

KEEP LEFT



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EDITORIAL

At the time of writing the final outcome of the Geneva Conference is not yet known, but already the familiar pattern of world politics has emerged. As always, the two great powers continue their international game of chess with the lesser nations as pawns.

Two other factors must be taken into account. The most important is the ever growing tide of Asian nationalism. In Indo-China, for example, rebellion against French colonial rule is on the way to complete victory. As usual, the Capitalist powers throw their weight behind the corrupt rulers, representing the native landowning class, which act as the puppets of imperialism. On the other hand, the rebels, for want of any alternative, are forced to turn for support to the Soviet bloc, and must mould their tactics to suit the foreign policy of the Kremlin.

The other tendency which shows itself is the reluctance of French and British Capitalism to follow the U.S. lead into any extensive military commitments. This is illustrated by Eden's caution on the question of the proposed South East Asian pact and also by Churchill's statement about Indo-China.

It is true that the latter was far from clear as to what the British Government really intended to do and it left many loopholes for future capitulation to American pressure. Nevertheless, it looks as though another Korea, with American intervention dressed up as "United Nations action" is not possible just now.

Aneurin Bevan's stand on the question of the South East Asian question must be welcomed by all Socialists in the Labour Party. (It is a pity that at the time of Korea he was on the other side of the fence.) It is high time that Labour stopped tailing the Tories on these matters.

(continued foot of page two)

LEAGUE OF YOUTH CONFERENCE 1954.

As in previous years the Master Conference of the League of Youth was dominated by the issue of democracy in the League. This year, however, the question was posed more urgently than ever because of the serious decline in the national position of the organisation.

The announcement that next year's conference would be allowed to discuss political resolutions on two selected topics was welcomed by all delegates, but it was made clear that this small concession did not mark the end of our struggle for the right of free discussion at all levels.

The discussions on resolutions, and particularly the study group report on European Unity, indicated the talent and enthusiasm which exists within the League. Why does Transport House not agree to our demands so that these energies may be used against the Tories instead of being absorbed by this struggle with those who are supposed to be our leaders?

As Ron Keating pointed out in his Chairman's Address, the answer is a political one. The right-wing of the party is afraid of the League of Youth because of its infection with Socialism.

Many branches were not represented simply because they saw the futility of a conference which could not discuss the issues facing young people and the Labour Movement today. The impossibility of the situation was clearly shown in the to-do over emergency resolutions. When Conference had twice rejected the report of the standing orders committee which had refused to accept these resolutions, the Standing Orders' committee offered its resignation. It was only after an astounding piece of blackmail on the part of the N.C.C., a majority of which also threatened to resign, that the resolutions were withdrawn under protest.

It is quite obvious that we cannot go on this way. There must be full democracy in our organisation if it is to play its full part in the Labour Party. We came away from Beaver Hall feeling that, given a bold lead from the N.C.C. the League can win these elementary rights, and can go forward to becoming a really effective weapon in the fight for Socialism.

Sylvia Maizels
Wembley North L.o.Y.

Cyril Smith
Wembley South L.o.

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(continued from page 1)

By giving complete support to the Asian Revolutions, Labour will not only help to end Colonialism but will also assist these movements in freeing themselves from the stranglehold of Stalinism.

UNGRATEFUL WEST INDIANS

Only a few weeks ago, the Royal Commission Report made it quite clear that the leaders of the British Honduran Peoples United Party were anything but loyal Britishers. Just a day before the election, a trailer of another Report told the people what wonderful things the Colonial Office was going to do for them when it found time to get round to it.

And still these ungrateful people went and voted solidly for the P.U.P. How fortunate that the Constitution does not give those electors any real power!

The existing social constitution is nothing but the product of revolution.....
The work for legal reform has no motive power in itself and independent
of revolution.

Rosa Luxembourg

Thought for Today.

If the great powers honestly and sincerely want to call a halt to the world
armament race, they must begin to dismantle their protectionist systems
and to abandon colonial robbery and their policy of 'spheres of influence'
all over the world - in short both in home and foreign politics they must
begin to do the exact opposite of what is now the very essence of capitalist
class national policy.

