

TORY ECONOMIC POLICY IN CONFUSION

The defeat that the Government has suffered owing to the Electricity supply and other settlements has brought into question the whole of the Government's economic policy. The Government wishes to avoid industrial conflict but is under pressure from home and abroad to 'stand firm'. This week's Economist says quite flatly that the harm done to Britain by the Electricity supply settlement is less than that done had there been a strike. Elsewhere in the Bulletin we have material showing the attitude of foreign bankers. On the other hand, whilst the Government is now trying to reassert itself and make the wages pause stick, the workers have every incentive to go ahead with their wage demands. How can the Government now say to the miners and railway workers "No, you can not have a wage increase the country cannot afford it" when the threat of a strike brought a climb down in the Electricity supply industry? Still more, and perhaps of greater importance, how can trade union bureaucrats use arguments about the country's wellbeing to head off wage demands and action to achieve them?

This is the dilemma of the Tory Government. They know that to precipitate sharp struggles could very well upset the whole trade union set up, that a series of struggles could lead to the kicking out of the dominant class collaboration leadership and its replacement by a militant leadership. The strength of the workers movement is such that unless the Government is willing to pursue the battle to the bitter end there would be the danger of the Government's defeat. They cannot be unmindful of the electoral consequences of such a struggle - the loss of two thirds of the Tory general election vote at Bridgeton could be an augury - more especially as the official leadership of the Labour Party would be compelled to make some kind of a 'left' turn.

All these developments take place with a backcloth of the attempt by the Tories to get into the Common Market. For a variety of reasons, entry into the Common Market makes more essential for the Tories that they should weaken the workers bargaining power. Under conditions of intenser competition against countries whose working class, in most cases, is tamer, British capitalism would be at a disadvantage. From a general point of view the other members of the Common Market will not be keen to have in their ranks a country with an 'uncontrollable' working class.

The Labour leadership, whilst making some political capital out of the Tory Governments difficulties, gives no real alternative policy. No one knows exactly how Gaitskell proposes to deal with the situation. This is not accidental, the present crisis is basically a crisis of policy and to propose an alternative to what the Tories are doing is to bring into question the fundamental assumptions underlying their (and the Labour leadership's) policies. The intolerable strains on the British economy are caused not by wages inflation but by the armaments burden. What the capitalist class is angry about when they talk of wage inflation is the refusal of the British working class to pay for the armaments burden by tightening their belts. Protecting the pound or maintaining sterling means preserving British capitalism. The balance of payments crisis has significance only in terms of Britain being part of the world capitalist system. Whilst the working class rejects paying for these policies, this rejection has not yet been reflected in a socialist consciousness, which would draw the necessary conclusions from this state of affairs. Until this comes about the fight on the industrial front will be an empirical one and not fitted into a general policy.

On the industrial front the trade union leadership are angry at the Tory Government's brusque treatment of them but also fearful of the militant spirit which is growing among the rank and file. They still haven't given up hope of arriving at at some working arrangement with the Government, hence their dilly-dallying on the Government's planning bodies participation. However owing to the pressures upon them, the Tories cannot come to complete agreement with the trade Union bureaucrats. This fact, combined with the restiveness of the rank and file brings into question the social role of the trade union bureaucrats. The bureaucrats can only play their role of middleman between the workers and the bosses if on the one hand they show some results to the workers, apparently greater than those direct action would bring, and on the hand, if they can exercise control over the workers. Therefore the trade union bureaucrats will be forced to initiate, very much against their will, some struggles. The exact pattern of this will be determined by a complex of factors. Nevertheless, this very fact will of itself help very much to create a basis for all kinds of struggles, both official and unofficial.

The extreme case of the teachers' wage claim shows what we must expect if the rank and file does not take a hand. However there exist various currents in the trade union leadership and the 'left' tendency, as personified by Cousins, can play a powerful role in the initial stages in setting into motion powerful forces. Of course, as marxists we know that at a later stage, in the absence of a marxist leadership, ^{the lefts} can be just as dangerous as the rights of today.

