramme,” 8 June 1947, in IISH, SI, Box 235, pp. 3–24.

35. Loeb to Victor Larock, 27 June 1947, in IISH, SI, Box 454, General Correspondence 1947.

36. Vilém Bernard, “International Socialist Co-operation,” *Socialist World*, March–May 1948, pp. 7–14.

*Arbeiter-Zeitung* and the weekly *Der Kampf*, known for their anti-Communist editorial line—wrote in favor of turning the Socialist International into a “third force,” an alternative between the extremes of capitalist and Catholic reaction and totalitarian Communism.<sup>37</sup>

The admission of a party to the International Socialist Conference was often the main topic of debate: “All the post-war international conferences have concentrated on organizational questions: who belongs to the International, who is admitted to conferences, what kind of permanent organization is to develop?”<sup>38</sup> *Socialist World* offered a platform for aspiring parties to present their credentials and ask for help. Applicants included the International Jewish Labor Bund and two competing Socialist parties from India—the Congress Socialist Party (Jayaprakash Narayan) and the Radical Democratic Party (Manabendra Nath Roy). The most contentious issue for the International Socialist Conference was the admission of the SPD.<sup>39</sup> Another contentious issue was the split of the Italian Social Democrats (PSLI) from the PSI (the main Italian Socialist Party) in January 1947 over the latter’s alliance with the Communists. The PSLI asked to be recognized as the true Italian Socialists or at least for the intervention of the International in this internal dispute. The official Italian party, led by Pietro Nenni, used its article to reject the PSLI’s pretenses.<sup>40</sup>

In the case of *Socialist World*, editorial choices were also political choices. Until the Communist takeover in Czechoslovakia, the main concern of international Socialism was to accommodate the needs of the pro-Communist Socialist parties of Eastern Europe and Italy. Disputes arose immediately about the feasibility of cooperating with Communists, but all the parties of the International Socialist Conference assumed that cohabitation of different forms of Socialism was possible. As long as some form of political pluralism and democracy seemed possible in the “people’s democracies,” Western Socialists did not insist that the Social Democrats of Eastern Europe should break with the Communists. Instead, they wanted cooperation to continue so that they

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37. Oscar Pollak, “The Third Force,” *Socialist World*, March–May 1948, pp. 15–20.

38. *Ibid.*, p. 19.

39. Loeb to Lujan Blit, 1 July 1947, in IISH, SI, Box 454, General Correspondence 1947; Lujan Blit, “The Bund—A Jewish Socialist Movement,” *Socialist World*, September–November 1947, pp. 16–19; Jayaprakash Narayan, “An Indian Plan for Socialism,” *Socialist World*, June–August 1947, pp. 11–18; V. B. Karnik, “The Radical Democratic Party of India,” *Socialist World*, September–November, 1947, pp. 32–35; and Erich Ollenhauer, “The Revival of German Social-Democracy,” *Socialist World*, December 1947–February 1948, pp. 30–36.

40. An Italian correspondent, “Italy—Political Background,” *Socialist World*, September–November 1947, pp. 10–15. See Antonio Varsori, “Il Labour Party e la crisi del socialismo italiano (1947–1948),” in *I socialisti e l’Europa* (Milan: Franco Angeli, 1989), pp. 159–211.

could prevent a Communist power monopoly and facilitate the “socialist roll-back of Eastern Europe.”<sup>41</sup>

In the first four issues, *Socialist World* was committed to preserving this plurality of views, despite difficulties. As Loeb explained: “You will see that here too we have to try to balance East and West—a trick that needs as much skill as eating fried eggs on a cross-Channel steamer.”<sup>42</sup> The first issue (June–August 1947) explicitly invoked this balancing act by presenting two articles by the Dutch Labor Party and ČSSD as examples of the different problems of Socialists in government.<sup>43</sup> Although Issue 4 came out in March 1948 (i.e., after the Communist takeover in Czechoslovakia), it featured a debate between Pollak and Bernard (“What they have in common is much more important than their disagreements”) and invited readers to accept the differences between Socialists while recognizing the underlying unity of the movement.<sup>44</sup>

Post-war political developments in Europe have meant that socialist parties in different countries are working under widely dissimilar conditions, have meant especially that there are differences between parties in Eastern and Western Europe. But the essential socialist principles remain the same in all countries.<sup>45</sup>

Studied ambiguity was the key to cohabitation. Criticism of Communism was not presented as an ideological imperative and was limited to countries where the local labor movement was already anti-Communist—for example, Canada and the United States.<sup>46</sup> The survey of recent events in Issue 3 (December 1947–February 1948) attempts the delicate balancing act of describing the decline of Communism in most West European countries. Although the article describes French Communism as “authoritarian,” it tacitly approves the alliance of the PSI with the Communists as a bulwark against neofascism.<sup>47</sup> In private, Healey warned: “Co-operation between the Socialist Parties in East and West is based on the tacit principle of non-interference in one another’s spheres.”<sup>48</sup>

41. Heumos, “Einleitung,” p. 33.

42. Loeb to Ian Mackay, 11 December 1947, in IISH, SI, Box 454, General Correspondence 1947.

43. “Notes of the Quarter,” *Socialist World*, June–August 1947, pp. 3–10.

44. “Notes of the Quarter” (March–May 1948), p. 4.

45. *Ibid.*

46. David Lewis, “Canada and the CCF,” *Socialist World*, June–August 1947, pp. 26–32; and Philip Taft, “American Labour Trends,” *Socialist World*, June–August 1947, pp. 33–38.

47. “Notes of the Quarter,” *Socialist World*, December 1947–February 1948, pp. 2–3.

48. Healey to Robert B. Kirby, 19 March 1947, in LHASC, LP, International Department (ID), DH, Box 9, Folder 5.

At this stage, the main criticism was that the Communists subtracted votes and activists from the Social Democrats, making Socialists in government less able to enact Socialist reforms and weaker against the growing threat of conservatives and reactionaries.<sup>49</sup> The Finnish Social Democrats, for example, had to appeal to local conditions to justify their anti-Communist tone.<sup>50</sup> Strong criticism was usually kept in bounds, however. For example, just by mentioning the names of Henryk Erlich and Victor Alter, the International Jewish Labor Bund subtly reminded readers that they had been murdered at Stalin's behest.<sup>51</sup>

The tone of the SPD was particularly harsh because they were not accepted into the International Socialist Conference until November 1947 and had to defend their credentials against the attacks of Communists and East European Socialists. They denounced the totalitarian regime being built by the Socialist Unity Party (SED) in the Soviet Zone of Occupation, the subservience of the Communists to Soviet interests, and the persecution of Social Democrats, drawing comparisons with Nazism.<sup>52</sup> Their article, which came out in December 1947, anticipated the tone of the final three issues of the journal.

Nonetheless, supporters of an alliance with the Communists found a platform in *Socialist World* to explain their situation and justify their behavior. Italian Socialists criticized monopoly capitalists for sabotaging reconstruction and obstructing Socialist economic policies. They also accused the Catholic Church of "clericalism" and embracing ex-Fascists.<sup>53</sup> The alliance with the Communists was not just defensive but allowed the Socialists to develop ties with industrial workers and peasants, building credibility that, in the long term, allowed them to become the working-class alternative to the Communists.

ČSSD members defended their government's record, which had resulted in the radical restructuring of society through nationalization and planning.<sup>54</sup>

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49. Karl Fredriksson, "Social Democracy in Sweden since the War," *Socialist World*, September–November 1947, pp. 27–31; and Ollenhauer, "The Revival of German Social-Democracy," pp. 30–36.

50. Vaino Leskinen, "Finland since the Armistice," *Socialist World*, December 1947–February 1948, pp. 4–10.

51. Blit, "The Bund," pp. 16–19.

52. Ollenhauer, "The Revival of German Social-Democracy," pp. 30–36; and "Reviews," *Socialist World*, March–May 1948, pp. 36–39.