(written in 1911)

Rosa Luxembourg.

So long as men are content to believe that providence has sent into the
world one class of men saddled and bridled and another class booted and
spurred to ride them so long will they be ridden, but the moment the masses
come to feel and act as if they were men, that moment the inequality ceases.

Keir Hardie.

Progress is not made by converting the older generation, but by educating
the younger.

Benjamin Kidd.

To know what is just and not to practice it is cowardice.

Confucius.

A TIMELY REMINDER.

We would do well, in this our May Day edition of "Keep Left", to remember
the work of Robert Owen, one of the great pioneers of the Socialist and Trade
Union Movements. Owen took a leading part in the Grand National Consolidated
Trades Union (established in 1834) which was the first organisation of its
kind, and which brought over half a million workers into militant activity
against the conditions and social order of their times.

It was the phenomenal success of the G.N.C.T.U. that prompted the govern-
ment attack on the agricultural workers' branch in Tolpuddle. After the
G.N.C.T.U. broke up a few years later, it was nearly half a century before
agricultural and unskilled workers were again effectively organised on a
similar scale.

There is no doubt that the G.N.C.T.U. laid the basis for Trade Union
organisation in nineteenth century Britain, and that its work, in the short
time it was active, not only stimulated Socialist thought and agitation, but
also made a profound impression on the employers of the strength of the
organised working class. One of the rules of the G.N.C.T.U.(no.XLVI) is
worth quoting in full as it makes a point often forgotten by the Trade Union
movement of our own times :

"That although the design of the Union is, in the first instance, to raise
(Continued on back page)

WAR AGAINST WAR

The dropping of atom bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki marked the end of the Second world war, but the remnants of misery and destruction still remain. Less than nine years since the end of the war, the big powers are engaged in arms race unparalleled in an era of "peace". (With, incidentally, Germany and Japan, "the militarist" nations, disarmed). Britain's £1,500 - £2,000 millions per year expenditure on arms is over three times that of the years of war preparation 1937-9. There seems no limit to the new and more deadly weapons which are being constantly produced: both America and Russia have exploded hydrogen bombs more than twenty times as powerful as the bombs used on Japan. If the living hell of Hiroshima marked the end of the last war, it will herald but the beginning of the next.

Who still refuses to see that the misery and suffering of two world wars, with the staggering total of over 45 millions killed and wounded, has solved nothing? The Second world war, as the First, was the result of a clash between one group of capitalists, whose markets and privileges were threatened by another and, by the drawing to a close of the post-war recovery boom and the intensification of the struggles for markets between the capitalist powers the seeds of a new conflict are being sown. Given the continuance of capitalism, war, almost certainly against Russia and China, is inevitable.

The central feature of the "cold war" is the clash between two fundamentally opposing systems, western Imperialism on the one hand and the state-owned economies of the Russian bloc on the other. In the well-worn names of "Freedom" and "Democracy", the western powers are preparing for war against their old "comrades-in-arms" the Russians, with the aid of the ex-"Fascist beasts" the Germans and the ex-"yellow monkeys" the Japanese, or so the Americans hope.

In the camp of the "democracies" we find Franco, Syngman Rhee, Chiang-Kai-Shek and Malan. Wars in the interests of the monopolists and financiers are being waged in Malaya, Indo-China and Kenya, while in America, Negroes and striking workers are brutally assaulted.

The Soviet leaders must bear an equal share of the guilt, for by their betrayal of international socialism, they have prepared the conditions for the present conflict. They were parties to the partition of Korea and the dismemberment of Germany. The Stalinist policy of "Five Power Peace Pacts" serves only to confuse the workers. At best such a solution would only be of a temporary nature, for the causes of war remain and a new conflict would be the inevitable outcome of the policies of imperialism and the Russian bureaucracy.

