

Labour Review

WHERE IS BRITISH LABOUR GOING ?

The Crisis In The Labour Party

By G. Healy



The Communist Congress at Moscow

By ARTHUR DICKINSON

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The Crisis in the Labour Party

By G. HEALY.

After Morecambe, both the *London Times* and the *New York Times* observed that the Labour Party is facing its gravest crisis since 1931. What they failed to note is the world of difference between the two developments.

In 1931 the high and mighty gloated over a prostrate labour movement. MacDonald, Snowden and Thomas had deserted the party which they and their associates had steered on to the rocks. The Left was leaderless, weak and isolated; the workers were confused, helpless and hopeless.

Today the situation is reversed. The 1952 crisis has emerged from a victory of the Left over the Right which, for all its aggressiveness, is losing ground in the party. The active majority of the workers is mobilised behind the leadership of the Left. Instead of demoralisation before the offensive of capitalist reaction, the movement is militantly determined to push ahead toward a Socialist Britain.

For Labour, 1931 was a time of regression and defeat. 1952 is an occasion for renewed hopes and fresh advances. The class difference between the two periods is likewise mirrored in the Big Business press which hailed MacDonald as the hero-saviour of Britain, but now demands that Bevan and his associates be mercilessly crushed.

The present divergences within the Labour Party were not created by Morecambe. They have been developing for several years. The first symptoms were already discernible by 1949. They were brought into the open by the resignation of the three Bevanite members from the Cabinet early in 1951. They have been thrust to the centre of the stage by Morecambe and sharpened by what has happened since.

What lies at the root of these growing differences? And in what way can they find the best solution?

THE POST-WAR LABOUR GOVERNMENTS

The dissension between the Old Guard and the party ranks which has ripened with Labour in opposition originated while Labour held office. The current controversies cannot be understood except in the light of the experience of the past seven years.

When the British voters booted Churchill out and put Labour in, they were not endorsing the war-time coalition but emphasising their desire for a decisive break with the old order. Labour's triumph in 1945 was the English expression of that tidal wave of anti-capitalist feeling and revolutionary hope that surged throughout Europe and Asia after the darkness of the war years.

Labour's tenure in office from 1945 to 1951 provided a monumental school of political education for the British working class. They learned both from its considerable achievements and from its glaring faults and failures.

On the credit side, the workers became convinced that Labour and its representatives, inadequate though they might be, took better care of the people's welfare and could manage the nation's affairs more competently than any capitalist party. They welcomed the nationalisations as steps away from the chaos of private enterprise toward a more rational economy. They received valuable benefits from the National Health Scheme and other extensions of the social services. They saw that full employment could

be maintained in peacetime as well as war and vowed never again to be hurled on to the dole. They were given glimpses of what a Labour regime could accomplish and even more, what a Socialist future could bring.

The outstanding debit item on the balance sheet of the Labour government was undoubtedly its foreign policy. The spate of critical resolutions submitted to the Conference indicated how the party ranks viewed that. They strongly opposed the exorbitant arms budget imposed by the Atlantic Alliance with its damaging effects upon social benefits and living standards. They were disappointed by the failure of the second Labour government to bring forth a more extensive programme of nationalisations or to enact measures for widening democratic participation and control by the workers in the nationalised industries. They felt that the general staff of the Right Wing, having raised the banner of "consolidation," was letting the movement drift closer to conservatism both at home and in foreign affairs.

THE COLLAPSE OF FABIAN GRADUALISM

The representatives of the rank-and-file vented their discontent with the Old Guard on specific issues at Morecambe without generalising the ground of their opposition or bothering to consider the basic reasons for the behaviour of the Right Wing leaders. What was at the bottom of the flabbiness displayed by the Labour government, especially during the latter part of its term in office?

This feebleness demonstrated in practice the limitations of the Fabian gradualism which has been its philosophical guide for so many years. Fabianism proposed to refashion capitalism bit by bit, and step by step, until some day, somehow, it would be totally transformed into its opposite: from a system of exploitation, oppression, want and war into a co-operative commonwealth where all people of good will would live and work in fraternal harmony.

In the prolonged period of transition from capitalism to socialism there would have to be an agreed-upon divi-

sion of power, property, income and functions between Capital and Labour. Labour would share power at Westminster and in the localities with the capitalist parties, alternating office with them as in a gentlemanly cricket game. In the economic domain state and municipal ownership would operate side by side with private enterprise; the two sectors would both compete and collaborate in this mixed economy. Government regulation would assure that the public interest was safeguarded while government economic policy would see that the yearly national income was "fairly" shared among the classes. An educated corps of civil servants, expert executives, and board officials would administer government departments and supervise industry, while the unions, co-operatives and similar mass organisations would exercise certain checks and controls upon them.

However, there was one big joker in this deal. Labour would have to keep its place as a subordinate partner in this carefully contrived and indefinitely prolonged collaboration of class forces. The whole social structure would be thrown into disorder if Labour stepped out of line and threatened to act as the major and decisive force. Such "Bolshevik" behaviour could not be countenanced in the properly regulated Fabian scheme of things.

Of course, the British ruling class would rather not see Labour in power at all, just as it would prefer to see trade unionism eliminated. But, unlike the German and Italian capitalists of the pre-war years, they were in no position to strike at Labour's political and industrial organisations through fascism. They had to find some mode of co-existence with the Labour movement. They were most favourably inclined towards Fabianism precisely because its representatives sought to restrain Labour within bounds compatible with the continued existence of capitalism.

The brutal behaviour of the Tories in the 1926 General Strike showed what they were ready to do whenever Labour was goaded to challenge capitalist supremacy. On the other hand, this also warned the capitalist rulers of the need to seek collaboration with compliant sections of the Labour leadership to avert further head-on collisions.

This collaboration was closely cemented at the beginning of the war only to be disrupted at its close. In 1945 the Right Wing took complete charge of the government with an unexampled opportunity to carry out their ideas. Fabianism was put to the test under the most favourable political conditions—but this time without the camouflage of any coalition or the excuse of being in a minority.

The results are a matter of history ; they can be judged by the movement. The verdict Morecambe passed on this experiment is : “Tried and found wanting”.

REFORM OR REVOLUTION ?

The question of abolishing capitalism and arriving at socialism by way of partial parliamentary reforms or through sweeping measures and revolutionary action has been debated for a long time in the British and world Labour and Socialist movements. The Right Wing has always been the champion of gradual, oh, so gradual, evolution. But this problem is now being presented to the British nation and its working class in a somewhat different and quite unexpected way.

The post-war Labour governments instituted far-reaching reforms in the social and economic structure of British capitalism without touching its foundations. The ranks insist upon an even more drastic programme of nationalisations. But British capitalism has become so decrepit and its empire is so close to collapse that it cannot survive many more operations of this type. More nationalisations, more reforms, more social welfare threaten it with slow death. The irony of the situation is that more doses of *reform* have *revolutionary* implications in the present feeble state of British and world capitalism.

On the other hand, Labour has become increasingly conscious of its powers and more and more determined to wield them for Socialist purposes. It is pressing ever harder at a time when the capitalist regime lacks its former resources and resilience to cope with this mortal danger to its predominance.

