

PROBLEMS FACING LABOUR PARTY WORKERS

BY VINCENT CHARLES

The Labour Party Conference meets at a time when the national economy is beset with tremendous difficulties. Resolutions on the agenda this year reveal a sense of uneasiness among the best sections of the rank and file of the Labour Party. Workers are posing the question: has the Labour Government taken full advantage of its opportunities and really carried out a struggle against capitalism? Will the policy of the Labour leaders prepare the way for Socialism or will there be a swing back to Tory reaction in the next period?

It is true that the Labour Government came to power at a time of great shortages on a world scale and in the chaos of the aftermath of war. Every Labour worker knows what would have been the disastrous consequences had the Tories come to power. It is also true that the Labour Government has introduced important social reforms: Subsidies on food, the Education Act, the Health Act and various other schemes. To a great extent, these have been paid for by the workers themselves. They have carried out the programme of nationalisation of coal, railways, gas, electricity and the nationalisation of steel is being projected for the coming Sessions of Parliament. All these have been opposed by the Tories. They constitute powerful factors which help the Labour leaders to retain the support of the masses at the present time, coupled with the existence of full employment.

All this appears impressive. But what processes are taking place? Far from the bastions of capitalism being overthrown, they remain intact. The capitalists today, are reaping profits greater than under the Tory governments before the war. Indeed, profits are reaching record heights. With 80% of the economy still under private ownership the laws of capitalism continue.

The small unemployment in Britain today is not due to the measures of the Labour Government. Unemployment in capitalist America is also negligible at present. This is due to the laws of capitalism: the inevitable boom which followed the destruction of the war. The help given by American imperialism by the Loan and Marshall Aid, will only temporarily alleviate the condition of ailing British economy, which will lead to a crisis of over-production.

Where will this end? Three years after the war, yet another world war looms ahead as the inevitable consequence of the antagonism between American imperialism and the Soviet Union; an antagonism which must exist while capitalism continues.

The illusions generated by the Labour leaders in the General Election are and will be dispelled. And the Tories are utilising the discontent of the middle class and backward workers, placing the responsibility for Britain's parlous situation on the shoulders of the Labour leaders.

The reverse suffered by Labour in the last two Local Government elections came as a deep shock to the rank-and-file. An examination of the causes of these defeats has made it clear that Labour is losing support, principally among the middle classes, not because it has introduced "too much socialism" but precisely for the opposite reason. The bureaucratic restrictions imposed on the country have nothing in common with socialism but serve only to irritate large layers of Labour supporters.

15 RESOLUTIONS ON WORKERS' CONTROL

An essential feature of a genuine socialist economy is that it is a planned economy and that the workers, through their elected representatives, have a full measure of control over it.

This vital fact receives full recognition on the Conference Agenda. No fewer than fifteen resolutions dealing with one aspect or another of the problem of workers' control has been sent in. Not a single one of them approve the existing policy of the Government. Some of the resolutions confuse the issue of technical management with that of control; others attempt to fit control into the framework of the Joint Production Committees. But the general trend is clear—the resolutions voice the concern of the movement at the economic policy pursued by the Labour Government. This is also clear in many of the resolutions dealing with the Government's Wages, Prices and Profits policy.

The resolutions from Salford (North) D.L.P. and Chatham and Rochester D.L.P. give expression to the general fear prevalent in the movement that the Government may try and back out of nationalising the Iron and Steel Industry. Salford's, in particular is a good resolution. It reads:

SALFORD RESOLUTION

"This Conference calls upon the Labour Government to place on the Statute Book, during this session, an Act for the Nationalisation of the Iron and Steel Industry, without compensation, an Act which shall have as its foundation a complete scheme of Control by the Workers engaged in the Industry. In every Iron and Steel Plant, there shall be elected a Committee of Control. This Committee shall include the Management and Technicians representatives, but only the elected workers' representatives shall have voting powers. This Committee shall have power to examine all aspects of the company's activities, financial and technical and to have access to all books past and present relating to the business of the firm. The principle of Workers' Control to be applied to all Industries nationalised past and present."