Socialism alone offers an alternative to the policies of imperialism and Stalinism. A fighting Socialist policy aimed against secret diplomacy, the exploitation of labour, and the

oppression of one country by another, would end for ever the power of the financiers and monopolists and give a lead to the people of the world. The responsibility for such a campaign rests in the main on the British Labour Movement. In the words of Rosa Luxemburg we must wage "war against war", that is, war against the system which causes war.

PADDY WALL
Garston L. o. Y.

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H A V E Y O U READ

W H A T I S S O C I A L I S M ?

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LOCAL GOVERNMENT REFORMS.

The month of May, besides heralding summer, brings the Borough Council Elections - this event, and an occasional rate-fixing meeting, stirring the thoughts of approximately fifty per cent of the public into something approaching a sense of civic responsibility. No one can say that it is a good thing for one half of the electorate to decide the future of the whole community. Educational advances, the evolved betterment of our social and working conditions, and adult suffrage should automatically have encouraged a keener interest in local government than they have, and so it follows that the present system has not served its purpose, and is now out of date. If this assumption is correct, then we must consider how best, and to what ends the system can be reformed.

The Labour party has had this matter under review, but at the moment they have made no more than tentative suggestions, and to encourage discussion I make this humble contribution. Reform as I see it, must arouse interest so that local government becomes a live and vital thing. I would firstly abolish the present system of rate levying and substitute a method based on ability to pay. This is something with which no Socialist should disagree, and is merely a problem of organisation once the principle is settled.

The most difficult task of reform is to transfer apathy on the part of electors into an appreciation of the value of their votes. I make so bold as to suggest that electors failing to use their votes at local elections for reasons which are inexcusable, should forfeit their vote for a period, including the right to vote at Parliamentary elections. It may be argued that this is interference with democratic freedom, but a little coercion is always used in some form or other to implement democratic decisions, and it may bring about, as a result, a greater sense of responsibility to our fellow men.

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 6.)

(LOCAL GOVERNMENT REFORMS (CONTINUED.))

Having disposed of my own theories, let us take a general view of the problems that face us. There is a good case for enlarging administrative areas, and I am sure that official policy will not allow a three tier system to develop. Modern trends of travel and the extension of built up areas have left inefficient and unnatural boundaries, although this may be denied by local pride. Having, however, established our regional authority e.g. London and Middlesex, these may be the questions with which we are faced:

- (1) Would the old system of finance be suitable for adaptation to the new areas?
- (2) Would a greater interest in local affairs be stimulated?
- (3) What would be the advantages?

The answers to (1) and (2) may easily answer number (3). The answer to no. (1) is obviously no, for the inequalities would be magnified, although the situation would be eased if the principle that national assets such as Roads, Education and Health should be financed by the Exchequer, were accepted. No (2) is more problematical, although I feel that the basis of larger areas, with a fair share of newspaper space, in addition to the rate reform mentioned earlier would create an interest, to the greater good of everyone.

A final aspect I would commend to your notice is the question of the raising of loans, as this plays an important part in local government finance. It should be established as a principle that private individuals do not profit from money loaned to finance public works or local civic amenities.

I trust that you have found some food for thought and possibly further discussion, in this article; if so, my effort has not been wasted.

Jim Reynolds
Prospective Cllr. Alperton War.

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("A TIMELY REMINDER" cont.)

the wages of the workmen or to prevent any further deduction therein, and to diminish the hours of labour, the great and ultimate object of it must be to establish the paramount rights of humanity, by instituting such measures as shall effectively prevent the ignorant, idle and useless part of society from having that undue control over the fruits of our toil, which through the agency of a vicious money system they at present possess, and that consequently the unionists should lose no opportunity of mutually encouraging and assisting each other in, bringing about A DIFFERENT ORDER OF THINGS in which the really useful and intelligent part of society only shall have the direction of its affairs, and in which well directed industry and virtue shall meet their just distinction and reward, and vicious idleness its merited contempt and destitution."

Our Trade Union leaders of today cannot afford to overlook this point, for in the long run it is only a Socialist system of society which can guarantee the mass of the people security and a decent standard of life. They must see that the unions do not get sidetracked from the main issue by their day to day activities, but are, as in the past, in the vanguard of the fight for Socialism.

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