

10
SOCIALIST LABOUR LEAGUE

■ A NEWSLETTER PAMPHLET ■

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THE decisions of the Trades Union Congress to oppose the manufacture of the H-bomb and to extend nationalization have raised the hopes of every socialist in the Labour Party and trade unions. At last it seems that Labour may have a policy fundamentally different from that of the Tories.

It is all very well for the newspaper proprietors in Fleet Street to sneer and jeer at the split in Labour's ranks. The Economist of September 10 assures us that the Tory opponents of Labour are greeting the decisions of the TUC with outbursts of 'uncontrollable laughter'. Maybe so, but it is the laughter of people who have long since grown senile in their attitude towards reality.

There is no reason for the Tory Party to rejoice. Ruling class power has always relied upon the subservience of the Right wing and its bureaucratic domination of the Labour movement. Honours and titles have been doled out with monotonous regularity each year to placate those who had betrayed Labour's future to the ruling class.

The Right wing can no longer claim to rule the Labour movement. Instead of giving way to 'uncontrollable laughter', it might be more fitting for The Economist to ask the businessmen who read it, a simple question: What next for capitalist Britain now that the policy of class collaboration on defence has been blown sky high? What form of rule shall replace class collaboration?

No one in his right senses, least of all the Tories, believes that the Tory Party can continue as at present.

The return of Enoch Powell to the Front Bench is the signal for new plans to destroy the health service. The credit squeeze continues and there are rumours that it will get worse. Whilst the home sales for motor cars have begun to increase, the export trade stagnates and shows a tendency to decline. Mr. Brooke steps up the rent war. We are entering a period of British politics where the breakdown of class collaboration may well mean the ruling class considering a form of fascism in the years that lie ahead.

Fascism is not only the rule of inhuman brutes who have become so depraved that they continuously resort to atrocities and murders on a vast scale. Capitalist democracy such as we know it in Britain is based mainly upon a Parliament in which the leaders of the two major parties, Labour and Tory, collaborate on the fundamental issue of defence of the capitalist state. The authority of Parliament and with it the rule of the capitalist class is based upon this relationship of forces. If the ruling class can no longer rule through these forces, then other alternatives must be found. That is what happened in Germany and in Italy. Fascism replaced parliamentary democracy at a time when the latter could no longer be used to camouflage the rule of monopoly capitalism.

With due respects to The Economist, the more far-sighted capitalists in Britain are not really engaged in outbursts of 'uncontrollable laughter'. They are busy thinking out what they must do now that their Right-wing Labour puppets stand discredited. We are entering an entirely new period of political life in Britain wherein the class struggle and its political requirements will pose major problems before the Labour and trade union movement.

IS MR. GAITSKELL THE LEADER OF THE LABOUR PARTY?

Mr. Gaitskell advised last year's special conference to 'take a holiday from producing streams of new detailed policy pamphlets. There are other and more important jobs to be done', he said. His advice has been taken seriously. He proposed the elimination of Clause Four, which advocates nationalization and public ownership. This piece of advice has now been decisively rejected by the trade unions and constituency parties.

'There seems no doubt', said Mr. Gaitskell, 'that if we

are to accept the majority view of those who fought this election, nationalization—on balance—lost us votes'. He then drew the conclusion that Clause Four must go.

'The movement', said Mr. Cousins at the TUC, 'still believed it could not have socialism fully applied without control of large sections of major industry.' Even the Right-wing trade union leader Mr. Carron (a faithful disciple of Hugh Gaitskell) declared that 'it may be that a further re-examination of the situation is necessary'.

Mr. Gaitskell says that nationalization loses votes; the TUC says that more nationalization is necessary and the present situation must be re-examined.

The TUC called for 'a complete rejection of any defence policy based on the threat of the use of strategic or tactical nuclear weapons', and 'the permanent cessation of the manufacture or testing of nuclear or thermo-nuclear weapons'.

Mr. Gaitskell stands for the manufacture of the H-bomb and testing of nuclear weapons.

This is the real policy gulf which separates Mr. Gaitskell from the Labour Party and the trade unions. Whilst he may continue to hold office as leader of the Labour Party, he has no mandate whatsoever to continue in that post.

Mr. Gaitskell and his Right-wing supporters should, therefore, make way for new leaders who represent these policies and who are prepared to fight for them.