FOREIGN POLICY

As at every Conference since Labour took office, Foreign Affairs feature largely on the Agenda. Out of the 15 Resolutions originally submitted, only one gives full support to the Government's policy. Strangely enough, this comes from Arthur Horner's Trade Union—the National Union of Mineworkers.

On the whole, indeed, the foreign policy resolutions reveal much greater confusion than do those dealing with economic policy at home. That from Dagenham, which simply states, "That this Conference re-affirms its belief in international Socialism as the surest way of attaining world peace", really raises the basic issues. If it succeeds in reaching the Conference floor in that form it should provide wide scope for internationalists to give the fullest expression to their views.

DEMAND RIGHTS FOR YOUTH

Much concern is also felt in the Party about the situation of the League of Youth. The hostile attitude of the Labour Party leadership towards the creation of a genuine, fighting, socialist youth organisation

constitutes the gravest threat to the future of Labour. While the Young Tories with the assistance and encouragement of the Conservative Party, are growing into a powerful bastion for capitalism, Labour's youth finds itself hamstrung by the fears and prejudices of its elders. No League of Youth worthy of the name can emerge while the existing restrictions remain! The age limit of 21 prevents the development of an experienced leadership, especially in view of the fact that at the age of 18 the young men are called up under the Conscriptio Act.

For its full development, the age limit of the League of Youth must be raised to 25, the League must have the right to hold its own national conference, to elect its own leadership and to control its own press.

FOR DEMOCRACY

Between the publication of the preliminary and final Agendas for the Conference, some significant changes have taken place. Most important of these changes is the disappearance from the Order Paper of the resolution from East Lewisham which sought to ensure that conference decisions should be binding on the Labour Government. Under pressure from the M.P. for East Lewisham, Herbert Morrison, the resolution has been withdrawn but the issue will be discussed under resolutions standing in the name of the Eddisbury and St. Marylebone Parties. If the Party leaders can ignore Conference decisions at will, once they have been sworn in as "His Majesty's Ministers," then what becomes of the claim that there is "genuine democracy" in the Labour Party?

In the Preliminary Agenda, all the resolutions dealing with the "Anti-Red" drive of Transport House, condemned it. The final agenda reveals that Morgan Phillips and his friends from Headquarters have been busy in the meantime, and one or two amendments now give support to the "witch-hunt".

By its manipulation of the Card Vote, Transport House will undoubtedly get majority support at Scarborough this whitsuntide.

The leadership will attempt to stampede the members of the Labour Party round the issue of dictatorship versus democracy. They will point to the methods of Stalinist totalitarianism in Russia and Eastern Europe. Labour workers must reject the policies of reformism as well as the policies of Stalinism. A clear International Socialist policy based on firm workers democracy with control of the administration of the State and industry by the working class is the only road forward.

Workers looking for a militant lead must group themselves round a Left-wing programme which will rally the workers for a real onslaught against capitalism. Events, we believe, will convince the mass of the Labour Movement that only a revolutionary anti-capitalist programme can lead to the better Britain and the new world of Socialism which we all desire to build.

NOW AVAILABLE Permanent Revolution



By LEON TROTSKY

Order From: Business Manager 256 Harrow Road, London, W.2.

Anti-Red Terror in U.S.A.

News now reaching us from America of the anti-left wing campaign indicates the alarming proportions the witch-hunt is assuming.

Typical is an incident described as follows in the paper of the American Trotskyists, the "Militant":

"On March 30, a hoodlum mob, incited by newspapers and encouraged by the police, smashed down the door of the house of the local official of the Communist (Stalinist) Party in Columbus, Ohio and wrecked the interior.

"This was the culmination of a steady newspaper and police campaign to drive 'reds' out of Columbus. For days the newspapers, led by the Scripps-Howard 'Columbus Citizen', had, in effect, invited their readers to take vigilante action by printing pictures of the house, its occupants, giving the address and telephone number.

"After several nights of threatening phone calls, visits from toughs who tried to beat him up, rocks and concrete being hurled through the windows, Frank Hashmall, Communist Party official, after appealing vainly for police protection, fled with his wife and their 9-months old infant.