Whilst in confusion about their general strategy and whilst they will probably pull back at the brink of an all out struggle, the Tories and bosses will pursue very definite tactics. We can see this clearly in the Motor Car industry in the Rootes strike. They will seek to take on, and try to inflict defeats upon, those sections of the workers who are weakest or can be most easily isolated. On the other side, the trade union bureaucrats, even if they do initiate struggle, have no conception of how to wage all out struggle neither do they want things to 'get out of control'; their ideal would be where they could use the workers as pawns in a gigantic game of chess with the employers.

This then is the prospect before us, one of sharp struggles in industry without a conscious leadership, and without being fitted into a general workers' programme with socialist aims. We must, of course, see our main contribution as helping to bring about a state of affairs where such a programme can be worked out and accepted by large sections of the working class. However we have a role to play here and now, which is an integral part of the struggle for such a programme.

We should struggle for an immediate programme around the following points:

(1) All out preparation at all levels, especially factory level, of the trade union movement. The drawing up of concrete plans to wage the fight for increased wages and against attacks on conditions.

(2) A policy of the linking up of all struggles with the maximum solidarity. At all costs we must prevent any section of the working class having to take the brunt of a particular struggle a la the Rootes Acton strike.

(3) For the unions to on to the offensive now by waging recruiting campaigns and a programme of activity. Pockets of non-Unionism should be tackled by the whole trade union movement.

(4) For the Labour Party to be linked to the industrial struggles and carry out solidarity action with all strikers etc. At present ^{this} can be done best, and easiest, by getting the Young Socialists to intervene in industrial struggle.

(5) For a renewal of propaganda for socialism by all organisations of the working class, in particular posing the socialist solution to the present crisis of British capitalism.

We should raise all these questions in our organisations and in particular in the Trade Councils, which can in the coming period play a key role.

STEERING COMMITTEE

26/11/61

GUERRILLA STRIKES SMASH A PAY PAUSE

A series of guerilla strikes in Scotland by the Scottish Horse and Motormen's Association has smashed the pay pause in road haulage. The bosses have been forced to pay a wage award immediately instead of waiting until January 10th. Over 1,000 men were involved in the strikes, some of which only lasted a day or two, until the firms capitulated. The award consists of a 6 shillings increase and a two hours cut in the working week. This victory, whilst small in content, is of importance in the lessons it contains for other sections of the working class.

ROOTES STRIKE CONTINUES - SOLIDARITY GROWS

As reported in the press, the Rootes strikers have again, after 13 weeks, decided to struggle on until all are reengaged. They turned down an offer by the Rootes bosses to re-employ 490 of the 750 on strike. The bosses proposals contained 'bait' of a phased build up over two weeks during which applicants for employment would be paid the 'guaranteed week' and compensation for those to be sacked. But real content of the proposals came out when it was realised that those sacked would include all the 'trouble makers.' Meanwhile teams of Rootes men are touring areas, especially Yorkshire, to explain their case. Shardlows workers have donated £180, the Sheffield AMU District Committee £20, Armthorpe colliery workers £20 and many others from Yorks pits and factories. Weekly collections are taking place in many London factories. The Sheet Metal Workers has blacked all Acton work throughout the cou

THE PERMANENT REVOLUTION.

(A Fundamental Thesis)

I hope that the reader will not object if, to end up this book, I attempt, without fear of repetition to formulate briefly the most fundamental conclusions.

1. The theory of the permanent revolution now demands the greatest attention of every Marxist, for the course of the ideological and class struggle has finally and conclusively raised this question from the realm of reminiscences over the old differences of opinion among Russian Marxists and converted it into a question of the character, the inner coherence and the methods of the international revolution in general.

2. With regard to the countries with a belated bourgeois development, especially the colonial and semi-colonial countries, the theory of the permanent revolution signifies that the complete and genuine solution of their tasks, democratic and national emancipation is conceivable only through the dictatorship of the proletariat and its leader of the subjugated nation, above all of its peasant masses.