Much is heard nowadays about the disequilibrium in the terms of world trade which prevents British economy from stabilising itself and gives rise to recurrent crises. But nothing is said of the no less important disequilibrium in the relations between the classes which has grown out of these international economic conditions and produces such sharp conflicts here at home.

Thus the old internal balance of forces in the economic and political spheres upon which Fabianism depended has been rapidly altered and is on the verge of becoming radically reversed. The old division of property and power which enabled capitalism to dominate the nation can no longer be maintained except through the most artful manipulations or furious convulsions.

Under pressure from the masses the post-war Labour governments speeded up the undermining of the old regime without carrying the process through to the logical conclusion of dislodging and destroying it. They went about as far as gradualism could in modifying British capitalism while leaving its fundamental privileges and powers intact. To cut deeper into its tissues would come close to excising its most vital organs.

Faced with this prospect, the Right Wing leadership in 1948 flinched and drew back. They were not trained for such operations. They were educated to be the repairers and collaborators of capitalism, not its grave-diggers.

This helps explain the paralysis that afflicted the post-war Labour government and has so perplexed and frustrated the ranks of the party. The fear of tampering with the foundations of capitalism lies at the bottom of the crisis affecting the Labour leadership.

This situation was not wilfully created by anyone. It has been the inescapable outcome of the whole development of social struggles in Great Britain during the first half century. The slowdown in the First post-war Labour government, followed by the breakdown of the Second, stems from the incapacity of the Right-Wing leaders to understand the essential features of this new stage in the relations

between capital and labour in this country and the new tasks it dictates to Labour's leaders. The Fabian philosophy which dares not transgress the limits of capitalism, is absolutely unsuitable to conditions which call for the most radical measures against capitalist power and privilege.

THE WELFARE STATE

Early this year a group of prominent Labour Party thinkers produced an attempt to modernise the doctrines of Fabianism. It is not clear from an attentive reading of the articles in "New Fabian Essays" whether the contributors really wanted to praise Fabianism or to bury it.

In any case, they made two points plain. These former M.P.'s. and Cabinet members recognised the inadequacies of the original Fabianism and connected it with the "loss of momentum" and sense of direction that befell the Labour government. They could hardly be expected to affirm that this failure signified the exhaustion of Fabianism—for were they not engaged in refurbishing and adapting it to contemporary conditions? On the other hand, they were unable to offer an adequate explanation of what went wrong and why. How did the Labour government get derailed?

The editor, Mr. R. H. Crossman, gave one important clue. The Right Wing defends its record in office by boasting of its success in establishing the Welfare State in Great Britain, something quite different from American free enterprise or Russian communism. Mr. Crossman makes an extremely significant observation on this matter. "In the first post-war months," he writes, "the British people was ready to accept the peaceful socialist revolution, and if what it got was merely Welfare Capitalism, the fault lay with the politicians and not with the public."

This is a severe but a correct judgment. The people wanted and expected socialism; they were given Welfare Capitalism. The substitute has turned out to be extremely unsatisfying. The Tories naturally hate whatever welfare is in it, although they thank their lucky stars for its capitalism. The workers like the welfare, but the capitalism prevents them from solving their vital problems.

The middle-class elements were so annoyed by this hybrid that they helped the Conservatives return to Westminster in 1951.

This was a setback for the Labour Party. But it was no defeat for the Socialist programme which its leadership had failed to apply consistently. It was a condemnation of the Welfare Capitalism submitted by the Right Wing in place of a sustained drive toward socialism. It was the reaction of the people to that Fabianism which promised so much and performed so little.

What is a gradualist? "A gradualist is one who has a valid claim for a pound, demands a shilling, proclaims a great victory when he gets a farthing, and is then dismayed to find that higher prices have faken that away from him." Let this be the epitaph of Fabianism.

ONE YEAR OF TORY MISRULE

The foremost agitator against capitalism is capitalism itself. This is being proved anew by the present Tory government. If the Welfare State grew unpopular under Attlee, Cripps and Morrison, it is becoming unbearable under Churchill and Butler's administration.

The fact that British capitalism is sliding downhill does not mean it has become milder in disposition or less harmful. The weaker it grows, the more desperate and vicious it shows itself to be, the more it must support itself at the expense of the masses, and the sterner its resistance to further changes which threaten it with total dispossession.

All the familiar "inequities and inequities" of capitalism are now reasserting themselves. Higher prices with reduced consumption of food. Curtailed social services in the face of deepening misery and want. Textile, furniture and shoe factories shutting down while people go without. Less housing—more guns, tanks and atom bombs. Tax favours for the upper crust—reduced real incomes for the poor. Wage-restraint for the workers—record profits for the employers. Production and exports falling while unemployment doubles and short-time spreads. Luxury on top—growing hunger and insecurity down below.

The Tories have not adopted their economic policy out of sheer malice; several of their measures were already fore-shadowed by Sir Stafford Cripps. It has been dictated by the decline of British capitalism which is itself a product of the disintegration of international capitalism. The capitalist world market has been severely contracted by the withdrawal of large areas from its control through the revolutionary developments following the war all the way from Eastern Europe to China. Whatever sap and strength is left in the old economy is concentrated in North America. Its European and British branches are blighted, withering, and rotting away. We see the evil fruits this is bringing today in Britain.

The Tory policies have only one merit. They have shown the British people, and especially the younger generation, what naked, unrestrained capitalist rule is really like. The past year has deepened the revulsion of the workers against the system Toryism represents and stiffened their resolve to get rid of it as soon as possible.

Wearied with trying to manage a decomposing capitalism for the benefit of the people, the Right Wing leaders were relieved to retire from Westminster in 1951 and turn over that task to the Tories. They appear to be in no haste to resume office as receivers and caretakers of a social system heading toward bankruptcy. But the workers don't want to see the Tory wreckers stay in power for the full five years. They want to oust the Tories and get on with the job of removing capitalism which was begun in 1945, halted in 1949, and shelved since then.

THE MEANING OF MORECAMBE

This was the background for Morecambe. The delegates were sent there by the active party workers who are in daily touch with the voters to do the following things. Revise party policy to give it a more radical and militant character. Offer a clear Socialist alternative to Conservatism, strengthen the movement for the coming showdown with the Tories, and equip it for the next stage in the re-

construction of Britain along Socialist lines. Put in a leadership capable of doing this job.

It is a law of political struggle, as well as of the physical world that forward movement generates friction and heat. What counts in politics, however, is not the incidental friction and heat, but the progress made by change of positions. The contest between the standpatters and the representatives of the ranks resulted in three important steps forward. First, the drift of the party toward conservatism was repudiated and reversed. Second, certain extremely significant amendments were made to the proposed documents on foreign and domestic policy. Third, a Bevanite leadership was chosen to replace the agents of the discredited Old Guard and to pilot the party for the next year.

Every genuine mass movement which ossifies at the top can renew its vitality only through the resurgence of new ideas and fresh forces from its midst. This is what happened at Morecambe.

