

KEEP LEFT

ORGAN OF THE WEMBLEY LABOUR LEAGUES OF YOUTH

VOLUME 2. No. 9

JULY 1953

Price 1½d.

COMMENT

The recent events in East Berlin must have caused shivers in Moscow. The growing restlessness of the workers in both Czechoslovakia and Eastern Germany boiled over in Berlin upon the order for an increase in production. The workers' demands for more food and free elections illustrates Moscow's relentless pillage of the economy.

Of course, the outburst will be used as a counter in the power political game, but in the long run, the movement will prove as dangerous for the capitalist powers as for Moscow. After thirty years of betrayal, defeat, and demoralisation, the German working class may yet set off the explosion which will threaten not only the tyranny of the Kremlin but the existence of capitalist society itself.

* * * * *

At the time of writing, it is not possible to tell whether Dr. Rhee and his friends in the U.S. have succeeded in frustrating the attempt to end the Korean War. In any case, the 'escape' of prisoners, and other events in South Korea expose the complete futility of this 'war against aggression' and the hypocrisy of those who have portrayed it as a fight for freedom.

Meanwhile, the Great Power's manoeuvre, and the slaughter continues. If the truce is not signed, what possible arguments can now be raised against the complete withdrawal of British troops?

* * * * *

WE ARE BREAKING AWAY FROM TRADITION NEXT MONTH. GREAT NEWS - THE EDITORIAL BOARD ARE PLEASED TO INFORM OUR READERS, THAT THERE WILL BE AN AUGUST ISSUE OF 'KEEP LEFT' - SO DON'T FORGET TO PLACE YOUR ORDER WITH YOUR NEWS AGENT NOW!!!

CHALLENGE TO BRITAIN?

Roll up, roll up, all you poor hard done-by capitalists. Place your cross here and the Labour Government will stabilise your decaying system for you.

"Challenge to Britain", the new Labour Party policy document is a challenge to Socialism. It is an attempt to solve the crises of British capitalism by bolstering it up again and ignoring the obvious Socialist solution.

This document also completes a cycle that even League of Youth members have seen, for two years ago Nye Bevan resigned from the cabinet on the very issues this pamphlet advocates.

There are of course many excellent proposals in the statement and it is with these I should like to deal firstly.

All National Health charges are to be abolished as soon as Labour is returned to power. This is a good sign of healthy Socialist reasoning, for their imposition in the first place was wrong and a victory for the Tories.

This pamphlet also advocates public control over the Industrial assurance, and subscribes to the belief of superannuation schemes. Labour will also set up the machinery to manufacture the requirements of the Health Service. This will cut the cost of the Health Service and stop the disgusting profiteering that has been going on in the last few years.

Praise here is due, I think, to the Socialist Medical Association for the inclusion in the policy of the plan to provide 'long stay annexes' in hospitals for old people who require care and comfort.

The plan for reform of the educational system is both bold and imaginative, the proposals to take over the best of the public schools as high schools, the ending of Local Government scholarships to public schools, and the demand that the Universities should be modernised and reformed to fit in with the needs of society, are excellent.

The immediate return of food subsidies, etc. and the repeal of the 1929 Industrial Derating Provisions Act will see that those most able to bear the burden, carry it.

But when we review the industrial and economic side of the new policy - it stinks. The resolutions and demands of the rank and file at the Morecambe conference have been ignored. Socialism has been swept aside, and the policy of propping up this rotting and decaying system is employed. Capitalism has got us into this horrible mess, and if we are to believe this pamphlet, will get us out of it.

The proposed solutions to the crisis upon us, is to either only half nationalise some of the basic industries, leaving the other half in the hands of those responsible for the present position, or to make loans easier for private enterprise to drag this country and the world into an even bigger crisis.

It is proudly claimed that encouraged by the last Labour Government, the oil industry built massive new refineries in Britain and that output in 1951 was

Challenge to Britain? (Cont'd)

nearly twenty times more than 1946, so were their profits. This expansion should have been carried out by the State for the benefit of the community, it is still not too late to correct this mistake.

The general proposals for industry are:

** "We propose that the State shall either build and operate new enterprises or acquire a controlling interest in existing enterprises or both".

"We will see that there is an adequate supply of risk capital at cheap rates".

Neither of these proposals will solve our problems; only full nationalisation of all basic industries, with full workers' control and the extension and fuller use of consumer councils will. Workers' control and consumer councils have been completely ignored in this policy statement.

