

KEEP LEFT



ORGAN OF THE WEMBLEY NORTH AND WEST HENDON LABOUR LEAGUES OF YOUTH

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EMPLOYERS ON THE WARPATH

Mr. Butler's budget can only be understood in one way. It is his signal to his friends and relations, the bankers, industrialists and landlords, that now is the time to attack. It is his way of telling them that, after six years of nibbling at the workers' living standards, the moment has come to take a large bite.

He wants the employers to make a stand on wage increases, while prices rise and the landlords get a chance to put the rents up. If this involves a struggle with organized labour, then the capitalists must be prepared to take the offensive. Meanwhile the government begins the job of dismantling what is left of the welfare state.

(A letter was published recently in the "Wembley Observer", which criticised the Tory Council for spending too much money on school meals and milk. It was written by one Beryl Goldsmith, who happens to be a full-time worker for the Tory Party. We must not be surprised if her letter turns out to have been inspired, in a political, not an artistic sense, by someone at Tory Central Office.)

Profits Up, Wages Down

Butler's aim is to cause sufficient unemployment to enable employers to beat down the wage-claims now coming up. That is why the struggles over what is still mis-named "redundancy" are so important.

All this means that, while profits soar, the real wages of the working class are to be cut. Every day, we read about some dinner or other, at which, after filling his belly, a leading Tory makes the usual speech about the need for sacrifices. In every company report, the chairman tells his shareholders that "our" economic problems will only be solved if those selfish workers stop asking for more money.

What these gentlemen mean is that the problems of the profit-makers can be solved only at the expense of the wage-earners. There is no solution for them and for us.

(continued on page 2)

1925 and 1955

There are some resemblances between the position today and that of thirty years ago. In 1925, a Tory Government was elected by fraud, with the able assistance of the MacDonald-Snowden leadership of the Labour Party. Although miners' wages were the key issue, the government did not start an all out attack at once. Instead it played for time, giving concessions. As Mr. Churchill put it: "We decided to postpone the crisis in the hope of coping effectually with it when the time comes."

At the same time, the government built up coal stocks, perfected its official strike-breaking organization and increased unemployment by going back on the gold standard. While the labour leaders did nothing, the Tories got ready to provoke and smash the General Strike in May 1926.

The Tories Can Be Stopped

Then, as now, the capitalist offensive was by no means irresistible. The rank and file was willing to defend itself when attacked. But it was led by men like Thomas and MacDonald, who made no secret of the fact that they did not want to fight back, and who were just as concerned with maintaining the status quo as their parliamentary sparring partners. That was why Labour was defeated in 1926.

Given a leadership which is prepared to hit back at Big Business, the Tory advance of 1955 can be halted. For example, if the Unions, the Labour Party and the Coops, really went to town on the Tory rents policy, then the proposal to amend the Rent Restriction Act would never reach fruition. Even the attempt to abolish housing subsidies could be de-railed if the tenants went into battle with the complete support of the Labour Movement.

Leaders and Policies.

The Tories and their pet journalists, broadcasters, professors and other tame experts, all tell us the same tale: "Our" economy cannot survive unless "costs" "costs" (i.e. wages) are cut. In one sense they are dead right. British capitalism hammered by German, Japanese and United States competition, can only keep going if it cuts the living standards of those who produce its profits. To stay alive capitalism has to cripple the Labour Movement.

This means that those who strive to defend that movement, who try to protect its hard-won gains, can only succeed if they are prepared to break the power of Big Business. But Big Business is not only a British, but a world-wide, system. And so, to hold back the Tory attack, we require a leadership which understands the need for world socialism.

Because we have not got such a leadership, Mr. Butler is getting away with murder: when labour unites behind a socialist policy, no Tory Chancellor will stand a chance.

CYRIL SMITH
Tockington Ward.

YOUTH FOR SOCIALISM

A REPORT ON A CONFERENCE ORGANISED BY VICTORY FOR SOCIALISM

The morning session was opened by Stephen Swingler, who dealt with the failure of the Labour Party and the Labour movement as a whole not only to attract youth into its ranks since 1949-50, but also to provide any real answer to the problems facing the British working class. He pointed out, quite correctly, that these two things went together. He was followed by a number of delegates, who spoke on the same theme. All agreed that the failure to forge ahead with plans for more nationalisation and the failure to ensure that those working in nationalised industries had a say in the organisation - in other words - the failure to carry through a policy smashing the capitalist system, has led to a loss of active supporters.