THE 'EXPERTS' AT WORK

For weeks the so-called political 'experts' have been working on plans which would enable Mr. Gaitskell to continue as leader of the Labour Party. Rumours were circulating at the TUC to the effect that the anti-bomb policy of Congress would require a two-thirds' majority before it became Labour Party policy.

The resolution on German rearmament carried at the Scarborough conference of the Labour Party in 1954 received only a 248,000 majority. Yet no one dared to suggest that **this** decision required a two-thirds' majority of conference. Since it suited the Right wing in 1954 to uphold a policy carried by a small majority, they have no alternative but to accept the conference decision on the H-bomb in 1960.

If the Right wing heed the advice given by Fleet Street,

they are heading for a split from the Labour Party. The Economist of September 10 advises them to ignore party decisions. 'Disaster will arise', it says, 'only if the Parliamentary Labour Party and its leaders continue to take these annual votes in seaside pavilions solemnly and meaningfully and seriously as compulsory marching orders'.

It calls upon Mr. Gaitskell to 'stop wriggling and retreating' and join in the 'hearty laughter' at what has been decided at the TUC. In other words, it is calling openly for the Right-wing leaders to take the next step and split the party.

It may be that Mr. Gaitskell and his friends will publicly repudiate all this, but there are other incidents which cannot be allowed to go unnoticed.

Several weeks ago, Mr. Douglas Jay, a prominent lieutenant of Mr. Gaitskell, announced that he would resign from the Labour Party if an anti-Gaitskell resolution was carried by the Hampstead Labour Party. Here is a state of affairs which borders on the threat of a split.

There is, in fact, a real danger that Mr. Gaitskell and his friends have already a plan under way to split the Labour Party. Although this may not come to a head for some time, there is little doubt but the effectiveness of organizational manoeuvres is rapidly dwindling.

LIFT THE BANS AND PROSCRIPTIONS

Regardless of what Mr. Gaitskell may or may not do, the decisions of the Scarborough conference will be extremely important. For the Labour Party to cut loose from collaboration with the Tories on matters of defence is to take the first great step towards independent working-class politics. This was the goal of many of the socialist pioneers. Unfortunately, the pressure of the ruling class proved too strong. As time went on the party was turned more and more away from the ideals of the pioneers, to collaboration with the Tories.

A Labour Party free from collaboration with the Tories could begin a serious discussion of socialist policy. The bans, proscriptions and bureaucratic bludgeoning which have gone on in the party, especially against the Marxists, can now be replaced by a real discussion on the problems of the working class.

The aim of the bans and proscriptions has always been to preserve relations with the Tory Party. The Right

wing who do their bidding always resort to such methods out of the fear that their pro-Tory policies would be exposed.

The implications of the TUC debates are not as yet comprehended by many of its members. The infamous black circular, for instance, which is directed against the Communist Party but which in reality is a blow against the democratic rights of all socialists should be removed. The way is now open for a campaign along these lines.

WHAT NEXT FOR MR. COUSINS?

There is no doubt that Mr. Cousins has played an important role in the struggle against the H-bomb. Unfortunately, he doesn't appear to be too clear on what is to be done in the future. The Right wing and the Tories will continue to insist that it is necessary to defend capitalist Britain by retaining the bomb. Mr. Cousins is for scrapping the bomb, but he remains silent on the question of the defence of capitalist Britain as such. This hesitation on the part of Mr. Cousins can have dangerous consequences.

Socialists would be proud to defend a socialist Britain, we are not pacifists. Should the working class take the power in Britain and replace capitalism with socialist planning, then the Labour movement would fight with every means in its power to defend this great conquest. We are opposed to the H-bomb, because we are opposed to the defence of capitalist Britain.

Defence of a socialist Britain must be based upon true socialist internationalism. The fate of mankind cannot be determined by socialism in one country, but only through the efforts of the international working class to weaken world imperialism and eventually establish international socialism. A socialist Britain would redouble its efforts to convince the working people of the capitalist countries that they must unite in order to put an end to capitalism and the H-bomb for ever.