A LESSON IN DEMOCRACY

Morecambe not only exemplified the virility and militancy of the movement but also its desire for genuine democracy. This word is often on the lips of the Right Wing leaders. But they have the bad habit of thinking and acting as though the Labour Party, the trade unions or the Labour government were their private property, and that rank-and-file interference should be kept to the minimum. Hugh Gaitskell expressed this attitude when he characterised the Morecambe delegation as "the unthinking mob".

The party members rightly believe that the movement is primarily their affair and they should have the deciding voice on questions of policy and leadership. They exercised these rights somewhat boisterously at Morecambe, where they asserted their authority to change the direction of party activity.

This jolted and revolted the over-complacent Right Wing. But it was an encouraging manifestation of democratic

processes correcting those who had lost touch with the sentiments of the ranks. At one point in the Morecambe debates, M.P. George Brown, an arch-exponent of the Right, shouted: "This party has lost its head!" A delegate who followed him replied: "You are wrong; it has regained its self-respect." This little exchange dramatised the contrast between the oligarchs and the spokesmen for the membership.

THE ANTI-BEVANITE CAMPAIGN

In the hullabaloo and hurly-burley since Morecambe, it may easily be overlooked that the decisions taken there in response to rank and file pressure greatly satisfied the activists in the party and, from all reports, most of the working people. They felt it was a victory for their views and a big step along the right road.

This is the most important feature of the Morecambe Conference. The fury whipped up by the press lords against the proceedings should not be permitted to obscure this fact.

Senator McCarthy's witch-hunts in the United States are the only thing comparable to this anti-Bevanite press campaign—and both have been inspired by equally reactionary motives. The hue and cry against Bevanism comes in the first place from the counting houses and country houses of the rich. They want to sow confusion and panic in order to forestall further advances by the Labour movement, and especially to protect their property against new nationalisation measures. That beagle of the financial interests, *The Economist*, revealed this in its editorial alarm immediately after Morecambe, when it questioned whether the present electoral system shouldn't be changed "to fend off the catastrophe" of a Bevanite Labour government. They regard Bevanism, the label given to the present radical temper of the people, as a threat both to their privileges and to the execution of their imperialist plans and war preparations.*

* Even the supposedly Liberal organ, the "Manchester Guardian" cries: "A Labour Government with a Bevanite programme would be a disaster!" (Nov. 13th, 1952). We might ask: "For whom?"

However, neither Big Business nor its press can hope to change the situation within the working class. For this they need assistance from influential figures and forces within the movement itself. These experts applied their smear, scare, and terror techniques to create the atmosphere for putting pressure upon susceptible elements in the Right Wing to carry forward this campaign. The roster of those who have joined the anti-Bevanite chorus shows that they have been conspicuously successful in this aim.

The Right Wing leaders undoubtedly sincerely believe that the Bevanite movement is a challenge which cannot be ignored and a menace which must be contained and crushed. This would be the logical conclusion from their positions, policy and outlook which leads them to collaboration in the operation of capitalism at home and alignment with American imperialism in foreign affairs. But a huge obstacle stands in their way: the mass of the movement itself. How can this be purged when over 90 per cent. of the workers are infected to one degree or another with "Bevanitis?" This is the organisational problem the Right Wing master-minds are now grappling with.

The chances of ultimate success in this endeavour are far from bright for them. The existing relationship of forces in the party, and even more, the tide of developments in the country are running against them. Although they are shrewd politicians and experienced strategists, they have certain big blind spots in their vision. Just as they do not understand the power of the revolutionary developments in the colonies and elsewhere today, so they do not grasp the depth of the changes taking place under their noses.

That is why they were taken aback by what happened at Morecambe and find themselves in such sharp opposition to their own rank-and-file both in the party and in the trade unions.

THE RIGHT WING AND THE LEFT

The events since Morecambe have shown that this Conference did not definitively settle the main questions in dis-

pute within the party. On the contrary these have been more acutely posed by the clashes which have occurred since then.

These differences and conflicts do not depend upon individuals, no matter how prominent. The leading individuals themselves derive their importance and their influence far more from the philosophies, positions, programmes and forces they symbolise in the eyes of the working class public than from their personal qualities.*

If the broadest line was drawn between them, the contending sides would shape up as follows. The camp on the Right embraces all those elements who stubbornly cling to the outworn ideas and mistaken policies of the past and persist in defending and maintaining them when the time has come to shake them off. They not only refuse to march along with the leftward swing of the masses, but actively or passively resent and resist it, striving to head it off and even behead it.

On the other side, which is popularly designated as Bevanite, are all those forces who, regardless of their previous positions and present differences, have absorbed certain lessons from the post-war experience and are seeking to overcome the defects of the past. They wish to adopt and implement a programme of action that more closely conforms to the realities, needs and aspirations of the Socialist and Labour cause at this critical juncture of its evolution in England.

* Those who attribute the prevailing mood of the movement to the demagogy of individuals would do well to reflect on the following remarks of the French historian Michelet : "The deeper I have excavated, the more surely I have satisfied myself that the best was underneath, in the obscure depths. And I have realised that it is quite wrong to take these brilliant and powerful talkers, who expressed the thought of the masses, for the sole actor in the drama. They were given the impulse by others much more than they gave it themselves. The principal actor is the people."

Jenny Lee gave a pithy definition of the difference between the Right Wing and the Left in the October 10th *Tribune*: "Some people are afraid of the consequences of applying their Socialist principles. Others are afraid of the consequences of *not* applying them," she said.

Let us see how this distinction works out on such a crucial question as the public versus the private ownership of the basic means of production.

THE FUTURE OF PUBLIC OWNERSHIP

The 1951 Handbook for Socialists published by the Labour Party says: "Britain's economy today is a mixed economy. Our major basic industries, like coal, gas, electricity and transport, are publicly owned. But private industry still employs four-fifths of the total number of industrial workers in this country."

These three sentences well summarise the present problem of our home economy. The post-war Labour governments nationalised a number of basic industries and, according to its own figures so redistributed the national income that the wage-earners received ten per cent. more than before and the profiteers that much less. These were excellent reforms, but they did not change the essential nature of the economy. The capitalists retain four-fifths of industry under their direct ownership while at least one-fourth of the national income still goes every year to the profit, interest and rent of this class. In this way these parasites maintain their domination over the lives of the people.

Centralised operation of the nationalised means of production has greatly benefitted the nation and the workers in these industries, and proved to be far more efficient than monopolist combinations or capitalist competition. That is one reason why the Tories are so anxious to wreck these nationalised industries and restore them to private owners. But if government ownership and control has improved conditions within these industries, it has fallen far short of solving the basic problems of directing and

planning the economy as a whole. In fact, it has served to accentuate the difficulties.

In 1858, two years before the American Civil War, Abraham Lincoln made a prophetic speech in which he declared to the compromisers with the slave power of his day: "A house divided against itself cannot stand. I believe this government cannot endure permanently half-slave and half-free It will become all one thing or all the other."

This is precisely the predicament confronting Great Britain today. Labour is pledged to plan the national economy in the interests of the public and the producers. But a system which is one-fifth publicly-owned and operated, and four-fifths privately-owned and operated cannot really be planned or made to function efficiently and harmoniously. The two opposing sectors tend to work at cross-purposes, no matter how watchful and extensive government regulation may be.