As we read "Challenge to Britain" we realise that a tremendous task we have before us, the necessity to demand that the decisions of last year's conference be implemented, and at this year's conference we must demand even more drastic social measures to solve the ever-growing crises of the years ahead.

By the way, we still haven't a Foreign Policy!

** - Page 11, "CHALLENGE TO BRITAIN"

JOHN HAYNES
Harrow Weald L.o.Y.

* * *

SOCIALIST CLASSICS"THE JUNGLE" - by Upton Sinclair

In "The Jungle", which was the outcome of a visit to the Chicago stockyards in 1904, Upton Sinclair gives a comprehensive description of the capitalist system as it applied to the meat industry; how it worked, how the high profits were made, and how the system was maintained.

Two main strands run through this book. Firstly, the account of the sufferings endured by the working-class, even though money wages (for those in employment) were higher than they had ever been before. It is to be noted that Sinclair does not fall into the error, as common then as now, of arguing that because conditions were better than in the past, the working-class should be satisfied with the capitalist system. For he saw clearly that the working-class standard of living should be compared with the contemporary standard of living of the employers. The latter standard of living would be within the reach of all, should the Co-operative Commonwealth (which was Sinclair's version of the Socialist economic system) be substituted for the capitalist system.

The second strand, is his exposure of the capitalist system. The view that capitalism is the most efficient and most libertarian method of satisfying the needs of consumers, he shows quite clearly to be hypocritical and in opposition to the facts. The capitalist is out to secure the maximum profit for himself and is not

"The Jungle" - Upton Sinclair (Cont'd)

overscrupulous as to how he does so, and in the meat trade, the capitalist succeeded in poisoning many of his customers, which can hardly be called an efficient way of satisfying consumer's needs.

The meat industry of Chicago, employing the methods of mass-production, was dominated by two gigantic concerns, which although nominally competitive, had formed a trust in order to keep down the prices paid for cattle and to keep up the prices of their own products. In order to achieve maximum output, nothing was wasted - the cattle which had died from T.B., cholera, or gangrene being slaughtered at night, when the federal meat inspectors were away. Odd scraps of meat and skin, mildewed meat, decayed meat, sweepings from the floors, potato flour and chemicals - all went into the sausages or were canned. If perchance a workman should fall into the vats used for preparing the meat - well, the customer wouldn't taste him in the sausage. The horrors of the meat factory may turn the stomachs of the squeamish - the dirt, the absence of sanitation, the accidents, the working conditions, the vermin which were everywhere - but all this is forgotten by those who talk of the 'good old days'.

Wages, though high, were offset by higher prices and extortionate rents. The continued influx of immigrants and the large number of unemployed, drove down wages in times of depression. The immigrants were swindled by housing agents who sold them jerry-built houses on hire-purchase, knowing that working people could never keep up the instalment payments. The houses were damp and insanitary, the streets unlit and unpaved, and the water though it came from taps was not purified. Family life was disrupted by the long hours of work and the necessity for every person to work in order to subsist. But the only clothing they could afford was shoddy, and the food they ate consisted of 'sophisticated' milk, bread containing more chalk than flour, and sausages which contained more starch than meat. In face of these difficulties, the Unions were powerless. Strikes failed, but only when the strikers were faced with the alternative of death by starvation or returning to work for lower wages. In addition the Unions were riddled with spies and agents provocateurs and the leaders were frequently bought off by the bosses. The Chicago municipality was controlled by the bosses who paid the city councillors, the police chiefs and the magistrates. They 'fixed' elections by bribing electors, falsifying electoral registers, duping unsuspecting immigrants and intimidating opponents. In spite of this, the employers could not prevent the spread of Socialist ideas.

From the world of poverty, starvation, drunkenness, prostitution and crime, which had arisen under capitalism, Sinclair wanted to see the working-class arise and throw off its chains and run the economic system in its own interest. He also realised that they were often too demoralised to resist the onslaught of capitalism, and that many working people sincerely believed that wage-slavery was the essence of individual freedom, rejecting Socialism as authoritarian. To Sinclair the one essential principle was that of 'no compromise' and that reforms were but steps on the road to Socialism, and that eventually the whole working-class would arise to a new life.

ADRIAN MOLE

* * *

LABOUR WILL HOLD THE FIRST GOVERNMENT (3 months) OF THE WEMBLEY YOUTH PARLIAMENT AND WILL PRESENT A QUEEN'S SPEECH, OUTLINING THEIR POLICY, AT THE FIRST SITTING. THIS WILL BE HELD ON THE 16th JULY (THURSDAY) AT THE WEMBLEY TOWN HALL - 7.45 p.m. SO COME ALONG AND HEAR YOUR M.P.'s AT WORK.