53. An Italian correspondent, "Italy—Political Battleground," pp. 10–15.

54. A member of the Research Dept., Czechoslovak Social-Democratic Party, "Czechoslovakia on the Road to Socialism," *Socialist World*, June–August 1947, pp. 19–25; and Bernard, "International Socialist Co-operation," pp. 7–14.

Western Socialists they argued, should have balanced their criticism of East European Socialists with understanding and comradeship. The achievements of the Czechoslovak people's democracy, they claimed, were superior to those of the Socialist parties in Western Europe, excepting the British Labour Party. Alliance with the Communists, the argument went, was necessary to defend those achievements against the Germans and the reactionary classes. Hungarian Social Democrats also celebrated the scope of their economic and social revolution, insisting that only the help of the Red Army had made it possible to abolish feudalism. The alliance between Socialists and Communists was the driving force of these reforms.<sup>55</sup> In an unpublished article, Julian Hochfeld, the leading intellectual of Polish Socialism, defended the right of the Polish revolution to use defensive violence, while also rejecting a dogmatic interpretation of Marxism.<sup>56</sup>

Geographical determinism was an argument often invoked to downplay differences. Since the eighteenth century, Western Europe had defined Eastern Europe "as its complementary other half," with the West identified with civilization, reason, and progress and the East with backwardness, barbarism, and autocracy.<sup>57</sup> This division was sometimes invoked to excuse violations of political democracy: East European Socialists, for example, stressed the absence of traditions of democracy and tolerance.<sup>58</sup> Instead, Eastern Europe, through expropriation, socialization of heavy industries, and land redistribution, was supposedly developing forms of economic democracy more advanced than those in Western Europe. Buset insisted that the synthesis of economic democracy in the East and political democracy in the West would produce full Socialism.<sup>59</sup> Bernard endorsed this interpretation: "We must demand that the socialist programme in both East and West should unite the principle of democracy and the principle of Socialism so that the two aspects of socialist activity are equally balanced."<sup>60</sup>

This was the line of *Socialist World*: It invited readers to take geography, history, and national character into consideration before judging other

55. Anonymous [Vilmos Böhm], "Social Revolution in Hungary," *Socialist World*, March–May 1948.

56. Julian Hochfeld, "Les problèmes de la nouvelle époque," in IISH, SI, Box 454, Correspondence with printers re "Socialist World," materials which have not been used 1947, pp. 1–15.

57. Larry Wolff, *Inventing Eastern Europe: The Map of Civilization on the Mind of the Enlightenment* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1994), p. 4.

58. Blit, "The Bund," pp. 16–19.

59. Max Buset, "A New Socialist International," *Socialist World*, September–November 1947, pp. 6–9.

60. Bernard, "International Socialist Co-operation," p. 8



countries.<sup>61</sup> Czechoslovak and Polish Socialists warned: “Any observer who judges Czechoslovak post-war economic developments by Western European standards can easily reach false conclusions.”<sup>62</sup> Massive nationalization through expropriation, the expulsion of ethnic Germans, and the persecution of the opposition were unpalatable, but—Eastern Socialists argued—they were the results of the national context, not of their intentions.<sup>63</sup> Hochfeld claimed that Poland was dealing with the same problems of capital accumulation, state building, and bourgeois revolution that England had encountered from the time of Henry VIII, through Oliver Cromwell, to the Reform Act of 1832 that abolished rotten boroughs. British parliamentarianism and the industrial revolution, Hochfeld argued, had been made possible by violence, theft, expropriation, revolution, dictatorship, and corruption. “It is equally hard to believe that someone had to take ‘fair play’ or the principles of democracy into account then.”<sup>64</sup> Some political actions that would have been unacceptable in the civilized West were tolerated when they took place in the East. This denied the responsibility of the Eastern Socialists as well as the Western Socialists’ complicity.

The Communist seizure of power in Czechoslovakia started a complete reorientation of the International Socialist Conference, forcing the newsletter and *Socialist World* to be “more challenging in their contents.”<sup>65</sup> The goal for the final three issues of *Socialist World* was to publicize the anti-Communist resistance in Europe, drawing comparisons with the resistance against Nazism.<sup>66</sup> The struggle waged by the citizens of Berlin and Vienna was a continuation of their battle against Nazism in 1933 and 1934: “Reliable eye-witnesses report that there was no difference at all between these SED demonstrators and the raiding-squads of Nazi Storm Troopers in the thirties. It is against this that Berliners, led by the Social Democratic Party, are fighting.”<sup>67</sup> In this “microcosm of the European conflict,” the destiny of the world was in balance: “Berlin is the point where it will be decided whether or not Germany

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61. “Reviews,” *Socialist World*, September–November 1947, pp. 36–39.

62. A member of the Research Dept., Czechoslovak Social-Democratic Party, “Czechoslovakia on the Road to Socialism,” pp. 19–25. See also Blit, “The Bund,” pp. 16–20.

63. A Polish correspondent, “Poland’s Three-Year Plan,” *Socialist World*, December 1947–February 1948, pp. 16–20.

64. Hochfeld, “Les problèmes de la nouvelle époque,” p. 9.

65. Bolle, “Statement of the activities and finance of the Socialist Information and Liaison Office.”

66. “Notes of the Quarter” (June–August 1948), pp. 2–4.

67. News from Germany—SPD, “Berlin—City of Decision,” *Socialist World*, September–November 1948, p. 3.

and Western Europe can be saved for the ideals of liberal democracy.”<sup>68</sup> The journal also said that “Berlin became a battlefield in the struggle between democracy and terror.”<sup>69</sup>

This rhetoric signaled a reorientation of attitudes toward Germany after the February 1948 coup in Czechoslovakia. Since the beginning, *Socialist World* had treated the German question, particularly the fate of industry in the Ruhr, as the key postwar issue: “The future of Germany is to-day perhaps the greatest enigma in the international political scene.”<sup>70</sup> Western Socialists put their trust in the German Social Democrats for the democratization of Germany and socialization of industry as the means to disarm war-mongering German capitalists. For Eastern Socialists the matter was different. They identified the Germans as their main foe, as both military aggressors and capitalist owners of industry and land in Eastern Europe. Czechoslovak and Polish Socialists used their articles in *Socialist World* to justify the expropriation of German property, the expulsion of ethnic Germans, and the extraction of reparations from Germany, such steps being necessary for the security and prosperity of their countries.<sup>71</sup> Eastern Socialists would not accept Germany’s restoration on an equal basis; it had to be kept to a lesser status for many years, until complete reeducation had been achieved. Conversely, the German Social Democrats reasserted their anti-fascist credentials to demand self-government, German unity, the return of the territories east of the Oder-Neisse line, and better living conditions and food to stave off extremism.<sup>72</sup> The only way to ensure a peaceful Germany, they argued, was to create a socialist economy by nationalizing heavy industry, which meant preservation of the Ruhr’s industries for reconstruction and planning in a democratic Germany.

With Eastern Socialists out and bipolar tension escalating, the Western Socialists aligned themselves with the U.S. strategy for European reconstruction. The restoration of German industrial production was a key component of the Marshall Plan. Economic reconstruction would lead eventually to the creation of a West German state and years later to German rearmament and West Germany’s integration into NATO. The Western Socialists accepted this process, although they stressed their support for international control of the

68. *Ibid.*

69. Kurt Mattick, “Berlin Fights for Freedom,” *Socialist World*, December 1948–February 1949, p. 19.

70. “Notes of the Quarter” (June–August 1947), p. 5.