That is not the most of the matter. The private sector not only far overweighs the public part but subordinates and exploits it for its own anarchic, profit-seeking aims. As the Handbook for Socialists itself points out: "Private industry will not function without the expectation of profit. However much Labour deplors the profit motive, in a mixed economy such as ours the incentive for profit has to remain."

Consequently when the Labour government takes over, it has to administer this mixed economy in such a way as to assist private enterprise to earn adequate profits. Otherwise it will stop running. Every worker knows how lush these profits have been in the post-war years. Even the capitalists displaced from nationalised industry have done very well by reinvesting their indemnities in other sectors. In addition, the old owners hold a heavy mortgage of government bonds with which they were handsomely compensated for their property. For example, the former coal owners were paid £50,000,000 in interest last year!

The workers in private industry are not disposed to see their conditions worsen and be subjected to profiteering and disorder, while their comrades labour in protected public sectors. This is especially true of workers in closely allied industries. Moreover, the workers in the nationalised industries know that their own conditions are not secure so long as the Conservatives and capitalists have the upper hand.

BACKWARD OR FORWARD ?

What is to be done ? The simple solution of the Tories is to hand everything back to the privateers. The delegates at both the Trades Union Congress and the Labour Party Conference gave a fitting answer to this by resolving to resist denationalisation to the utmost. But they went much beyond that. They voted to pass over to the offensive by extending nationalisation to other key industries as soon as Labour gets back in power and break the monopolist stranglehold once and for all.

Here is another reason for panic in the Right Wing. They are not happy at this development. Many Right Wing leaders on the T.U.C. General Council and the Labour Party Executive are to say the least, reluctant to proceed with a bold programme of expanding public ownership. Arthur Deakin and others openly opposed it at Margate. Others of the Party leaders have taken up a more evasive attitude. At Leicester, October 25th, Herbert Morrison said that the next policy declaration of the party should "seek a somewhat more elaborate and general mandate for public enterprise in relation to stated conditions" from the nation.

It would violate the expressed will of the Morecambe Conference and be unworthy of a Socialist leadership to play hide and seek with the nation and the working class on a matter of such importance. The national leadership must work out a specific programme of major nationalisations to be put into effect as soon as it returns to office.

Certain Fabians are preaching that nationalisations are not essential for Socialism. Even the Tories know better

than that. It is absolutely impossible to organise and plan an economy along Socialist lines unless the main means of production and exchange are publicly owned and centrally controlled.

This is a key question in the struggle to achieve Socialism in Great Britain. Either the Tories will dismantle and destroy public property for the benefit of their stock-jobbing clients—or the Labour movement must go forward to take over all the strategic departments of the economy. The devotees of the present mixed economy among the Right Wing would like to deny and ignore these alternatives. But they cannot do so.

Part of the support Aneurin Bevan has among the workers comes from his recognition of this fact and his vigorous championship of more nationalisations as the only basis for a planned economy.

LABOUR'S FOREIGN POLICY IN EVOLUTION

Despite the volume of critical resolutions from the constituencies, the delegates did not make so big a break with the Right Wing at Morecambe on foreign policy as on other issues. In the main they went along with continuing the Atlantic Alliance and its associated measures. At the same time, they insisted upon significant amendments which disclosed their dissatisfaction with that policy and their intention to hedge about its application with important reservations.

One resolution unanimously adopted contained these five points :

(a) No agreements with such anti-working class forces as Franco.

(b) Stick to Socialist principles, and refuse to subordinate them to American, Russian, or any other pressures.

(c) Promote East-West trade.

(d) Resist the use of Britain's military strength as a means of enforcing territorial changes in Eastern Europe and elsewhere.

(e) Refuse to condemn the risings of the oppressed peoples as Soviet-inspired plots, and affirm that peace can best be secured by seeing that maximum aid is given to undeveloped areas.

All these modifications conform to a more independent and anti-imperialist course in external affairs. But it is equally necessary to note that they run into headlong conflict with the aims and actions of U.S. imperialism, to which Britain is bound by the Atlantic Alliance.

Washington not only seeks alliance with Franco but subsidises the deadliest enemies of the working class from Chiang Kai-shek in Asia to the ex-Nazi generals in Germany. As the mainstay of world capitalism, the dollar diplomats are hostile to all Socialist principles and to every move towards Socialism which can be brought about only at the expense of capitalism. Through the Cold War blockade and the Battle Act, they are primarily responsible for restricting East-West trade. The Republican and Democratic parties have vied with each other to prove that every national liberation movement in the colonial world is engineered from the Kremlin and must be opposed and stamped out on that account.

Can the admirable propositions in this resolution be realised by clinging to the Right-Wing foreign policy which is wholly oriented on the American Alliance? Is it possible to sympathise with the colonial peoples fighting for their freedom in Korea, Malaya, China, Persia, Egypt and Africa—and remain entangled with the imperialist coalition against them? Or to seek closer economic ties and mutual relations with anti-capitalist countries which are trying to build their economies along Socialist lines—and line up with the plutocratic powers which are working to disrupt and destroy them? Or to co-operate with working class movements on all the continents—and be in league with the very capitalist classes they are pitted against? Or to defend peace—and be banded together with the makers of war?

These inconsistencies show that the broad Left Wing has yet to take into account the full implications of its distrust

for the old foreign policy. It has turned away from this policy without as yet working out a consistently Socialist course. But, as the case of Korea has already proved, it is not possible to straddle conflicting class positions on life-and-death questions in foreign affairs. That will prove even harder to do than to preserve a mixed, or rather muddled, economy here at home. Sooner or later, one side or the other must be definitively chosen.

LOOMING THREATS OF CRISIS AND WAR

The current crisis in the Labour Party has so exceptional an urgency and sharp an edge because of the speed with which international events are moving, bringing with them the twin threats of economic slowdown or a new world war. It should be kept in mind that the last Labour government functioned under peace-time conditions favoured by a sellers' world market. A new Labour government would have to take office with clouds of war thickening overhead and a downturn in world capitalist economy.

Signs of a slump have already appeared, even though the Conservative-controlled press maintains a conspiracy of silence around it. Production has fallen below the 1951 level. Since the first half of 1952, total exports have dropped by 13 per cent. After the recession in textiles and other consumers' goods, the engineering trade upon which the export drive hinges has been hit. One fifth of the nation's dock-workers are jobless. Unemployment and short-time are rapidly mounting.

What will the leadership do if Labour takes over under crisis conditions? Follow MacDonald's footsteps who tried to salvage a shipwrecked capitalism by squeezing the life-blood out of the working people? That would be even more dangerous and disastrous than in 1931, for two reasons. On the one hand, British capitalism has even less to give than it did then; on the other, the workers wouldn't take it.

Having passed through the bitter days of MacDonaldism, the pre-war years, and after the experience of the post-

war Labour governments, the British worker is a different human being. He has become accustomed to expect improvement in social and working conditions and is aware that he and his mates possess the power and the means to achieve them. No amount of soft talk can eradicate this profoundly revolutionary factor from his psychology.