Complete Shambles

"Then the vigilante attack came. A mob collected before the house and broke all the windows. The police arrived and soon left. The vigilante mob then battered down the doors and wrecked the interior of the home. Furniture was overturned and smashed, drawers were pulled out and their contents trampled on. Venetian blinds were smashed. When the mob was finished the place was a complete shambles.

"When the mob had finished the police arrived and ordered it to disperse. No arrests were made."

Then follows a series of reports of the gangsterism of hired capitalist hooligans against activities on the part of various sections of the American Labour movement, including the trade unions.

Let those who are supporting the drive against "Communism" here learn from these scandalous happenings in the U.S.A. the implications so far as the Labour movement is concerned.

PRESENT COST OF MILITARISM IN THE U.S.A.

Here are the estimated Federal Government expenses for 1947-48. Note how future wars, past wars, and war preparations account for more than 71% of the total budget.

	Per Cent.
FUTURE WARS \$10,776,000,000	29.0
(War Department, Navy Department Terminal leave for enlisted personnel, Stockpiling of strategic materials etc.)	
PAST WARS \$12,294,000,000	
(Veterans' services, Pensions, Insurance, Re-adjustments, Benefits, Hospitals, Other services, Administration, Interest on public war debt, etc.)	33.0
WAR PREPARATIONS: PROPPING UP WAR ALLIES \$3,617,000,000	9.7
WELFARE, HEALTH, EDUCATION, INTERNAL EXPENSES, ETC \$6,989,000,000	18.8
OTHER \$3,517,000,000	9.5
(General government, Refunds, Reserve, etc.)	
TOTAL BUDGET . . . \$37,193,000,000	

Vehicle Strike

(Continued from Page 1.)

the issue, the Executives should have exposed the policy and fought against it.

No Organised Collections

Widespread support, the creation of working-class solidarity is an important factor for the success of any strike. The work of the District Strike Committees was good in many respects, though varied.

The main weakness was the fact that no collections were organised. The fact that the men were receiving strike pay should not have deterred the organisation of solidarity collections. Circulars to branches and factory collections represent the strongest weapon in the hands of striking workers. Support on this basis shows the employers that the workers are ready for a long fight and that they have support in their struggle.

Coupled with a clear opposition to the wage freeze, the vehicle builders appeal would have gained a good response from organised labour.

Role Of The Communist Party

During the early part of the strike, the "Daily Worker" took a sympathetic attitude to the strike. In view of the change in the Communist Party line last November, when Harry Pollitt declared that the main task of the Party was to defend the standards of the workers, and in view of their vociferous opposition to the wage freeze, this was expected. The vehicle builders accepted the support of the "Worker" with sympathy and enthusiasm.

The course of the strike, however, exposed this support for the sham it was.

On Thursday, April 22nd, the "Daily Worker" forecast the

acceptance by the Unions of the terms offered by the employers, ruling out arbitration. On Friday, this theme was further developed by George Sinfield's article "Inside Industry." Brother Stewart, reporting on behalf of the Executive to the Glasgow workers, stated on April 25th, that as the result of an article in a national newspaper on Thursday, the attitude of the employers stiffened on the eve of settlement, and for this reason the Executive recommended return to work without any concessions having been won.

The paper could only be, and was understood to be, the "Daily Worker."

The articles in the "Daily Worker" which proclaimed victory even before the Union Executives had considered the terms, showed the bosses that a settlement was on the cards, in fact, almost certain. The "Worker" gave a valuable weapon to the bosses which the Trade Union officials did not fail to use.

The leaders of the Communist Party may argue that this was a mistake. But every worker knows that any hint of readiness to settle before terms have been reached, only serves to strengthen the employers. In any case, the "Daily Worker" and Sinfield have the responsibility to explain their action. Perhaps the Communist Party leadership will explain it away as a Right wing attempt to foist responsibility onto them. The truth is otherwise.

The Communist Party factions in the two Unions were instructed over the week-end to vote in favour of a return to work. In Glasgow these instructions were given by Henderson, Communist Town Councillor.

The disgust of the rank and file C.P. militants can be seen by the voting which was 7-5 in favour of the return, with one abstention.

POLICY OF THE R.C.P.