71. A member of the Research Dept., Czechoslovak Social-Democratic Party, “Czechoslovakia on the Road to Socialism,” pp. 19–26; and A Polish correspondent, “Poland’s Three-Year Plan,” pp. 16–19.

72. Ollenhauer, “The Revival of German Social-Democracy,” pp. 30–36.

Ruhr industries through the International Authority for the Ruhr approved by the London Six-Power Conference in June 1948.<sup>73</sup> Leon Blum's article in *Socialist World* (June–August 1948) signaled the willingness of French Socialists to give up earlier plans to limit German rebirth, although he demanded supranational control over Ruhr industries in the form of "international nationalisation."<sup>74</sup> This was a contentious issue, with the other Socialists accusing the German Social Democrats of nationalism.<sup>75</sup> However, resolution of the matter laid the foundations for European integration.

*Socialist World* not only celebrated the heroism of those resisting totalitarianism but also commemorated the tragic fate of the East European Socialists who were persecuted or made refugees by the Communist regimes. In this case the journal's volte-face was more explicit, insofar as East European Socialists, including Bernard, had previously defended the alliance with the Communists. Now Bernard and the Hungarian leader Antal Bán recounted the destruction of their Socialist party at the hands of the Communists.<sup>76</sup> Rather than glossing over the recent past, the Socialists reframed it. They said they had sincerely tried to cooperate with the Communists, but their trust had been misplaced.

Each of these [East European] parties tried to maintain its independence while at the same time collaborating in a coalition government with the Communists. But loyal collaboration was not enough for the Communists; they were satisfied with nothing less than complete domination.<sup>77</sup>

Bernard stressed that "healing of the breach in the working class movement dating from 1920" was necessary, but it had to result from "the expression of free will and not . . . blackmail and brute force."<sup>78</sup> Bán said the majority of Socialists had not been anti-Soviet and had desired a working agreement with the Communists to fight reactionary forces.

Bernard and Bán focused on the destruction of the independent Socialist Party as the worst crime of the Communists. The Communists had used treachery, intimidation, and violence to silence democratically elected

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73. "Notes of the Quarter" (June–August 1948), pp. 2–4.

74. Leon Blum, "The Problem of the Ruhr," *Socialist World*, June–August 1948, p. 6.

75. Shaev, "Workers' Politics, the Communist Challenge, and the Schuman Plan," pp. 251–281.

76. Antal Bán, "The Last Months of Social Democracy in Hungary," *Socialist World*, June–August 1948, pp. 33–36; and Vilém Bernard, "The Suppression of the Czechoslovak Social Democratic Party," *Socialist World*, September–November 1948, pp. 38–39.

77. "Notes of the Quarter" (December 1948–February 1949), p. 2.

78. Bernard, "The Suppression of the Czechoslovak Social Democratic Party," p. 39.

Socialist party officials and to install Communist-backed Socialists in their place. By first incapacitating the democratic functioning of the Socialist Party, imposing fusion, then “swallow[ing] up hundreds of thousands of organized Social Democrats” and forcing them into an organization with no democratic expression, the Communists had destroyed the only genuine organization representing the working class.<sup>79</sup> Bernard asserted that bourgeois political parties had been left alone because they lacked a social base after nationalization had destroyed the other classes. Destroying the Socialist parties signified that the Communist regime would impose dictatorship and exploitation on the workers. To stress the similarities between Nazism and Communism, the article about the persecution of Hungarian Social Democrats (June–August 1948) was preceded by an article about the persecution of Spanish Socialists.<sup>80</sup>

East European Socialists argued that the free spirit of the workers and sympathy for democratic Socialism were still alive, and *Socialist World* announced the creation of an organization of East European Socialist exiles to prepare the future struggle.<sup>81</sup> However, the morality tale of the destruction of East European Socialism clearly worked better for Western Socialists than for Eastern Socialists, who did not have freedom to organize or debate. Particularly useful for delegitimizing internal dissent were Bernard’s and Bán’s damning descriptions of leftwing Socialists, who had backed an alliance with the Communists. The left wing had falsely claimed that it would favor Socialism over Communism and would remain independent. In reality, the leftwing Socialists proved to be Communist stooges, backing the Communists instead of the Socialist party or workers.

The definition of democratic Socialism changed amid these upheavals. *Socialist World* no longer celebrated the economic changes in Eastern Europe as the foundations of economic democracy. Political democracy, the journal stressed, was a prerequisite. Without individual freedom, economic democracy was impossible. The International Socialist Conference in Vienna (June 1948) embraced liberal definitions of freedom, rights, and pluralism.<sup>82</sup> These human rights were not limited by historical conditions or geography and instead were universal. When Norwegian and Danish Socialists stressed their economic and social achievements, they reassured readers that they had not

79. *Ibid.*, p. 38.

80. Rodolfo Llopis, “Spanish Socialists Fight on,” *Socialist World*, June–August 1948, pp. 26–32.

81. “Notes of the Quarter” (December 1948–February 1949), pp. 2–3.

82. “Notes of the Quarter” (June–August 1948), pp. 2–4.

infringed individual rights.<sup>83</sup> Although political democracy was the necessary precondition, it was not sufficient. Socialism's ambition was to develop the full potential of democracy by promoting economic rights. The Soviet-dominated "people's democracies" had nothing to do with Socialism:

Politically, these governments are the negation of all civic rights and of the fundamental freedoms. Economically, they are inclined to substitute state-capitalism for private capitalism. They betray both democracy and socialism which they claim to represent. The International Socialist Conference meeting in Vienna, declares that Socialism, being inseparable from political democracy, aims at completing the latter by economic democracy; this is its fundamental objective.<sup>84</sup>

The change of editorial line marked a turning point for the International Socialist Conference, which could no longer be a loose organization in which variations of Socialism coexisted or in which "a superior synthesis . . . of democratic socialism in the West and of revolutionary socialism of the East" was attempted.<sup>85</sup> The Socialist International, officially reborn in 1951, turned into an exclusive "club" enforcing one definition of democratic Socialism by setting strict conditions for affiliation.<sup>86</sup> Although this was partly a contingent result of the Cold War, it also reflected the long-term evolution of Socialist parties into parties of government and the reconciliation of Socialism and liberal democracy. The unique problems of the parties operating outside the liberal democratic framework of Western Europe found little space in the pages of *Socialist World*. The articles by the Spanish and Greek Socialists stand out for their language and content. Like the articles by East European exiles, they mostly served the ideological needs of the legal parties—in this case, balancing anti-Communism with anti-fascism.

## Interests and Concerns of the Socialist Movement

*Socialist World* offers a sample of the interests and concerns of Socialists during the first few years after World War II. The aim of *Socialist World* was "to concentrate on two different types of articles: Some will report on political situations; others will express different shades of opinion of socialist theory,

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83. Haakon Lie, "Norway since Liberation," *Socialist World*, September–November 1948, pp. 17–20; and Jorgen Paldam, "Denmark's Economic Position," *Socialist World*, September–November 1948, pp. 21–25.

84. "Notes of the Quarter" (June–August 1948), p. 2.

85. Șerban Voinea, "The International Problem," in IISH, SI, Box 454, Correspondence with printers re "Socialist World," materials which have not been used 1947, p. 10.

86. Sassoon, *One Hundred Years of Socialism*, p. 210.

method and aim.”<sup>87</sup> The journal was supposed to carry straightforward factual reports as well as opinion pieces.<sup>88</sup>

Most issues of *Socialist World* included book reviews. One publisher complained that the reviews were “cursory,” sometimes with only a few lines dedicated to each book.<sup>89</sup> Although most of the reviews were not insightful, they did show which books British Socialists were reading (mostly publications by the Fabian Society or authors close to it). Reviews of non-English books appeared only in later issues to promote publications by Austrian and German Socialists.<sup>90</sup>

Some general themes emerge across the articles. The most common types of article were national surveys explaining the local environment and recent events, especially concerning labor parties and trade unions. The Socialists used these opportunities to justify their policies or present their case for admission. The reviews also mention many books of labor history.