The afternoon session was on the question of the League of Youth itself. Ron Keating, 1954 chairman of the N.C.C. and chairman of the Middlesex Federation of Leagues of Youth until it was disbanded by Regional Office after Conference, led off with a short history of the suffering and frustration which had been experienced in the League over the last few years. He then went on to deal with the way in which young people in the Labour Party should work now that Regional and National machinery had been disbanded. He strongly criticised those, who acted in an adventurous manner, by placing themselves in a position where they might find themselves outside the Labour Party, and unable to work with the left-wing, saying that for those, who took their Socialism seriously, their work was within the Labour Party, and not purely on the youth problems.

Ron Keating's views on the work which youth must do now that the League has been disbanded were endorsed overwhelmingly at this Conference by speakers from the floor. In fact the important point which came out of the Conference was that the vast majority of the members of the L.O.Y. feel that the Youth Sections must be accepted, and they must be in them to help and educate any new members, but they thought that contact should be maintained at all levels - in this respect Branches should have joint socials and discussion groups. Our aim must still be for more young socialists and a policy for youth within the Labour Party, and it is necessary to keep this in the mind of all Constituency Parties, which should be asked to protest strongly at the rough handling of the League of Youth at the Margate Conference this year.

The delegates at this Victory for Socialism Conference thanked the organisers very warmly for being the first people this year to give Labour youth a chance to get together to discuss their problems and air their views. It is hoped that there will be more such opportunities in the future. In the meantime it is necessary to warn young members of the Labour Party not to be misled by the Young Communist League, which is trying more than ever before to attract Labour youth to its ranks. The Chairman, Hugh Jenkins, said that, although the Conference had been arranged long before the League's disbandment, he felt that it had been held at an opportune time, and he was very pleased indeed at its success - he was more convinced than ever that youth had a future in the Labour Party, and by the level of the discussion and the enthusiasm, he knew that its future would be fruitful.

SET CYPRUS FREE

The British capitalist press is conducting a Campaign against the people of Cyprus. It continually accuses them of terrorism, disorder and agitation, while it bolsters up the military police and whitewashes the fascist restrictions on the welfare and living standards of the people eg, curfews, raids at all hours of the night, strike smashing etc.,

The working people of Cyprus stand firm and united in their demands for the right of self-determination. As the Greeks are in the majority it is only natural that they should want union with their mother land, and not be ruled by British Imperialism.

The British Conservative Government says Cyprus is of great strategic importance for Western Security that's a lot of bunk. A military base on Cyprus is for the protection of British oil interests in the Middle-East.

Unless something is done and done quickly all hell will be let loose and the innocent are going to get hurt (especially the working class). So far, only two British lads have been killed and a few wounded lets hope we get out before a lot more mothers and wives will be weeping and widowed. Please don't blame the Cypriots, blame the people who allowed such a situation to develop and still refuse to do anything about it--the Tory government.

The Cypriot People demand by right of majority over minority the:-

1. Restoration of democratic right-freedom of speech and assembly, ending the curfew etc.
2. The release of all political prisoners.
3. The immediate and unconditional withdrawal of all British Troops, police and their property.
4. The right of self determination.

To that, the workers, farmers and socialists stand firm and will fight for to the end. The Labour movement in Britain must support them in every way possible as this is our fight as well as theirs. Exploiters and Imperialists of all countries, BEWARE.

G. KENNEDY

West Hendon L.O.Y.

MAKING CONTACT:

We were pleased to receive a copy of "Contact" No. 2., published by St. Pancras North Labour League of Youth. This promising journal is issued monthly and can be obtained from the Editor, 36 Gordon House Road, N. W. 5. It is very important at the present critical period in the development of the League, that papers like this should gain recognition in the Movement. Unlike the press-lords, "KEEP LEFT" has no wish to suppress its contemporaries but, on the contrary, wishes it every success and a growing circulation.