The Revolutionary Communist Party stands for the establishment of a system of society in which class divisions and the exploitation of man by man have been abolished and the introduction of a communist mode of production and distribution in which people produce according to their ability and receive from society according to their needs. The R.C.P. declares this to be an international task, to be undertaken by the British working class in close collaboration with the workers and exploited masses of all lands, and is united for this purpose on a world scale with revolutionary Marxists of other lands in the organisation of the Fourth International. Towards the attainment of its goal, the R.C.P. strives to win the support of the majority of the British working class for the overthrow of capitalism and the establishment of a Workers' Government, on the basis of the following transitional programme:—

1. The nationalisation of the land, all atomic processes, all large financial, insurance, industrial and distributive and transport enterprises without compensation and their organisation on the basis of an overall production plan, with control of production at all stages in the hands of democratically elected committees of workers and technicians.
2. Foreign trade to be concentrated in the hands of the State.
3. Abolition of the national debt with provision for the repayment of small savings.
4. Abolition of business secrets. All company books to be open to inspection by the Trade Unions and Workers' Committees.
5. Luxury hotels and mansions to be requisitioned and all existing housing space, to be controlled and allocated by tenants' committees. An end to luxury building and the establishment of a State-financed national housing plan, drawn up and operated in collaboration with the building trade unions and tenants' committees.
6. Distribution of food, clothes, fuel and other consumers goods in short supply and the fixing of prices in collaboration with and under the control of committees elected from the co-operatives, distributive trades, factories, housewives and small shopkeepers.
7. A rising scale of wages to meet any increase in the cost of living, to be assessed at regular intervals by workers' and housewives' committees and the trade unions, with all wages based on a guaranteed minimum; a falling scale of hours with no reduction in wages to absorb the unemployed, who must be fully maintained while not working; a maximum week of 40 hours without loss of earnings.
8. Abolition of the Monarchy, the House of Lords and the law of inheritance; the immediate repeal of all strike-breaking and anti-labour laws, and the introduction of full electoral rights for men and women in the armed forces.
9. Dissolution of the standing army and its substitution by a workers' militia; abolition of conscription and military law; clear out the reactionary officer caste; for the election of officers from the ranks. The establishment of military schools by the trade unions at the expense of the State for the training of worker-officers.
10. Withdrawal of police protection from fascist meetings; illegalisation of anti-semitism and the propagation of race hatred of any description. For direct workers' action through the formation of defence guards based on a united front of all working class organisations to combat fascist provocation and defend workers' organisations, premises, and meetings from fascist attacks.
11. Immediate freedom for the colonial peoples to choose their own form of Government and the immediate withdrawal of British troops from all colonial countries.
12. Unconditional defence of the Soviet Union against all imperialist powers; for the overthrow of the privileged Stalinist bureaucracy and the re-introduction of workers' democracy in Russia.
13. An end to secret diplomacy; a peace without annexations or reparations based upon the self-determination of nations; the unconditional withdrawal of British troops together with all occupation forces from foreign soil.
14. Unity with the workers and exploited masses of all lands in the struggle for the overthrow of capitalism and the establishment of a United Socialist States of Europe and for world socialism.

Please Help!

Every Penny Counts

Readers of the "Socialist Appeal" are aware that our paper has been the subject of a libel action by the employers of Savoy Hotel Ltd.

It is well-known that the "Socialist Appeal" has no wealthy backers. Its support comes from the pennies of the working class. It can ill-afford such libel actions.

An agreed statement is published in this issue of the "Socialist Appeal", and a sum of money is to be paid to Savoy Hotel Ltd.

Added to this, our legal expenses are considerable.

Up to the present, workers in Trade Union branches, in factories, including catering workers, have rallied to the assistance of the "Socialist Appeal". But the amount received is by no means sufficient to cover our needs.

We appeal to every class-conscious worker to give as generously as possible. ORGANISE COLLECTIONS IN YOUR FACTORY AND UNION BRANCH. SEND INDIVIDUAL CONTRIBUTIONS, NO MATTER HOW SMALL.

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Published by E. Grant, 256, Harrow Road, London, W.2 Printed in Gt. Britain by C. A. Brock & Co. Ltd., (T.U.), W.10.

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