Economic challenges were the most discussed problem. Although the task of recovery and reconstruction was daunting, wartime planning offered a model for managing the economy: “Surely, if economic planning can help to win a war, it must have some virtues even in peacetime.”<sup>91</sup> Large sections of articles or even entire articles were devoted to surveys of the economic conditions of countries before and after the war. Industrial production, consumption, and regulations were described in full detail, presenting a wealth of statistical data in text and tables. Not only was the long enumeration of numbers and percentages dreary; it left the distinct impression that the writers wanted to pad their articles with statistics. However, these articles also showed that Socialists were proud of having rescued their countries from the destruction of war.

Contributors to *Socialist World* were in broad agreement that reconstruction along Socialist lines demanded a managed economy, increased productivity, full employment, and expanded exports to pay for food and capital goods. Opinions on how to achieve these goals differed. Some parties presented their experience as a successful model of Socialism. East European Socialists continually emphasized their achievements in reconstruction, socialization,

87. “Notes of the Quarter” (June–August 1947), p. 3.

88. Loeb to Tullio Vecchietti, 1 August 1947, in IISH, SI, Box 454, General Correspondence 1947.

89. J. Guttman & Co to Edward Thompson, 10 November 1947, in IISH, SI, Box 454, General Correspondence 1947.

90. “Reviews,” *Socialist World*, June–August 1948; and “Reviews,” *Socialist World*, December 1948–February 1949, pp. 38–40.

91. “Reviews,” *Socialist World*, December 1947–February 1948, p. 38.

and planning. British and Swedish Socialists celebrated their successes in dealing with crisis and enacting socialist policies.<sup>92</sup> Austrian Socialists defended Red Vienna as “the testing ground for planning” and “a school in socialist economy and administration for younger generations of socialists.”<sup>93</sup>

The nationalization of key industries was widely discussed. Despite a shift in attitude after the February 1948 coup in Czechoslovakia, the division of opinion did not simply follow Cold War lines. East European Socialists defended nationalization of heavy industries as an important economic measure and also as a means of weakening “reactionary forces” and strengthening democracy. This line was not exclusive to them, however; even the British Labour Party embraced it.<sup>94</sup> Karl Waldbrunner—the strongest intellectual voice for nationalization among Austrian Socialists and later minister for the nationalized enterprises—argued that the prewar Austrian experience showed that planning was impossible without public control over key sectors of the economy, such as banking, energy, and basic industries. He claimed that the Austrian Socialist Party had promoted extensive nationalization after the war to overcome the power of economic oligarchs and ensure democratic stability, but that they also supported increasing productivity and full employment.<sup>95</sup> The articles of Danish and Norwegian Socialists appearing after the Communist takeover in Czechoslovakia did not emphasize that Socialist policies would strengthen democracy; rather, they argued that Socialist policies were not incompatible with democracy.<sup>96</sup>

The most thorough analysis of planning and nationalization was a series of three articles by the Dutch Socialist economist Nederhorst. Having surveyed Dutch economic conditions and state policies in the issues of March and June 1948, Nederhorst dealt with the nature and implications of planning in the September 1948 issue.<sup>97</sup> He argued that Socialists did not invent planning but adopted it from private industries and the Soviet Union.

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92. A British Correspondent, “Britain Meets the Crisis,” *Socialist World*, September–November 1947, pp. 22–26; and Fredriksson, “Social Democracy in Sweden since the War,” pp. 27–31.

93. Karl Waldbrunner, “Socialism and Planning in Austria,” *Socialist World*, September–November 1948, p. 12.

94. A British Correspondent, “Britain Meets the Crisis” pp. 22–26.

95. Waldbrunner, “Socialism and Planning in Austria,” pp. 12–16; and Karl Waldbrunner, “Austria’s Economic Future,” *Socialist World*, December 1948–February 1949, pp. 27–30.

96. Lie, “Norway since Liberation,” pp. 17–20; and Paldam, “Denmark’s Economic Position,” pp. 21–25.

97. Gerard M. Nederhorst, “Holland’s Economic Position,” *Socialist World*, March–May 1948, pp. 21–25; and Gerard M. Nederhorst, “Nationalisation in Holland,” *Socialist World*, June–August 1948, pp. 9–15.

“And at the present moment planning and socialism are so closely linked with each other that no socialist party would question the very great importance of planning.”<sup>98</sup>

Coalitions between Social Democrats and Christian Democrats were an obstacle to nationalization in Continental Europe, but Nederhorst said that even Socialists with a large majority in Britain and Sweden could not carry out radical nationalization because of opposition in the civil society. In any case, nationalization was not the only way to ensure public control over the private economy. Mixed committees of employers, trade unionists, and government representatives could achieve the same goal while avoiding excessive bureaucracy.

International events were also a recurrent topic in *Socialist World*. The Cold War weighed heavily on Socialists and shaped their reflections. Reviews mentioned books that would provide a better understanding of the world’s hot spots and centers of power, such as the United States, the Soviet Union, Germany, Greece, and China. A recurring argument was that geopolitical and technological developments were limiting national sovereignty. Pollak wrote, “There has been increased incorporation of small and medium nation-states, no longer capable of independence, into the power blocs of the great powers.”<sup>99</sup> The editorial staff and the British and Scandinavian parties favored forms of intergovernmental cooperation instead of federalism and supranationality, whether in the form of a world government or European integration.<sup>100</sup> However, after the coup in Czechoslovakia in 1948, *Socialist World* gave a platform to federalist Socialists who linked nationalization and public control of the economy with the interdependence of states.

Leon Blum was the best-known figure to write on this topic, but a particularly insightful article was written for the June–August 1948 issue by Cerilo Spinelli, a federalist Socialist and brother of Altiero Spinelli. Cerilo Spinelli recognized the end of the old order of European sovereign states, balance of power, and European supremacy. European states, he argued, were no longer able to control much bigger countries on other continents. Destroyed by war and dependent on the United States and the Soviet Union, “Europe has lost the power to determine the course of history.”<sup>101</sup> Through federation the

98. Gerard M. Nederhorst, “International Socialist Planning,” *Socialist World*, September–November 1948, pp. 4–5.

99. Pollak, “The Third Force,” p. 17.

100. “Notes of the Quarter,” *Socialist World*, September–November 1947, pp. 3–5; and “Reviews” (September–November 1947), pp. 36–39.

101. Cerilo Spinelli, “European Unity and European Reconstruction,” *Socialist World*, June–August 1948, p. 16.



Europeans would be able to regain independence and mediate between the two blocs.

Conservatives conceived united Europe as a military bloc against the Soviet Union. Liberals and democrats saw in the federation an opportunity to abolish economic nationalism and promote free trade:

United Europe has become more and more a problem of the progressive adaptation of the various national reconstruction programmes to the demands of general European recovery—that is, progressive integration of the various national economies by means of a co-ordinated policy of trade, tariffs and investments.<sup>102</sup>

Spinelli approved the goal of modernization and economic integration, but he argued that only centralized planning, nationalization, and control of investments would destroy monopolistic privileges, reduce the human costs of economic dislocation, and achieve the Socialist goal of full employment. European unification with the help of the Marshall Plan would provide the Socialists with the radical economic policy they needed to stave off the Communists. By exploiting the misery of the people, the Communists had taken over the leadership of the working class in some countries. Only the Socialists who had remained independent of the Communists and identified with the trade unions had been able to keep their presence in the working class. Socialists wanted to regain the allegiance of the working class from the Communists by matching their radicalism in defending workers. “This objective can only be achieved by recapturing the trade unions and factory organizations, and by a financial policy which ensures just redistribution of the national income.”<sup>103</sup> Being in government was useful only when the Socialists were powerful enough to enact Socialist reforms, otherwise the Socialists would lose their credibility. Spinelli’s line is significant because it matched British Labour’s conception of Socialism, which Healey was trying to encourage among the Italian Social Democrats at the time.<sup>104</sup>

In the following issue (September–November 1948), Nederhorst also recognized that “for most countries planning on a national scale is no longer an adequate means of raising the people’s standard of living.”<sup>105</sup> The problem was

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102. *Ibid.*, p. 21.