Sensing the cold blasts of the incipient crisis, certain Right Wing spokesmen are already talking about the need to go slow, to give up hope of improvement, and refrain from any more anti-capitalist measures. They even hint at accepting lower standards to stabilise the listing economy, help the export drive, save the balance of payments, and incidentally, the profit margins of the bosses. This is the start of a slippery slope that can end only in MacDonaldism.

For Fabians, the Socialist programme is something pleasant to contemplate in fair weather. But as soon as storms blow up, it must be stowed away for the duration. They shrink from applying appropriate remedies for the malignant maladies of a mortally-stricken capitalism. Their formula for salvation is to ask the working class to make sacrifices. The workers have time and again demonstrated their capacities for sacrifice in a good cause. But they must first be convinced that the demands upon them are fully justified and made in their interest. They will not consent to give up their aims to save once more an unworthy and incurable social system.

Genuine Socialists have an altogether different conception of the value and necessity of Socialist ideas and methods. We don't expect to overcome the inescapable consequences of capitalist anarchy and greed by capitalist measures. If we thought that, we would be Tories or Liberals. Furthermore, MacDonald and Churchill have tried that out before.

A Labour Party dedicated to Socialism can cope with the problems posed by capitalist decay only by putting its own Socialist programme into effect and thereby proving in practice the superiority of our procedures over theirs. Aneurin Bevan was right when he explained the first day

at Morecambe that the only effective way to combat unemployment and the other scourges of capitalist depression was to go ahead and apply Socialist measures and create a planned economy.

Such a Socialist policy is closely connected with the struggle for peace. The same delegate who rebuked George Brown at Morecambe declared that : "to take the profit out of war is to help save the peace." This hit the nail on the head. The "merchants of death" on both sides of the Atlantic could be delivered no bigger blow than for British Labour to take power, hasten the elimination of capitalism here, and show the rest of the world what a peaceful Socialist Britain could accomplish.

THE CHOICE BEFORE US

Three main programmes are contending for the allegiance of the British people today. One is Toryism, which seeks to prolong, by fraud if it can, by force if it must, the mastery of a parasitic plutocracy which should long ago have been laid in the grave beside the feudal aristocracy. This programme has no attraction or interest for the educated and organised working class of our day which understands the necessity for a new social order.

The choice for the working class, therefore, narrows down to the other two, which find their expression in the two wings of the Labour movement. The Right offers the creed of Fabianism, the practice of class collaboration in a capitalist Welfare State based upon a mixed economy, and subservience to U.S. imperialism on the foreign field.

The fault with Fabianism is not that it insists upon reforms, but that it never intends to pass beyond them. The Marxists too, believe that reforms are necessary and beneficial, but in themselves they do not go far enough. They must be used as springboards and footholds for overcoming the whole of capitalism, not for tinkering with this or that part of it.

The Fabians contend that their piecemeal passage is the better road to Socialism and better suited to the British traditions and temperament. The Marxists reply that the Fabian road ends in a blind alley and does not lead the

movement to its Socialist goal at all. Even the reforms gained under favourable conditions are hacked away under conditions of capitalist reaction, crisis and war. Once economic stagnation sets in, the Fabian's Welfare State quickly turns into an Ill-Fare State. As rearmament and war preparations gain the upper hand, it heads towards a Warfare State.

This is no more a matter of theory. It is becoming a grim reality in Britain today.

That is why British Labour needs and is demanding a new philosophy, a new leadership, a new outlook. The day for half-way measures and half-hearted actions has passed. Capitalism itself is forcing the movement to go all the way. At the next opportunity, Labour must use the political power at its command to concentrate all the decisive means of production under public control; give the workers in these industries democratic participation in their operations; institute overall planning of our national resources, and use them for the common good in the realisation of Socialist equality.

Only this great goal can inspire the Left Wing and enable it to emerge victorious. The Right is content with "the minimum of Socialism in the maximum of time." Twenty years ago Herbert Morrison declared at Bristol: "Socialism in our time is all romanticism." Whatever he thought then, or believes now, this cannot be the outlook for British Labour today. The working people will be satisfied with nothing less than "the maximum of Socialism in the minimum of time."

At every party gathering some Right-Wing orator invokes the memory of the pioneers who laid the foundations of the Labour Party. We say: "Let's celebrate them less and imitate them more." We may not have to create a Labour Party, but let's use that instrument to fulfill its Socialist purposes. This cannot be done without encountering misrepresentation, opposition and abuse, and passing through bitter internal struggle. But the Socialist pioneers of 1952 will no more be daunted by this than were the pioneer Socialists at the turn of the century.

THE COMMUNIST CONGRESS AT MOSCOW

By ARTHUR DICKINSON

For the first time in thirteen years, the Communist Party of the Soviet Union held a national congress at the beginning of October. No one explained why there had been such a long lapse since the last gathering in 1939, and no one ventured to ask why. The "discussion" was more in the nature of a parade of high officials and their uniform declarations than of an interchange of opinions. A portion of each speech and most of the interjected applause was reserved for hosannahs to Stalin, unfailingly received either with "tumultuous" or "tempestuous" enthusiasm, amidst which "all rise". It was, to judge from reports in the Cominform press, a sickening Byzantine spectacle with little resemblance to a representative labour gathering.

Nevertheless, this deformation of what was in Lenin's day the policy-making body of revolutionary Russia had some significant revelations for socialists. Even through the haze of fixed statistics and obscure theorizing, an outline of the present state of Soviet society managed to emerge.

It is a picture of a flourishing and expanding economy in which planning on the basis of nationalised means of production overcomes the destruction of war as well as the backward heritage of the past, the resistance of the old world order, as well as the dead hand of the ruling bureaucracy.

It is also a picture of a society facing a great new crisis before it takes a decisive leap into the socialist future. This is a crisis of growth in which the last vestiges of private property in agriculture must be overcome; a crisis of expansion in which the final struggle with world capitalism must be faced.

The "party" of Stalin, the bureaucracy of the Soviet state—this congress showed—is attempting to resolve this crisis in characteristic fashion: by seeking some means of compromise between the classes both at home and abroad which will as far as possible maintain the status quo.

UNPRECEDENTED ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL PROGRESS

Even if we discount exaggerations, the figures presented by Malenkov, Beria and others show a prodigious advance for Soviet and Soviet-bloc economy. Despite the devastation of World War II, it appears that industrial production in the USSR is more than double that of 1940. Poland, Czechoslovakia and the other East European countries have similarly surpassed their pre-war output.

None of the capitalist countries, not even the United States, which did not suffer destruction during the war but built up its industrial plant as never before, can match that kind of a rise.

Soviet production increased no less than twelve-fold in the period between 1929 (when planning was first undertaken) and 1951. In that same period, production in the U.S.A. grew only two-fold, in Britain only 1.6-fold.

In the Eastern regions of the USSR, the industrial growth of the Soviet republics (Uzbek, Azerbaijan, etc.), towers above the bordering capitalist states (Turkey, Egypt, Iran, Pakistan, etc.). The increase in health facilities and educational opportunities is equally phenomenal. All in all, such economic expansion and social advance as the world has not seen before.