GENEVA AND PEACEFUL COEXISTENCE

The failure of the much-advertised and much-boosted Geneva Conference of the Big Four Foreign Ministers has come as a surprise only to those who have mistaken superficial appearances for the realities behind the Big Power relationships. The realities are comparatively simple (i) the fundamental antagonism between the Western capitalist bloc headed by the United States and the non-capitalist bloc of countries (China, the U.S.S.R., the East European satellites); (ii) the fundamental conflict between the imperialist powers and the colonial revolution; and (iii) the international class struggle which is at the root of world conflicts and the Big Power relations.

The end of the second World War brought about a situation where the U.S.S.R. could no longer count on inter-imperialist wars (Stalin's writings to the contrary, notwithstanding). The U.S.S.R. was face to face with a capitalist coalition led by the mighty United States of America. The feverish war preparations which took on a new upward turn following the outbreak of the Korean War are explicable only in terms of the antagonism between that part of the world which has abolished private property and the other part where private property is still the dominant form of property.

The cold war is not due to misunderstandings, personal antipathies, lack of Conferences, or the cussedness of the late and unlamented Josef Stalin - it is simply due to the fact that capitalism and the U.S.S.R., China, and Eastern Europe cannot coexist. Capitalism and the foundations of Socialism are incompatible. Imperialist rule and domination, for the same reason, cannot coexist with the colonial revolution. The Labour Movement cannot coexist with the Tory Party, the party of the ruling class, the party of the employers and monopolists. All these gigantic conflicts - described as "misunderstandings" in newspaper parlance - can never be resolved by discussions, Conferences, or by diplomatic notes.

One world cannot contain the revolutionary forces making for Socialism, for a new order of society - and the decadent capitalist system with its wars, war preparations and slumps. The slogans of peaceful coexistence, which are now the current slogans emanating from the government of the U.S.S.R., are but a trap for the innocents who confuse the labels with the contents of the bottle of poison. Peaceful coexistence is a myth, a fraud designed to hold back, to disorient the movement against war, which is at one and the same time, the struggle against capitalism.

Against this background the Geneva Conference ended in a cul-de-sac, neither the Western nor the Soviet side giving way on the key German problem. The sale of Soviet arms to Egypt, upsetting the Western contrived balance of power in the Middle East, did not exactly help to lower the tension. On the contrary, it was taken for granted that the Soviet leaders were going to sit back while the Western powers transformed the Middle East into a strategic base against the U.S.S.R., with its Baghdad Pact. Again, it

was assumed that the Soviet leaders were going to make substantial "concessions" in Germany, allowing a restoration of capitalism in Eastern Germany under the cover of all-German free elections.

Among those who took all this for granted was Nye Bevan who writes wistfully and sadly in "Tribune" that "She (Russia) should not have encouraged so many expectations, if all along she did not intend them to be taken seriously". But the facts show that it is the Western powers who have continued with their aggressive policy, despite the efforts (pathetic in themselves) by the Soviet leaders to show their pacific intentions. The current Soviet deals in the Middle East, the visits by Krushchev and Bulganin to India are absolutely defensive moves.

The cold war is still on, despite the fact that it has taken on a more muted form. The Hydrogen Bomb, the collapse of negotiation from strength has cast its darkening shadow over the fate of mankind. This fact has been mainly responsible for the first two Geneva Conferences. Undoubtedly, the Soviet leaders believe they can appease capitalism and its hydrogen bomb by concessions and the lining up of their "Communist" Parties for new zig-zags and changes of lines. However, the capitalist system cannot be appeased. The price imperialism demands of the Soviet leaders (the rolling back of the anti-capitalist sector of the world) is too high, for the Soviet bureaucracy derives its massive income and privileges from this nationalised economy. The Soviet bureaucracy is prepared to sell out any awkward revolutionary movement or colonial uprising for a price, but it cannot allow its own economic basis to be peacefully undermined.

The struggle for Socialism is indivisible. The struggle to remove capitalism and war is international. The collapse of the Geneva Conference only confirms this essential truism.

ELLIS HILLMAN
Chelsea Labour Party

A TORY PANTOMIME

Scene - A Cabinet Meeting In The State of Inertia

PRINCE ANTHONY CHARMING:

Softly, softly, speak to me
My head is spinning terribly,
My troubles, growing, weigh me down,
Is it the same in Every town?