3. Not only the agrarian, but also the national question is assigned to the peasantry, the overwhelming majority of the population of the backward countries, an important place in the democratic revolution. Without an alliance of the proletariat with the peasantry the tasks of the democratic revolution cannot be solved, nor even seriously posed. But the alliance of these two classes can be realised in no other way than through an intransigent struggle against the influence of the national liberal bourgeoisie.

4. No matter what the first episodic stages of the revolution may be in the individual countries, the realisation of the revolutionary alliance between the proletariat and the peasantry is conceivable only under the political direction of the proletarian vanguard, organised in the Communist party. This in turn means that the victory of the democratic revolution is conceivable only through the dictatorship of the proletariat which bases itself upon the alliance with the peasantry and first solves the problems of the democratic revolution.

5. The old slogan of Bolshevism—"the democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and peasantry" expresses precisely the above characterised relationship of the proletariat, the peasantry and the liberal bourgeoisie. This has been confirmed by the experience of October. But the old formula of Lenin does not settle in advance the problem of what the mutual relations between the proletariat and the peasantry inside of the revolutionary bloc will be. In other words, the form of the alliance has unknown algebraic quantities which have to make way for precise arithmetic quantities in the process of historical experience. The latter showed, under the circumstances that exclude every other interpretation, that no matter how great the revolutionary role of the peasantry may be, it can nevertheless not be a leading one. The peasantry follows either the worker or the bourgeois. This means that the "democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and peasantry" is only

conceivable as a dictatorship of the proletariat that leads the pe
masses behind it.

6. A democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and peasantry, as a regime that is distinguished from the dictatorship of the proletariat by its class content, might be realized only in case an independent revolutionary party could be constituted which expresses the interests of the peasants and in general of petty bourgeois democracy, a party that is capable of conquering power with this or that aid from the proletariat and of determining its revolutionary program. As modern history teaches - especially the history of Russia in the last twenty-five years - an insurmountable obstacle on the road to the creation of a peasants' party is the economic and political dependence of the petty bourgeoisie and its deep internal differentiation, thanks to which the upper sections of the petty bourgeoisie (the peasantry) go with the big bourgeoisie in all decisive cases, especially in war and in revolution, and the lower sections - with the proletariat, while the intermediate section has the choice between two extreme poles. Between the Kerensky and the Bolshevik power, between the Kuo Min Tang and the dictatorship of the proletariat there cannot and does not lie any intermediate position, that is, no democratic dictatorship of the workers and peasants.

7. The endeavour of the Comintern to foist upon the Eastern countries the slogan of the democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and peasantry, finally and long ago exhausted by history, can have only a reactionary effect. In so far as this slogan is counter-posed to the slogan of the dictatorship of the proletariat, it contributes to the dissolution of the proletariat into the petty bourgeois masses and in this manner creates better conditions for the hegemony of the national bourgeoisie and consequently for the collapse of the democratic revolution. The introduction of this slogan into the program of the Comintern is a direct betrayal of Marxism and of the October traditions of Bolshevism.

8. The dictatorship of the proletariat which has risen to power as the leader of the democratic revolution is inevitably and very quickly placed before tasks that are bound up with deep inroads into the rights of bourgeois property. The democratic revolution goes over immediately into the socialist, and thereby becomes a permanent revolution.

9. The conquest of power by the proletariat does not terminate the revolution, but only opens it. Socialist construction is conceivable only on the foundation of the class struggle, on a national or international scale. This struggle, under the conditions of an overwhelming predominance of capitalist relationships on the world as a whole, will inevitably lead to explosions, that is, internally to civil war. Therein lies the permanent character of the socialist revolution, such, regardless of whether it is a backward country that is involved, which only yesterday accomplished its democratic revolution, or an advanced capitalist country, which already has behind it a long epoch of democracy and parliamentarism.