103. *Ibid.*, p. 23.

104. Ettore Costa, “The Socialist International and Italian Social Democracy (1948–50): Cultural Differences and the ‘Internationalisation of Domestic Quarrels,’” *Historical Research*, Vol. 90, No. 251 (Winter 2018), pp. 160–184.

105. Nederhorst, “International Socialist Planning,” p. 7.

that the strength of Socialists differed from country to country. British and Swedish socialists wanted to avoid integration because it would prevent them from enacting Socialist policies at the national level. In contrast, Nederhorst believed that building Socialism in one country, especially a small one, was impossible. "I have no hesitation in answering that it is our duty to venture on international co-operation even when international co-operation means, for a short time, that we must give up some parts of our socialist policy in the national field."<sup>106</sup> Nederhorst identified international socialization, or at least international control, of coal and steel as the first step for international cooperation, followed by international management of public utilities, financial systems, investment policies, and trade policies: "If the Western European countries were represented on foreign markets as if they were one country, comparable with Russia and the United States, then their position would be stronger and would enable them to compete successfully with those countries."<sup>107</sup> Nederhorst also correctly identified the possible problems of a single market, such as a race to the bottom for wages and taxation.

In the final issue of *Socialist World* (December 1948–February 1949), Waldbrunner envisioned the integration of Austria into a European planned economy as well.<sup>108</sup> The French economist Jean Weiller also argued that national markets were insufficient for modern production. Economic integration had to be followed by rationalization, increased productivity, and rising standards of living. The "Western Union" would control currency, exchange, and customs. The choice was between liberal integration, with non-intervention in social and economic matters, and socialist integration. "The second alternative would involve a federation of states with common socialist principles, or at least prepared to carry out a common policy on a European scale."<sup>109</sup> However, he wanted a gradual approach and to preserve states' power of intervention, at least for the time being.

Anti-colonialism is one of the "silences" of *Socialist World*. Critical voices cannot be found, references in generalist articles are mostly absent or euphemistically couched, and the three articles specifically dedicated to colonial issues are extremely defensive and apologetic. The British articles (from December 1947 and December 1948) celebrate the fair treatment of the colonies,

106. *Ibid.*, p. 8.

107. *Ibid.*, p. 9.

108. Waldbrunner, "Austria's Economic Future," pp. 27–30.

109. Jean Weiller, "Some Aspects of Western Union," *Socialist World*, December 1948–February 1949, p. 22.

their self-government, and the role of colonization in modernization<sup>110</sup> “Thus progress and socialism go hand in hand.”<sup>111</sup> The French article (December 1948) was sympathetic with Vietnamese nationalism and blamed the war in Indochina on Charles de Gaulle and other French party leaders, while also blaming extremists on both sides.<sup>112</sup>

The early issues of *Socialist World* expressed a strong interest in Socialist movements outside Europe, especially those in India, Canada, the United States, and Latin America. This seems to have been a form of compensation for the strong Eurocentric character of the International Socialist Conference, which Commonwealth and Latin American Socialists denounced.<sup>113</sup> “The European Socialists continue to pay absolutely no attention to the mere existence let alone the importance of the Latin-American Socialist Parties.”<sup>114</sup> At the same time, outreach to other continents worked as a form of escape from the contentious issues in Europe.<sup>115</sup>

Despite the initial intentions of the editorial staff, ideological issues were rarely discussed, except by parties at the margins.<sup>116</sup> Nonetheless, some of the international discussions contain the germs of Socialist revisionism, which wanted to detach Socialism from nationalization and its classist and Marxist origins. Revisionism identified Socialism with equality, liberty, and democracy and opened the movement to the middle classes and religious people.<sup>117</sup> The Dutch, Swedish, and Belgian Social Democrats were at the forefront of this transformation, which found expression in Hugh Gaitskell’s Labour Party and the Bad Godesberg Program of the SPD.<sup>118</sup> A German socialist reading *Socialist World* would have found an early version of the slogan “as much competition as possible—as much planning as necessary” in the program of

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110. H. D. Hughes, “Labour’s Colonial Policy,” *Socialist World*, December 1948–February 1949, pp. 4–11.

111. J. D. Krivine, “Imperialism—New Style,” *Socialist World*, December 1947–February 1948, p. 29.

112. Georges Brutelle, “French Policy in Indo-China,” *Socialist World*, December 1948–February 1949, pp. 12–17.

113. “Stenogramme,” 8 June 1947, pp. 24–27.

114. Robert J. Alexander, “Socialism in Latin-America,” *Socialist World*, December 1947–February 1948, p. 20.

115. This was the case in the 1950s. See Van Kemseke, *Towards an Era of Development*, p. 277.

116. Narayan, “An Indian Plan for Socialism,” pp. 11–18; Karnik, “The Radical Democratic Party of India,” pp. 30–36; and Achilles Gregoroyannis, “The Socialist Movement in Greece,” *Socialist World*, March–May 1948, pp. 26–30.

117. Sassoon, *One Hundred Years of Socialism*, p. 242.

118. Koos Vorrink, “The Dutch Labour Party,” *Socialist World*, June–August 1947, pp. 39–41; and Victor Larock, “The United States and Socialism,” *Socialist World*, December 1947–February 1948, pp. 11–15.

the Swedish Social Democratic Party published in the September–November 1947 issue.<sup>119</sup>

The articles in the journal underscore that the Socialists loved to talk about themselves, especially about their national and international organization, recent history, and ideas. Their goal was to justify their political choices, especially the contentious ones, to other Socialists. *Socialist World* was above all an internal bulletin. Whether the intention of creating a journal for the common reader was ever put into practice or even taken seriously thus seems dubious. It is hardly surprising that the wider public had no interest in such solipsism.

### The Reach of *Socialist World*

The reason *Socialist World* was an international journal is not simply that it had international contributors but also, more importantly, that it was meant to be read around the world in its basic English edition—which was sold in the newsstands of Great Britain and sent to British and foreign subscribers—as well as in localized editions.

The editors were aware of the problem of language. *Socialist World* was open to contributions from non-native English speakers and was intended either to be read by a large public of non-native speakers or to be easily translated. One contributor, J. D. Krivine, complained that the changes made to his article altered its meaning, but Loeb explained that they were necessary because half the journal's readers could not read English easily.<sup>120</sup> Most of the contributions were translated from languages other than English.<sup>121</sup>

Despite the small size and limited circulation—because of costs and restricted paper allocation—Loeb expected the magazine to be influential thanks to its intellectual weight and appeal to the educated public.<sup>122</sup> “It is certainly a non-popular cover which will not appeal to any except serious

119. Fredriksson, “Social Democracy in Sweden since the War,” p. 28.

120. J. D. Krivine (Central Office of Information) to Mrs. Roberts, 14 November 1947, in IISH, SI, Box 454, General Correspondence 1947; Loeb to Krivine, 20 November 1947, in IISH, SI, Box 454, General Correspondence 1947; and Krivine, “Imperialism—New Style.”

121. Marinus Van der Goes van Naters to Healey, 13 March 1947, in IISH, SI, Box 454, General Correspondence 1947; and Julian Hochfeld to Loeb, 6 August 1947, in IISH, SI, Box 454, Correspondence with printers re “Socialist World,” materials which have not been used 1947.