This picture is all the more impressive if, besides the ravages of the Nazi invasion, we recall the great purges before the war, which tended to stifle initiative by their terror; the forced collectivisation of the peasantry which disrupted relations with the countryside for years; the enforced trans-settlement of those peoples like the Volga Germans during the war, which must have caused terrible dislocations. It demonstrates the immense power inherent in a nationalised economy and its vast superiority over capitalism, even under adverse conditions.

INCOME FIGURES CONCEAL CRISES ELEMENTS

The recital of figures bearing on distribution of income, on the other hand, afford a glimpse into the crisis elements at work in the Soviet economy. We say a glimpse, because what the figures reveal is unintentional and was not, in spite of the big hullabaloo about self-criticism at the congress, meant to be disclosed. For they reflect on the privileged positions of a broad bureaucratic stratum, a subject which is taboo under Stalin.

In the years between 1940 and 1951 Malenkov told the congress, "real income (purchasing power)" of industrial workers and office employees together increased by about 57 per cent.; that of "working peasants" by about 60 per cent. The contrast becomes somewhat more marked when Malenkov *forecasts* an increase of 35 per cent. in real wages and salaries and of 40 per cent. in the real income of collective farmers for the next Five Year Plan.

It is left unexplained why a greater increase in *peasant* income than in *workers'* wages should be *planned* in a socialist state, particularly one preparing to "go over to the higher stage of communism".

Even more interesting is the figure for distribution of income given by another main speaker at the congress, Laurenti Beria: "Between 1940 and 1951 the combined income of wage and salaried workers and of peasants increased 78 per cent." Like Malenkov, Beria stresses that he is speaking of *real* income.

What intrigues the attentive reader of these reports is a comparison between this figure and those of Malenkov. Both arbitrarily club together different social categories in their income figures. A statistical breakdown which would differentiate between the factory manager and the factory worker, between the high state functionary and the ordinary civil service employee, between the agricultural worker and the peasant proprietor is nowhere to be found. This would disclose what the statisticians are at pains to conceal. Thus, Beria clubs together "wage and salaried workers and

peasants". Malenkov speaks of "industrial and office workers" on the one hand, and of "working peasants" on the other.

If we assume that both speakers referred to the same social categories, the discrepancy in their income figures would be inexplicable. According to Malenkov, the average for the three categories would be 58½ per cent. According to Beria, it is 78 !

Obviously something is being covered up by these figures. Either there are *salaried* "workers" taken into account by Beria who make much higher salaries than Malenkov's *office* workers ; or there are peasants who have a much higher income than the "*working*" peasants ; or both. If we bear in mind the wartime boasts about "kolkhoz (peasant) millionaires" and—to take but one example—the disparity between, say, a foreman's salary and a workers' wage in 1940,* it is clear that both suppositions are valid.

In other words, the figures intended to conceal, but actually revealed by implication the existence of a very considerable rake-off by a well-to-do section of peasant-proprietors as well as by a state, industrial and party-political bureaucracy. No protests were or could be made against this state of affairs at the congress. There is evidence elsewhere, however, of wide dissatisfaction and grave concern over the problems thereby raised for Soviet economy.

At the congress itself there was no genuine discussion of policy. There was, instead, constant eulogistic reference to articles by Stalin, published under the title "Economic Problems of Socialism in the USSR" in the party magazine *Bolshevik* on the eve of the congress. These articles appear to sum up a prolonged discussion on economic questions in the guise of an interchange of opinion on a proposed new textbook on political economy. There is

* Maurice Dodd, in "Soviet Economic Development Since 1917", cites the figures as from 500-1,100 rubles per month for the former, 200-300 for the latter. This is an income range for foremen up to five times more than that of workers.

no reference to the congress in these articles, although they are dated from April to September 1952. The "line" contained in them nevertheless dominated the so-called deliberations at the congress.

STALIN ON ECONOMIC PROBLEMS IN THE USSR

Stalin polemicises against views of persons (Notkin, etc.), whose names have not been previously heard of, and of others who are not named at all. Nor are *any* of these differing views published. We thus have a discussion of party policy which took place not at the so-called party congress, but in private; a discussion in which only the views of Stalin but not of his opponents are disclosed. Moreover, Stalin really throws more obscurity than light on the subjects under discussion. Nonetheless, with all these handicaps, Stalin's contribution must be taken as the key to the congress and to the policy flowing from it because he arrives at certain conclusions which have been sanctified by the congress as party policy.

The bulk of Stalin's latest literary effort is devoted, as the title indicates, to the domestic scene. While couched in ambiguity, adopting the form of a highly theoretic discussion, it appears to pursue two concrete objectives. One is to outline a course in Soviet economy which is facing a number of pitfalls as a result of the crisis of growth it is undergoing. The other is to find a new path in foreign policy in view of the "cold war" stalemate and the approaching war danger.

Stalin starts with a lecture to some "young comrades" about the objective character of the laws of science, particularly the laws of political economy, which they presumably want to change by government decree. They are, he says, "staggered by the colossal achievements of the Soviet government" and "imagine" that it can "do anything". Stalin thus has a great time knocking down straw men. But what actually appears to worry the "young comrades" is the continued existence of commodity production with its tendencies toward capitalist restoration, with its money economy and its great disparity in incomes

thirty-five years after the October revolution—especially at a time when the leaders say that they are going over to “communism, the highest stage of socialism”.

Their attitude reflects the dissatisfaction of a growing working class regaining its spirit of self-confidence with the economic upsurge. They are questioning the words of leaders which are in such glaring contrast to the Soviet reality. They are questioning the whole wherefore of the bureaucracy and its privileges.

Stalin's real rejoinder to them is to point to the continued existence of the “collective farm peasantry” as a class apart from the workers and with interests different from them.

“The collective farms are unwilling to alienate their products except in the form of commodities, in exchange for which they desire to receive the commodities they need. . . . Because of this, commodity production and trade are as much of a necessity with us today as they were thirty years ago, say, when Lenin spoke of the necessity of developing trade to the utmost.”

In pointing to the problem in agriculture as a justification for bureaucracy, Stalin reveals that there has even been demands from the Right for the state to sell means of production, tractor stations and other machinery, to the collective farms, to increase their independence. In other words, there *have* been tendencies toward capitalist restoration about which the “young comrades” expressed fears. In his argumentation, he rejects this pressure from the Right as well as from the Left. *Collective-farm property, and commodity production*, he says, “are being successfully utilised by us for the promotion of the socialist economy.” On the other hand, he warns :

“It would be unpardonable blindness not to see at the same time that *these factors are already beginning to hamper the powerful development of our productive forces, since they create obstacles to the full extension of government planning to the whole of the national economy.* There is no doubt that these factors will hamper the continued

growth of the productive forces of our country more and more as time goes on. The task is therefore to eliminate these contradictions by *gradually* converting collective-farm property into public property and by introducing—also *gradually*—products exchange in place of commodity production.”

Stalin thus confirms the development of a crisis of growth in the Soviet economy. While he promises a “gradual” solution of it as a verbal concession to pressure from the Left, in the immediate period ahead he proposes to maintain the status quo.