THE EMPLOYERS WILL RESIST

To establish socialism in Britain means to take the power from the Tories and the capitalists. Mr. Cousins is quite right when he stresses the need for extending

nationalization to major industries, but this is by no means enough. The employers are going to resist such measures; how does Mr. Cousins propose to resist the employers? Surely the opposition which the employers directed against the Labour government over the proposed nationalization of sugar and insurance should be taken as an example of what we can expect. If they resisted the nationalization of these two industries so fiercely, how much more fiercely will they resist the nationalization of the engineering, shipbuilding, motor and aircraft industries?

It is extremely dangerous to imagine that the Tories will relinquish control over their property by virtue of an Act of Parliament. They are not going to stand by and peacefully give up the powerful privileges they have enjoyed as a class for so long. All those tendencies in the Labour movement, such as the Communist Party, who preach the peaceful road to socialism simply confuse an important socialist principle.

The House of Commons is used by the Tory Party and big business to create the impression that power in Britain is wielded democratically. There could be nothing further from the truth. Parliament in Britain rests upon the state and its repressive institutions, such as the defence services and the police force. These institutions are staffed by specially trained representatives of the ruling class who will never relinquish power by peaceful means.

THE TORIES WILL FIGHT

Mr. Cousins cannot remain silent on the question of defence. If war was declared tomorrow where would he stand in relation to the defence policy of the Tory Party? If the Tories violently resist nationalization what will he advise the movement to do? These are questions which cannot be left unanswered because the next step forward for the Labour movement will depend on how the fight can now be intensified on all fronts against the Tories.

The rank and file of the Labour and trade union movement must be mobilized behind socialist policies which, when applied, will lead to the establishment of a socialist Britain. Labour must fight to win the next election on the basis of a socialist policy which will include nationalization of the basic industries, without compensation and

under workers' control; freedom for the colonial peoples and an end to the H-bomb. It must prepare itself to expropriate the Tory employers should they resort to violent measures against the socialist legislation of a Labour government. They must be resisted by a working class which is prepared and determined to win.

How shall we mobilize the rank and file of the Labour Party and the trade unions? The first step is to change the present leadership of the Labour Party and to elect people who are prepared to support and carry out the present policy endorsed by the Trades Union Congress.

The second step is to begin immediately a policy-making discussion in the ranks which will enable all points of view in the Labour and trade union movement to come together and work out a programme for a socialist Britain. Bans, proscriptions and witch-hunting must go. If the Right wing want to participate in this discussion, let them—on the same terms as anyone else.

The third step which must be taken is to unite the forces of the trade unions with the Labour Party in resisting Tory attacks against the standard of living and working conditions of the people. Mr. Cousins should come off the fence. At the Trades Union Congress he voted for a Right-wing resolution which advocated curbing the rights of militant shop stewards. He therefore struck a blow at the rank and file. Exactly what role does Mr. Cousins think the rank and file should play in the struggle for socialism? Are they supposed to shut up and say nothing and leave it to their betters at the top? Such a position would be ridiculous. If democratic socialism means anything, surely it must mean the full participation of the rank and file in organizing their struggle against the Tories? How can you separate a Tory politician from a Tory employer? If Mr. Cousins hits out at those who are leading a militant struggle in the factories, then he is, whether he likes it or not, indirectly assisting the Tories both in industry and in Parliament. There can be no looking both ways on this important question.

FOR LEFT UNITY AGAINST THE TORIES

The Socialist Labour League, like the Communist Party, is at present banned and proscribed by the Right-wing Labour leaders. We have many fundamental and important differences with the Communist Party, but we feel

that an injury to one is an injury to all. The time has come to launch a united struggle by all sections of the Labour movement such as the Communist Party and the Socialist Labour League, Left Labour Party members and trade unionists to lift the bans and proscriptions and restore the rights of socialist organizations to affiliate to the Labour Party.

The Scarborough conference could be the beginning of a great movement forward along these lines. We are on the threshold of a great change. The powerful defeats which the Right wing are suffering can make it possible for genuine socialist unity to emerge. But this unity does not mean the elimination of discussion or criticism of the viewpoints of those who are working seriously for it. The Socialist Labour League has constantly fought for unity in action of all sections of the working class. We believe that the time is now coming when we can implement it.

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SEPTEMBER, 1960

SOCIALIST LABOUR LEAGUE

PUBLIC MEETING

PUBLIC LIBRARY

Vernon Road
Scarborough

THURSDAY
OCTOBER 6
8 p.m.

Speakers:

Cliff Slaughter

Gerry Healy

Chairman:

G. Gale

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