122. Loeb to Blackfriars Press Ltd, 31 April 1947, in IISH, SI, Box 454, Correspondence with printers re “Socialist World,” materials which have not been used 1947.

readers.”<sup>123</sup> “As you see it is of a fairly serious—even high-brow—nature and aims at being serious.”<sup>124</sup> This perception justified a cover price of one shilling. “It will, however, be the sort of magazine one *reads* rather than skims.”<sup>125</sup> Loeb hoped that *Socialist World* would fill a gap for all Socialists interested in international affairs.<sup>126</sup>

Loeb worked to put out localized editions of *Socialist World*. The ČSSD immediately agreed to print a Czech edition that would come out simultaneously with the English edition, under the title *Socialistický svět: Mezinárodní socialistický čtvrtletník* (The Socialist World: International Socialist Quarterly). SILO was much satisfied with the Czech edition, the only version of *Socialist World* to find a public: “in appearance and production, your version is much better than ours.”<sup>127</sup> The second issue sold 3,000 copies and turned a profit.<sup>128</sup> SILO hoped that the Swiss, French, and Belgian socialists would print a French edition, although the consultative committee had to renew—in vain—its appeal in October 1947.<sup>129</sup> The Uruguayan Socialist Party welcomed the publication of *Socialist World* as a bridge between South American and European Socialists, and expressed willingness to publish the Spanish edition on the condition that other Spanish-speaking parties shared the expense.<sup>130</sup> Nothing came of it. The Greek Socialists said they could not sell copies or print a Greek edition. They did not have the money, few people spoke English, and the police harassed the Socialist press.<sup>131</sup>

The original English edition had a planned circulation of 4,000 copies.<sup>132</sup> The Dutch and Swedish Socialists bought 100 copies each, although currency exchanges put the purchase at risk.<sup>133</sup> However, the delivery of these copies

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123. Ibid.

124. Ibid.

125. Ibid.; emphasis in original.

126. Loeb to M. Allen, 5 June 1947, in IISH, SI, Box 454, General Correspondence 1947.

127. Thompson to Vilém Bernard, 20 November 1947, in IISH, SI, Box 454, General Correspondence 1947.

128. Circular 77, 23 December 1947.

129. Loeb to Blackfriars Press Ltd, 15 April 1947, in IISH, SI, Box 454, Correspondence with printers re “Socialist World,” materials which have not been used 1947; and Loeb to Mollet, 2 October 1947, in IISH, SI, Box 454, General Correspondence 1947.

130. Mario Jaunarena to Morgan Phillips, 15 July 1947, in IISH, SI, Box 454, General Correspondence 1947.

131. Alexandros Svolos to Loeb, 24 March 1947, in IISH, SI, Box 454, General Correspondence 1947.

132. Loeb to H. L. Schollick, 11 August 1947, in IISH, SI, Box 454, General Correspondence 1947.

133. Thomassen to Loeb, 26 June 1947, Thomassen to Loeb, 22 September 1947, and Kaj Björk to Thompson, 15 December 1947—all in IISH, SI, Box 454, General Correspondence 1947.

to Sweden was irregular and met financial and practical difficulties, making it harder to increase circulation.<sup>134</sup> This must have discouraged the Swedish Social Democratic Party from supporting *Socialist World* further.

Loeb wanted to spread 3,000 copies around Britain, for which she sought commercial advice from the *The New Statesman*, which suggested that the Divisional Labour Parties be encouraged to order copies.<sup>135</sup> Five subscribers from each of the 640 Labour Party units would mean an income of £700 per year, a solid basis for the future. Loeb also had the W. H. Smith retail chain order 1,000 copies to sell in selected towns.

The first year of publication was not a success. The initial issue of *Socialist World* (June–August 1947) had 284 individual subscribers. Fifty copies were sold through Socialist bookshops, 250 were given to affiliated parties, and 500 were sold through W. H. Smith. The total, 1,084 copies, meant the Labour Party was left with almost 3,000 unsold copies.<sup>136</sup> Orders for the second issue (September–November 1947) were similar to those of the first. For the third issue (December 1947–February 1948), W.H. Smith ordered just 500 copies and Socialist bookshops only twelve.<sup>137</sup>

The February 1948 coup cancelled the only successful version of *Socialist World*. The editorial board in July 1948 studied the possibility of having a German edition appear in Austria, where the Socialist Party had a strong organization and a long internationalist tradition. However, the party could not obtain a license to import periodicals.<sup>138</sup> Because this plan was the only remaining possibility for *Socialist World* to survive as a regular publication, the failure of it meant the end of the whole enterprise.

## The Failure of *Socialist World*

*Socialist World* was a failed experiment—Czechoslovakia aside—that proved there was no room for an international Socialist journal. What is open to question is whether it was a promising project that failed because of lack of

134. Björk to Thompson, 2 July 1948, in IISH, SI, Box 455, General Correspondence Socialist World 1948; and Björk to Thompson, 11 August 1948, in IISH, SI, Box 455, General Correspondence Socialist World 1948.

135. Loeb to Healey, 23 March 1947, in IISH, SI, Box 454, General Correspondence 1947.

136. Minutes of the Consultative Committee, 26 September 1947, in IISH, SI, Box 47.

137. Secretary's Report, 5 November 1947, in IISH, SI, Box 47; and Thompson to Finance Department, 17 December 1947, in IISH, SI, Box 454, General Correspondence 1947.

138. Circular 117, c. November 1948.

support and internationalism from the national parties or whether the global audience its founders imagined was out of reach given the technical and cultural limits of the contemporary media landscape.

Lack of interest was an important reason, especially from the richer parties. The Dutch Socialist leader Koos Vorrink complained that *Socialist World* had not been properly supported.<sup>139</sup> The Swedish Social Democrats, one of the richest parties, refused to write on international issues for the journal and approved of its cancellation.<sup>140</sup> The Danish Social Democrats, seeking to avoid embarrassment, refused to send an article covering pending international questions, submitting instead a factual article on economic issues.<sup>141</sup> This silence over international affairs might have satisfied the Socialist leadership, but it made *Socialist World* a poor journal. Other symbolic measures to emphasize international Socialist cooperation, such as an international stamp or a joint May Day manifesto, were equally unsuccessful.<sup>142</sup>

In addition to the lack of interest, Socialists were divided over which direction and media strategy the Socialist International needed to adopt.<sup>143</sup> The British and Scandinavian parties wanted to turn the Socialist International into an international Fabian Society, to pool technical knowledge on how to enact Socialist policies at the national level. When *Socialist World* ceased publication, SILO's offices were restructured to collect technical information, organize conferences of Socialist experts, and produce pamphlets on the model of the Fabian tracts. However, the frank exchange of opinions by experts demanded strict confidentiality, as the Danish Social Democrats requested.

French and Dutch Socialists wanted international Socialism to take the lead in European federalism, but in 1948 the Swedish Social Democrats refused to finance the French proposal for an international Socialist center for documentation and propaganda devoted to European unification. As Nederhorst noted, the lack of agreement on political issues limited the extent of technocratic cooperation.<sup>144</sup> Without a common position on the renunciation

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139. Circular 121, 3 December 1948.

140. Klaus Misgeld, *Sozialdemokratie und Aussenpolitik in Schweden: Sozialistische Internationale, Europapolitik und die Deutschlandfrage 1945–1955* (Frankfurt am Main: Campus Verlag, 1984), p. 100; and Circular 121, 3 December 1948.

141. Alsing Andersen to Thompson, 15 July 1948, in IISH, SI, Box 455, General correspondence Socialist World 1948; and Thompson to Andersen, 22 July 1948, in IISH, SI, Box 455, General correspondence Socialist World 1948.