True to the conservative character of the bureaucracy, he recoils from drastic steps in agriculture like the organisation of “collective farm towns”, “collective farm cities”, “Agro-Cities” proposed by agronomists at the end of the war, which gained popularity for a time. (See Malenkov’s speech at the Congress.) The bureaucracy senses in further great advances toward a socialist economy which would bring the organisation of agriculture into accord with the rest of production, a danger to its own existence and resists them with the inertia of all “obsolescent social forces”, to borrow a phrase from Stalin.

For the powerful Soviet working class, however, new advances in agriculture are not only bound up with a solution to the crisis in the economy but with their own advance to freedom from want and to liberation from the yoke of bureaucratic rule.

A NEW “THEORY” ABOUT WARS

The world press has made much of that section of Stalin’s article in which he predicts the greater likelihood of war between rival capitalist countries than their combined assault upon the USSR.

Stalin reasons as follows: The second world war has brought about the disintegration of the “single, all-embracing world market” and the creation of two parallel world markets, socialist as well as capitalist. The former, inclu-

ding the USSR, China and the "People's Democracies", is developing apace despite the attempted strangulation of the Marshall Plan, which even aided it indirectly. The capitalist market is consequently bound to shrink more and more. The countries of the "socialist world market" will, in fact, soon "feel the necessity of finding an outside market for their surplus products."

Stalin thus implies that the non-capitalist countries will soon be able to bring economic pressure to bear on the capitalist world market, which will weaken it even more. This, in turn, he argues, makes invalid the view "some comrades hold, that owing to the development of new international conditions since the second world war, wars between capitalist countries have ceased to be inevitable." On the contrary, the hold of the U.S.A. on the capitalist world is overrated. So is the idea that the "foremost capitalist minds" have been "sufficiently taught" by the two world wars to avoid inter-capitalist wars. "High profits" are the decisive element motivating the capitalists. That is why Britain and France, Germany and Japan will be compelled to break out of the embrace of the United States.

There are grains of truth in this reasoning. But it leaves out of account several decisive and countervailing factors. First, in the chase for "high profits" U.S. capitalism holds an economic whip-hand over the other capitalist countries similar to that of the monopolist over a host of bankrupt small entrepreneurs. It can "foreclose the mortgage" on them at any time. Second, Wall Street is hardly likely to sit with arms folded and wait until new Five Year Plans put the USSR and its satellites in a position to underwrite the economies of one or more of the other major capitalist countries. It is bound to drive home its economic advantage to conclude the organisation of the capitalist world for the assault on the non-capitalist nations in the briefest possible time. The election of Eisenhower is a sign of this.

Stalin, however, hinges his "theory" on a presumed lesson from the past. Contradictions between "socialism"

and capitalism are stronger *in theory* than contradictions among the capitalist countries, he grants, but that was also true before the second world war. Still, Germany attacked Britain and France first. On the other hand, the U.S.A., Britain and France were compelled to join the coalition with the USSR against Germany. The inference is that something similar can happen again.

In this connection, he appears to have been reminded by someone of another difference in the present situation. In contra-distinction to pre-war days, when the working class in Europe had undergone defeats and the colonies were comparatively quiescent, there is since the war an undefeated working class in Europe and a surging colonial revolution. Capitalist countries at that time therefore had greater freedom of action.

There is the argument, says Stalin, that "since powerful popular forces have come forward today in defence of peace and against another war" imperialism can no longer generate war. At this point, Stalin enunciates the thesis" at which his whole "theory" is really aimed :

"The object of the present-day peace movement is to rouse the masses of the people to fight for the preservation of peace and for the prevention of another world war. Consequently *the aim* of this movement *is not to overthrow capitalism and to establish socialism*—it confines itself to the democratic aim of preserving peace. In this respect, the present day peace movement *differs* from the movement of the time of the *first world war*, since the latter movement went farther and *pursued socialist aims*."

There are, to be sure, numerous sources of friction within the Atlantic Alliance which tend to become intensified as the arms programme unfolds. But these do not warrant Stalin's conclusion that the antagonisms are strong enough to culminate in a war by any of the secondary capitalist countries against the United States. The great changes in the world situation brought about by the Second World War prevent a repetition of armed conflict between two contending groups of imperialisms and push to the fore-front instead their combined assault upon the Soviet Union,

the colonial liberation struggles and the revolutionary Labour movement in its various forms. The overwhelming predominance of the American colossus and the struggles for self-preservation by the weakened ruling classes in the subordinate capitalist countries prohibit the kind of military adventures previously undertaken by Germany, Italy, and Japan.

Stalin himself cannot be unaware of this. What, then, motivates his assertion to the contrary in his article? There are two sets of reasons: one designed for internal consumption, the other for external purposes. On one side he wishes to allay the fears of another imperialist assault upon the USSR which is widespread among the Soviet population by exaggerating the divisions and difficulties among the enemy and pointing to the superior unity and power of the Soviet camp. On the other side he is calling the attention of the Communist parties in the nations of the Atlantic Alliance to the growing divergences there so that their leaderships may exploit them to the advantage of the Kremlin's foreign policy.

Finally, Stalin is thereby informing the heads of the lesser capitalist countries that the peace movements sponsored by Moscow and its agents are not directed toward the overthrow of the capitalist regime, but rather to the establishment and support of capitalist governments which will pull away from Washington and effect a rapprochement with the Soviet Union.

THE KREMLIN'S TWO-SIDED POLICY

However the possibility of such inter-imperialist conflicts was a minor theme of the congress. The main line revolved around the heightened danger of war against the Soviet Union and the "anti-national" character of the bourgeoisies which are selling the independence of their peoples for dollars. This idea was set forth in Stalin's closing speech, amplified by Malenkov, Molotov and others, and emphasised in the Cominform reports.

How did the congress propose to combat this danger in the field of foreign policy? Since there was not much

talk of seeking an accord with the United States, there is evidently just as little expectation of arriving at agreement in Moscow as in Washington.

The spokesmen at the congress set forth two variant lines for counteracting the Pentagon's aggressions and military preparations. They underscored the need to probe and press the possibilities of disintegrating the Atlantic coalition by detaching certain of the most discontented members from it. In accord with this aim they addressed themselves to the representatives of capitalism in Western Europe along the following lines. If any of these governments would quit the Atlantic Alliance, they could then count upon trading with the East, making big profits, and securing support from the Communist parties.

If however, these governments persisted in aligning themselves with the war-makers, they would not only forfeit any hope of social peace but run into grave economic difficulties. And, in the event of war they would risk the end of capitalism itself. Thus, with one hand the Soviet bureaucracy held out the offer of a deal to the capitalist rulers in Western Europe, while threatening them with the direst consequences if they refused.

The Stalinist-inspired peace movements emanating from Stockholm, Warsaw and Vienna fit into the framework of the first alternative. They are being primarily promoted to mobilise pressure upon the capitalist regimes to come to terms with the Kremlin. As Stalin said, they do not pursue anti-capitalist or socialist aims. Malenkov was careful to stress that they constitute "an anti-war coalition of different classes and social strata," which at most would help bring about a shift in government or official policy away from Washington and toward friendship with Moscow.