10. The completion of the socialist revolution within national limits is unthinkable. One of the basic reasons for the crisis in bourgeois society is the fact that the productive forces created by the conflict with the framework of the national state.

From this follow, on the one hand, imperialist wars, and on the other, Utopia of the bourgeois United States of Europe. The socialist revolution commences on the national arena, is developed further on the international state and finally on the world arena. Thus, the socialist revolution becomes a permanent revolution in a newer and broader sense of the word, it attains completion only in the final victory of the new society on the entire planet.

II. The above outlined scheme of development of the world revolution eliminates the question of the countries that are "mature" for socialism in the spirit of that pedantic, lifeless classification given by the present program of the Comintern. In so far as capitalism has created the world market, the division of labour and productive forces throughout the world, it has also prepared the world economy for socialist transformation.

The various countries will go through this process at different tempos. Backward countries, under certain conditions, can arrive at the dictatorship of the proletariat sooner than the advanced countries, but they come later than the latter to socialism.

A backward colonial or semi-colonial country, whose proletariat is insufficiently prepared to unite the peasantry and seize power, thereby incapable of bringing the democratic revolution to its conclusion. On the contrary, in a country where the proletariat has power in its hands as the result of the democratic revolution, the subsequent fate of the dictatorship and socialism is not only and not so much dependent in its final analysis upon the national productive forces, as it is upon the development of international socialist revolution.

I2. The theory of socialism in one country which rose on the yeast of the reaction against October is the only theory that consists in, and to the very end, opposes the theory of the permanent revolution.

The attempt by the epigones, under the blows of our criticism, to confine the application of the theory of socialism in one country exclusively to Russia, because of its specific characteristics (its exclusiveness and its natural resources) does not improve matters but only makes them worse. The break with the international position always leads to national messianism, that is, to attribute special prerogatives and peculiarities to one's own country, which would permit it to play a role that other countries cannot attain.

The world division of labour, the dependence of Soviet industry upon foreign technique, the dependence of the productive forces of the advanced countries of Europe upon Asiatic raw materials etc., etc., make the construction of a socialist society in any single country impossible.

I3. The theory of Stalin/Bucharin not only contrasts the national democratic revolution quite mechanically to the socialist revolution, but also tears the national revolution from the international path.

This theory sets the revolution in the backward countries on the basis of the task of establishing an unrealisable regime of the democratic dictatorship, it contrasts this regime to the dictatorship of the proletariat, thus introducing illusion and fiction into politics paralysing the struggle for power of the proletariat in the East, and hampering the victory of the national and colonial revolution.

The very seizure of power by the proletariat signifies, from the standpoint of the theory of the epigones, the completion of the national revolution (to 'nine-tenths' according to Stalin's formula) and the opening of the epoch of national reform. The theory of the kulak growing into the theory of socialism and the theory of the 'neutralisation' of the world bourgeoisie are consequently inseparable from the theory of socialism in one country.

They stand and fall together.

By the theory of national socialism, the Communist International is degraded to a weapon useful only for the struggle against military intervention. The present policy of the Comintern, its regime, and the selection of its leading personnel, correspond entirely to the debasement of the Communist International to an auxiliary corps which is not destined to solve independent tasks.

I4. The program of the Comintern created by Bucharin is thoroughly eclectic. It makes the hopeless attempt to reconcile the theory of socialism in one country with Marxian internationalism which is, however, inseparable from the permanent character of the world revolution. The struggle of the Communist Left Opposition for a correct policy and a healthy regime in the Communist International is inseparably combined with a struggle for a Marxian program. The question of the program in turn is inseparable from the question of the two mutually exclusive theories: the theory of permanent revolution and the theory of socialism in one country. The problem of permanent revolution has long outgrown the episodic differences of opinion between Lenin and Trotsky, which were completely exhausted by history. The struggle is between the basic ideas of Marx and Lenin on the one side and the eclectics of the Centrists on the other.

Constantinople, November 30,