142. Costa, *Labour Party*, p. 277.

143. *Ibid.*, pp. 265–272.

144. Circular B.17/52, 26 June 1952, in IISH, SI, Box 65.

of national sovereignty, the Socialists could not solve questions concerning integration, trade, investment, transport, or energy.

The journal's most successful product for media consumption was an issue on which all the national Socialist parties were in agreement: the sad fate of Socialists behind the Iron Curtain. Socialist exiles from the East produced a highly successful narrative of the Communist takeovers, and the Western Socialist parties spread it, first in *Socialist World*, then through a booklet, *Curtain Falls*, prepared by Healey with contributions from Bán and Socialist leaders from Poland and Czechoslovakia.<sup>145</sup> The booklet was translated into French and Italian, gaining an international reach that *Socialist World* never had.<sup>146</sup>

Although lack of commitment was an important factor in the journal's failure, it was not the only one. In the first half of 1948, SILO was engaged in frantic activity that kept *Socialist World* alive longer than necessary. The editorial board of expert journalists decreed that the efforts had yielded insufficient returns and that the international journal had failed to reach an international public. However, publication of any international journal faced important obstacles during that period. A key question for *Socialist World* was whether there were enough international English-speaking Socialists with financial means to support an international journal. This was the problem in Greece, which was both poor and authoritarian, but it was also true even in a wealthy and democratic country like Denmark, where the local Socialist party had problems finding more than 30 subscribers for the English edition.<sup>147</sup> In addition, currency problems, lack of paper, and regulation hampered the circulation of printed material across national borders. The only way a similar enterprise could be successful was by localization. *Curtain Falls* was successfully translated, but the only way a regular Socialist publication could survive was if the party machinery committed to promoting its sale. The leaders of the British Labour Party put some effort into distributing the journal among the local parties, but the base did not respond accordingly, as already during the war the rank and file had been lukewarm toward continental Socialists.<sup>148</sup>

145. Denis Healey, ed., *The Curtain Falls: The Story of the Socialists in Eastern Europe* (London: Lincolns—Prager, 1951).

146. Denis Healey, ed., *Le rideau tombe: Histoire des socialistes en Europe orientale* (Paris: Dominique Wapler, 1952); and Denis Healey, ed., *La cortina cade: La storia dei partiti socialisti nell'Europa orientale* (Florence: Nuova Italia, 1953).

147. Olaf Carlsson to Thompson, 18 September 1948, in IISH, SI, Box 455, General Correspondence Socialist World 1948.

148. Phillips to divisional and local parties, [n.d.], in IISH, SI, Box 454, General Correspondence 1947; and Andrew Thorpe, *Parties at War: Political Organization in Second World War Britain* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2009), pp. 203–204.



The Czech edition of *Socialist World* was successful because of factionalism. Factional infighting among Socialists tended to spill across national borders. National debates over strategy or ideology became debates for the entire movement; in turn, international debates assumed a domestic dimension as the factions inside each Socialist party took one side or the other. Controversy and factionalism were the keys to success, both at home and abroad, of similar editorial enterprises. In the same years of *Socialist World*, the journal of the Labour left (*Tribune*) sold 10,000 copies and still struggled financially.<sup>149</sup> In the 1950s, the periodicals of the British left served as a vehicle for internal debate, thriving in factional controversy. Sales of *Tribune* rose to 18,000 copies thanks to the quarrel between the Bevanites and the Labour right. This did not exclude success abroad. *The New Statesman*, the most successful journal—the only successful journal—sent 20,000 copies overseas, a quarter of its entire circulation.<sup>150</sup>

The reason that only the Czech edition of *Socialist World* was successful is precisely that factional struggle in Czechoslovakia made international activities meaningful. Before the February 1948 Communist takeover, East European Socialists debated whether to fuse with the Communists or to preserve a distinct Socialist identity and ties with Western Socialists.<sup>151</sup> Right-wing Socialist elements like Bernard, Hochfeld, and the Hungarian Vilmos Böhm wrote for *Socialist World* because their faction gained legitimacy and defined its identity by associating with Western Socialists. Right-wing Socialists sought a political and cultural alternative to the single-party state, a synthesis of East and West by extending social rights and preserving political pluralism, freedom of association, and worker self-management.<sup>152</sup> Buset had put forward this vision at the Zurich Conference, but it was Bán who asked that the speech be published in *Socialist World*.<sup>153</sup> The Polish rightwing Socialists used *Socialist World* to present their economic plan, which was based on consumer goods, cooperatives, and a mixed economy, in contrast to the

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149. Kenneth O. Morgan, *Michael Foot: A Life* (London: Harper Press, 2007), pp. 130–132, 160.

150. Lawrence Black, *The Political Culture of the Left in Affluent Britain, 1951–1964: Old Labour, New Britain?* (Basingstoke, UK: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), p. 171.

151. Karel Kaplan, *Das verhängnisvolle Bündnis: Unterwanderung, Gleichschaltung und Vernichtung der Tschechoslowakischen Sozialdemokratie 1944–1954* (Wuppertal: Pol-Verlag, 1984), pp. 107–116.

152. Brandley F. Abrams, *The Struggle for the Soul of the Nation: Czech Culture and the Rise of Communism* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2004), pp. 220–221.

153. “Stenogramme,” 8 June 1947, Annexe 6.

Communist policy of complete nationalization, central direction, and heavy industries.<sup>154</sup>

For some Socialist authors, *Socialist World* was the only platform available. Böhm found that leftwing Socialists barred him from publishing his articles in the party press in Hungary.<sup>155</sup> To avoid being sidelined by the Polish embassy, Hochfeld sent his article in French to *Socialist World* via the Labour attaché at the British embassy in Warsaw. He trusted this line of communication and wanted nothing to do with any channel controlled by the Polish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, run by Communists.<sup>156</sup>

Socialist literature was not just a matter of supply but also of demand. In 1945 the secretary of the ČSSD requested Socialist texts from Great Britain. The same year, the craving of Czechoslovak citizens for British cultural products (newspapers, books, movies, and magazines) impressed a delegation of the British Labour Party.<sup>157</sup> *Socialist World* answered the needs of the ČSSD, which had every interest in supporting the journal.

Even outside Czechoslovakia the demand for Socialist pamphlets and articles was considerable, with requests coming to Britain from South America, Germany, Italy, and Austria.<sup>158</sup> The Labour Party was willing to meet this overseas demand, seeing a genuine need to transmit Socialist articles across national borders using the international Socialist network. *Socialist World* was successful when it could facilitate this operation. However, an international journal was not the best vehicle because of its limited public exposure and the small number of people involved in its organization.

The many silences of *Socialist World* stemmed from overbearing rules meant to forestall embarrassment. The entire structure of Socialist internationalism after the Second World War had been built around avoiding controversy and embarrassment for the most important parties rather than struggling toward a common goal. As Healey wrote, the role of an international organization was “not so much . . . promoting positive action, as . . .

154. A Polish correspondent, “Poland’s Three-Year Plan.” See also Krystyna Kersten, *The Establishment of Communist Rule in Poland, 1943–1948* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991), p. 366.

155. Ullin J. McStea, “The Hungarian Social Democrats and the British Labour Party, 1944–8,” Ph.D. Diss., University of the West of England, 2003, pp. 266–267. Böhm asked to publish the article anonymously. Böhm to Thompson, 27 December 1947, in IISH, SI, Box 454, General Correspondence 1947.

156. Thompson to Hochfeld, 19 June 1947, in IISH, SI, Box 454, General Correspondence 1947; and M. Armstrong to Healey, 1 September 1947, Hochfeld to Loeb, 6 August 1947.

157. [Tom Williamson], “Czechoslovakia,” in LHASC, LP, International Sub-Committee, Minutes and Documents, 1945.