SOME REFLECTIONS OF A REPUBLICAN.

Well, now it's all over. The national anthem has been played for the thousandth time; the loyal drunks have staggered on their way; the rubbernecks have performed their contortions, and as the bunting is removed, revealing the familiar unpainted walls, the obvious question poses itself: WHAT THE HECK WAS IT ALL ABOUT?

A study of the enormous quantity of published material on the subject will lead inevitably to the answer: NOBODY KNOWS.

This should not surprise us, for we know that the British Monarchy is an institution which only survives because it has lost all its power. After all, no one really believes that the central figure of the celebrations, who may be, for all we know, a most charming and intelligent young woman, is anything more than human. Indeed, a large amount of propaganda is devoted to attempts to portray her as "just like you and me". But at the same time the impression must be given that we are dealing with something quite extraordinary. That is why we have all the Mumbo-Jumbo, all the self-conscious imitation of the past, all the mystical talk of "symbols"; (everything in the Coronation seemed to be a symbol for something else).

It is true that the Crown is a symbol. It is a symbol of oppression and humiliation for millions of people in the colonies. It is a symbol of the continued existence of a parasitic class in Great Britain. It symbolises the Britain which Socialists wish to see replaced.

However, most people do not look at it in this way. They are grateful for the colour which, in the past few weeks has broken through the drabness of their existence. They enjoyed the skilfully contrived pageantry, the emotional appeal to "tradition", the flags and fireworks and this is the real importance of the Coronation.

The capitalist system continues to exist because of the ignorance of the mass of the people and the extent to which they can be confused into accepting things as they are. At a time when Britain faces a desperate economic situation and when many essential services to its citizens are being cut, millions of pounds were spent precisely to add to their confusion, to take their minds off other things.

The Crown is not an important issue in politics today, but we have seen in the last few weeks what an effective weapon it could be. In the struggles which will undoubtedly occur in the not so distant future, the capitalists of Britain will not hesitate to use its appeal, whatever the personal feelings of the Monarch may be. Socialists must fight against any attempt to prepare the way for such a move and try to avoid being swept away in the current wave of hysteria and sentimentality.

CYRIL SMITH
Wembley South League of Youth.

JOE "THE DEMOCRAT" McCARTHY

It would appear that the latest course being offered by the White House is "How to become a successful witch-hunter" and, of course, the learned professor is Senator Joseph McCarthy, who demanded in Congress not only an investigation into the composition of US Service libraries but also the political background of many leading foreign statesmen.

Needless to say, the National press on this side of the water have answered the battle cry, with varying slights at the Senator. But it is difficult to understand the precise motive of Senator McCarthy's attacks on various leading members of the British public and in particular, the leader of the Opposition, Mr. Clement Attlee.

Two results are quite clear: McCarthy has made himself "headlines" and, secondly, made himself the laughing stock of Europe. For surely, there is nothing less like a communist sympathiser than the "mild" Mr. Attlee. In his attack he has said that there is a "smear" campaign against the "democratic" USA, but the Senator can rest assured that if there was not a campaign before he has now fostered a "hate America" attitude in this country.

To support his allegations the Senator put forward a statement in which, it was said, Mr. Attlee had begun a letter as "Dear Comrade" and had been known to address his associates as "Comrade". This is a pitiful argument, for the word "Comrade" has been used for many years throughout the Labour movement here and abroad. Furthermore, it is even included in American military vocabularies !

This battle of words has been going on for some time, but most of it does not become front page news on this side of the Atlantic. Leading American columnists continually attack Britain and our leading statesmen particularly "Labourites", as they call them, without having either fact or intelligent argument to support their slanderous claims.

Now, President Eisenhower has issued a statement condemning McCarthy and his henchmen, Cohn and Schine, for their witch-hunting activities, including the banning of any book faintly connected with communism, probably even those with red covers. Eisenhower said that Americans SHOULD read books on communism, only by knowing what it is can it be defeated - NOT by hiding it !

But isn't this discovery just a little late - in fact a few years too late? For the un-American Activities Committee has existed a long time and "screened" thousands of people - Senator McCarthy has only enjoyed a recent, if brief, rise to in'fame'y.

"Student"

- - - - 000 - - - -

We noted that Sir Hartley-Shawcross has declined the Kenya Government brief, but not because of his Socialist principles.

Printed and published by the Wembley Labour Leagues of Youth.
Editor: M. Trench, 108 Lonsdale Avenue, Wembley, Mdx..