RAB (A Loyal Servant):

Well, my lord, it's all those workers
They're just a rotten lot of shirkers.
They've too much money, lots and lots,
We ought to have a tax on pots.
And now they're full of moans and grouses
Because they can't afford new houses.
If they get up to many more tricks,
We'll give 'em a reminder of 'Twenty-Six!
We've shown 'em once, we'll show them again..

PRINCE ANTHONY CHARMING:

Oh! don't go on! It gives me pain.
All this talk of struggle and fights
Is keeping me awake at nights.
Let's have a tune, hey! minstrel sing,
And make it a merry, jolly thing.

McDCODLE (A Wandering Minstrel) Sings:

There ain't gonna be no war, no more
There ain't gonna be no war
By Lake Geneva I saw my fate
I met a Russian carrying a crate
Along to a friendly Arab state
Now it seems it's too darned late!
It looks like another war.

A WISE OLD MAN:

Shut up you singing ninny,
You ought to wear a pinny.
When I was at the helm
Of this great and glorious realm
We waved our mighty sword
And the natives were over-awed!
You've even made the finest mess
Of hanging on to Cy-per-us!

PRINCE ANTHONY CHARMING:

Old Man, you've had your say,
Now run along and play,
If you jump in that barrow,
We'll give you the Freedom of Harrow!

(A clap of thunder) Enters...

DEMON KING NYE:

Yo-ho, you scurvy crew. I've got news for you.
My phrases will not rhyme, because there is not space.
But see, the country's getting restive
And not because it's Christmas!
They are getting tired of you. WATCH OUT! For I'll
be back. For I am the Demon King and it is inconceivable
that we should tolerate indefinitely the maintenance
of a privileged parasitical minority within
our midst! (Disappears in inflationary spiral!)

GOOD FAIRY TUC:

Kind Prince, don't look so grey,
We are here to see fair play.
Round your castle we'll build a moat
And guard it with ye olde block vote!
We rather like the status quo
And would hate to see it go
My Sirs and Lords do all agree
Long Live the Property Owning Democracy!

PRINCE ANTHONY CHARMING:

Thanks Very Much

End Of Act I

R E N T S

The Tories are making a very definite attack on the rents front. The increases in the borrowing rate earlier in the year and the ending of subsidies in the Autumn Budget mean that the building of Council houses will virtually cease. Local authorities who continue with house building will have to levy tenants of existing Council houses in order to maintain reasonable rents for the new ones.

The Tories way of dealing with a matter such as the housing problem is quite a simple one. They believe in reducing demand by forcing up prices parallel with attempting to make the working class pay in order to maintain and improve the standards of the upper reaches of society. There can be no doubt that this is a conscious attack by the Tories on working class living standards. Let it be emphasized that this is not only an attack on the pockets of Council house tenants. It affects equally those who are buying their homes through building societies.

Some will counsel that nothing can be done, that the Government is all powerful and that is that. If the Parliamentary Labour Party can't stop it then you've had it. This is a counsel of despair. The workers did not achieve a higher standard of living by waiting for Parliament to vote them one. Such advances as have been made have been achieved as a result of long and bitter struggles with the capitalist class.

These standards are now being attacked and must be defended by all possible means. If the Tories are able to carry out their policy on this matter, they will undoubtedly turn their attention to the Rents Restriction Acts and then those living in privately owned rented property will be brought into line by having their rents raised. Socialist initiative is required to galvanize existing tenants' associations into conscious activity. Where no tenants' associations exist they should be formed to mobilise opinion against the Tory attacks. Only by vigorous opposition in all fields can the Tories be defeated and made to realise that the working class will not sit back and take meekly anything the Tories try on.

Clr. RON SPURWAY
Harrow Borough Council

"K E E P L E F T" WISHES ALL ITS READERS A VERY MERRY CHRISTMAS AND A HAPPY NEW YEAR. AS THE NEW YEAR APPROACHES, WE TOO, ENTER A NEW YEAR OF CIRCULATION - OUR SIX BIRTHDAY! WE THANK ALL OUR READERS FOR THEIR PAST SUPPORT AND SINCERELY HOPE THEY WILL CONTINUE TO DO SO IN THE FUTURE.

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