158. Costa, *Labour Party, Denis Healey and International Socialist Movement*, pp. 63–64.

preventing action by one member which might seriously but unintentionally damage another.”<sup>159</sup> This meant that *Socialist World* was wary of treating issues that could damage the respectability of Socialists, question their fitness to govern, delegitimize their colonial policies, or stimulate factional struggle. Loeb established the principle that *Socialist World* was “committed to publishing only articles advocating a policy with which the national party is in agreement”—for example, asking the French for permission to publish an article about the Monnet Plan.<sup>160</sup>

Articles about the colonial situation were solicited from Socialists in colonizer countries, which explains why they were so defensive.<sup>161</sup> Loeb requested an article on developments in the Socialist movements in the British Empire from Krivine, an employee of the Foreign Office, specifying that the article should be factual and avoid being overly critical.<sup>162</sup> In 1948 Thompson invited Socialists from Britain, France, and the Netherlands to produce a series of articles about their colonial policies.<sup>163</sup> For an article about the labor movements of Latin America, SILO asked Robert J. Alexander, who was an expert in the field but also a Socialist activist in the United States who had worked closely in this area with Jay Lovestone, who aided the “labor diplomacy” of the U.S. State Department and CIA.<sup>164</sup>

By the end of 1947, divergent political imperatives and a lack of clarity about what the journal was allowed to publish made running *Socialist World* difficult. Loeb argued that SILO should have set up a steering committee to lay down an editorial line, solve contentious issues, and decide on the degree of controversy and criticism allowed.<sup>165</sup> Could the journal have published personal contributions by well-known British Socialists with whom the Labour Party was not in agreement—such as Leonard Woolf or G. D. H. Cole—or

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159. Donald Healey [Denis Healey], “The Workers’ Internationals,” *Tribune*, 15 February 1946.

160. Loeb to Osborne, 23 July 1947; and Loeb to Henri Hauck, 31 March 1947, in IISH, SI, Box 454, General Correspondence 1947. No such article was published.

161. Loeb to Thomassen, 26 June 1947.

162. Loeb to Cynthia Clarke, 16 October 1947, in IISH, SI, Box 454, General Correspondence 1947; and Krivine to Roberts, 1 November 1947, in IISH, SI, Box 454, General Correspondence 1947.

163. Thompson to M. H. Malacrida, 6 October 1948, Thompson to Thomassen, 6 October 1948, and Thompson to Michael Foot, 6 October 1948—all in IISH, SI, Box 455, General Correspondence Socialist World 1948. The articles were Hughes, “Labour’s Colonial Policy,” pp. 4–11; and Brutelle, “French Policy in Indo-China,” pp. 12–17. The Dutch did not write anything.

164. Loeb to Robert Alexander, 3 July 1947, in IISH, SI, Box 454, General Correspondence 1947. See Jack Ross, *The Socialist Party of America: A Complete History* (Washington, DC: Potomac Books, 2015), p. 435.

165. “Some proposals on the running and administration of the Socialist Information and Liaison Office,” 5 November 1947, in IISH, SI, Box 47.

could only the parties publish such texts? Could the Polish Socialists have offered comments on Britain? As the media outlet of a deeply divided movement, *Socialist World* could not be an efficient journal.

Anti-Communism proved to be an ideal opportunity to deploy a simple narrative and powerful rhetorical arguments, however. The Socialists could rally against their enemy, mourn their martyrs, damn their traitors, and celebrate their identity.

On the other hand, some of the best lines of *Socialist World* can be found in its merciless attacks against conservatives. The journal called *Road to Serfdom* “shabby claptrap” and highlighted “the pitiful inadequacy of Hayek’s political and economic theories.”<sup>166</sup> Of *The Case for Conservatism* by a Conservative member of Parliament, Quintin Hogg, the journal proclaimed: “[he] devotes nearly twice as much space and a great deal of woolly verbiage to his task, and succeeds only in showing that there is no case for conservatism.”<sup>167</sup> The governments that were complicit with prewar appeasement were also easy targets.

Cooperation with the Communists before the February 1948 coup in Czechoslovakia, European integration, and nationalization were controversial issues, and they forced the Socialists to explain their national situations and to justify their policies. Other issues, such as economic planning, did not lend themselves to public debate, and many parties preferred to keep such discussions private. Criticism of fellow Socialists was to be kept tactful, making it hard to have a proper debate. As Thompson conceded, one could not call French Socialists “bloody fools” in a magazine they partly paid for, even if they deserved it.<sup>168</sup>

The failure of *Socialist World* was attributable to many factors, but, above all, topics that would have made for interesting reading were too embarrassing or controversial to publish, and safe topics were not of great interest. The journal faced other obstacles, including language barriers and regulations, but the poor sales offered no incentive to overcome them. *Socialist World* was the answer to a real need—the circulation of propaganda, opinion, and information among Socialist leaders—but it was not the best answer. The Socialist International found cooperation with the Information Research Department (IRD) much more fruitful.

166. “Reviews” (September–November 1947), p. 38.

167. “Reviews” (March–May 1948), p. 39.

168. Thompson to William Pickles, 30 July 1948, in IISH, SI, Box 455, General correspondence Socialist World 1948.

Employees of the Information Service of the British Foreign Office had already written for *Socialist World*, but systematic cooperation between international Socialism and the British state started only in January 1948 with the creation of the IRD, a special unit of British intelligence responsible for distributing anti-Communist information and propaganda.<sup>169</sup> As part of the British propaganda offensive of 1948, the British Council distributed some issues of *Socialist World* abroad.<sup>170</sup> The Socialist International developed close relations with the IRD, and Healey provided a list of reliable Socialist leaders who could spread propaganda material in their books and newspapers.<sup>171</sup> Material also came from the United States: Samuel D. Berger, the labor attaché of the U.S. embassy and a friend of Healey, provided an article by a U.S. writer for *Socialist World* (September–November 1948).<sup>172</sup> From the beginning, SILO passed the documents of the IRD to the Social Democrats of Europe, and the IRD distributed material by the Socialist International, a mutually beneficial relationship that lasted for many years.<sup>173</sup>

*Socialist World* represented the unresolved contradiction of international Socialist cooperation. One pole sought to emphasize the public and unanimous nature of the Socialist International to show the strength of the movement and increase the prestige of its leaders, whereas the other pole strove to create a forum based on confidentiality and trust in which Socialist leaders could exchange information and debate controversial issues frankly.<sup>174</sup> One pole courted public opinion; the other shunned it. Both functions were important, indeed essential, for international Socialist cooperation. In later decades, the Socialists adopted flexible structures and instruments for such cooperation, choosing public attention or confidentiality according to their goal.<sup>175</sup> *Socialist World* had proved in the late 1940s that an instrument trying to reconcile both functions was bound to fail.

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169. Andrew Defty, *Britain, America and Anti-Communist Propaganda, 1945–53: The Information Research Department* (London: Routledge, 2004), pp. 40–74; and Hugh Wilford, *The CIA, the British Left, and the Cold War: Calling the Tune* (London: Routledge, 2003), pp. 48–49.

170. C. R. Billob (British Council, Periodicals Department) to *Socialist World*, 11 February 1948, in IISH, SI, Box 455, General Correspondence Socialist World 1948.

171. Healey to J. H. Watson, 6 December 1948, in TNAUK, FO 1110/47-PR1211/G.

172. Mildred Wallace to Healey, 25 March 1947, in IISH, SI, Box 454, General Correspondence 1947.

173. Thompson to Andersen, 28 June 1948, in IISH, SI, Box 455, General Correspondence Socialist World 1948; and Costa, *Labour Party*, p. 64.

174. Devin, *Internationale socialiste*, pp. 182, 311–318.

175. Salm, *Transnational Socialist Networks in the 1970s*, p. 152.