But suppose these overtures are not accepted and the capitalist regimes of Western Europe persist in their present hostility toward the USSR ? This is by far the most likely state of affairs, since none of the secondary powers are in a position to turn around on its axis, defy American imperialism, and depart from the Atlantic Alliance. To

take this road under present world conditions would require staunch socialist convictions and leadership backed by a bold, determined and powerful labour movement.

In that event the congress threatened the rulers of Western Europe with mass oppositional movements organised by the Communist parties. The bourgeoisie would then be stigmatised as "anti-national" betrayers of the fatherland and subjected to continuous harassment by Stalinist guerilla tactics manipulating the mass organisations under their influence.

This dual character of the Kremlin's approach to the capitalist classes of Western Europe helps account for the contradictions and vacillations observable in the conduct of the Communist Parties in these countries. On one hand they strive to disconnect the bourgeoisie from the Atlantic Alliance and, when these efforts prove unsuccessful, they swing over to anti-capitalist attitudes and try to draw the masses into adventurist actions directed against these capitalist governments.

MOSCOW'S MOVES AGAINST THE LEFT

Despite its growing economic strength and the deepening crisis of world capitalism which acts in its favour, the Soviet bureaucracy today finds itself in a precarious position. It seeks to balance itself between the contending class forces on the world arena and to steer a middle course between imperialism and the ascending revolutionary movement. The aggressions of imperialism compel it in self-defence to countenance measures which involve a partial mobilisation of the working masses against the capitalists and encourage the struggles of the colonial peoples. At the same time the Kremlin takes precautions to insure that these anti-capitalist movements do not pass out of its control or go beyond the limits prescribed by its strategic necessities and diplomatic manoeuvres.

The Kremlin fears the advancing forces of the world revolution on its left as much as it dreads all-out attack by imperialism and is obliged to safeguard itself on both fronts.

It must contend with the forces of socialist revolution

first of all in its own domain. Stalin's reply to the critics of his economic policies indicates that the bureaucracy can no longer rely upon the M.V.D. alone to silence dissent. The arguments of the critics must be publicly met and answered. Malenkov gave still more direct evidence of the existence of oppositional voices in his statement that former oppositionists endure and his warning that fractional activities directed against the monolithism of the party must be hunted out and suppressed. These oppositionist elements are especially concentrated in the educational departments of the party, that is to say, among its most informed and advanced circles.

The bureaucracy is obviously disturbed by this re-emergence of unalloyed revolutionary tendencies within its very midst which reflect the discontent permeating the broad working masses.

The Soviet bureaucracy is also encountering resistance to its rule from the workers in the satellites of Eastern Europe. This conflict is at the bottom of the arrests, trials and executions of entire segments of the Communist Party leaderships in these countries. Albania (Koxi Doje); Bulgaria (Kostov); Hungary (Rajk); Poland (Gomulka); Roumania (Ana Pauker). One month after the Moscow Conference, these purges were crowned by the Slansky-Clementis trials in Czechoslovakia. Apart from other considerations, these murderous measures were taken to tighten Moscow's grip over these countries and to stamp out criticism of its policies, not only from the advocates of capitalist restoration and the agents of U.S. imperialism, but also from the working masses who desire to move toward socialism free of the exactions and oppression of the Kremlin. The spectre of a recurrence of Titoism haunts the Kremlin.

THE MARTY-TILLON AFFAIR

There is finally, the Marty-Tillon affair which has convulsed the Communist Party of France for the past several months. Although neither have yet spoken for themselves in public, it is clear from the accusations against them that, since 1939 and certainly since 1944, these top leaders held

views on the key political problems facing the French working class considerably to the left of the official Stalinist line and closer to genuinely revolutionary Marxist positions. Even if they did not actively oppose the Kremlin line, they committed the "crime" of disagreeing with it.

According to their accusers, Marty and Tillon contended, for example, that the French working class should have taken power at the Liberation in 1944, instead of disarming the workers and supporting de Gaulle. They believed that the French workers could get rid of capitalist rule through their own efforts without the aid of the Soviet army. They favoured united action between the Communist Party and the Socialist Party. Most unpardonable of sins, they considered the Trotskyists as a tendency in the workers' movement and not, as the Moscow frame-up artists insist, as "paid agents, spies," etc.

A most instructive aspect of the campaign against Marty and Tillon is the unintended disclosure that the C.P. leadership deliberately held back the French workers from taking power in 1944-45 out of deference to Stalin's pacts with Churchill and Roosevelt. The Political Bureau statement attacks Tillon for having said at a recent meeting that "it was ridiculous to accuse us of having wished to *take power* on May 28, 1952 (during the anti-Ridgway demonstrations) when *we could have taken it in 1944 but did not do so in order to remain loyal to our pledges.*"

Although the Political Bureau denies that there were such "pledges" to refrain from revolutionary action, the whole context of their statement affirms their existence. It advances two main arguments to refute Marty-Tillon's alleged contention "that the working class should have taken power at the Liberation."

On national grounds they assert, it was advisable not to provide de Gaulle with a "pretext" to use the Anglo-American armies to crush the working class and "to prevent him from establishing a Fascist dictatorship." According to this reasoning, the only thing for Maurice Thorez to do was to order the workers' militias (F.T.P.) to turn in their arms to de Gaulle's generals and for the Communists to enter de Gaulle's government—as they did!

Realising, however, that this sort of argument by itself could hardly be swallowed by the party ranks, the Bureau puts forward another justification for its 1944 surrender, on international grounds :

"A reversal of alliances, leading to a common front of the capitalist powers against the Soviet Union was a possibility. If a pretext had been given them, the Americans who came to France as eleventh-hour soldiers would not have hesitated, in their fear lest the Soviet army should advance too far in the West, to ally themselves with Hitler in Europe and Japan in Asia to range all the forces of international capitalism against the land of socialism."

In these admissions the Political Bureau actually confirms Tillon's intimation that a working class seizure of power in France was sacrificed in 1944 for the sake of Soviet diplomacy. It is now a matter of record that the policy imposed by the Kremlin upon the French C.P. and its scorn for the independent power and prospects of a revolutionary movement had disastrous results in the postwar period. It helped French and European capitalism to its feet, made the Atlantic Alliance possible and thereby weakened the position of the "land of socialism" as against the forces of international capitalism in the ensuing cold war.

The main lesson to be drawn today from the Marty-Tillon affair is that the Stalinist bureaucracy is capable of duplicating this derailing of the independent revolutionary struggles of the workers whenever this suits its special interests and strategy.

The events above-mentioned all point to the existence of powerful submerged currents of working class protest swirling within the depths of the Stalinist world. They indicate that its monolithism conceals deep differences and divisions. For socialists it is important to note that these manifestations of criticism emanate not from the right but from the left. They reflect the irrepressible demands of the revolutionary push of the masses toward socialism. This is not only aimed at the abolition of imperialism but operates in the last analysis to undermine the Moscow bureaucracy itself and to weaken its reactionary control over large sections of the international labour movement.

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