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Freedom

A N A R C H I S T F O R T N I G H T L Y

"The State rests on the slavery of labour. If labour becomes free, the State is lost."
 MAX STIRNER

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Twopence

Reaction Brought Up-to-Date

Comments on the Conservative Conference

THE subject-matter of the Tory Conference at Brighton was the development of a programme with sufficient appeal to the electorate to secure the ousting of the Labour Party at the next General Election. As such it can have very little interest to those who seek the abolition of the State and the wages system, and it will therefore not be necessary to go into any details of the business.

What does interest us very much, however, is the evolution of new methods in the technique of mass deception which is the first pre-requisite of any organization which aspires to wield power over the workers. Not that one envisages the Tory leaders as conscious and diabolical deceptionists deliberately thinking out a code for hoodwinkers; they are, doubtless, every bit as sincere as their Labour counterparts. And, like them, the evolution of their Party policy is chiefly a matter of adapting it to practical issues of the day, of making it more in line with the needs of the time.

What, however, does this mysterious phrase "the needs of the time" mean? In a leading article in the last issue of *Freedom* certain aspects of Labour policy, notably, the direction of labour, were shown to be framed less by the principles of Socialism than by the seemingly inevitable development of a State Capitalist mode of economy. The Tory Conference at Brighton showed that the same trend bears on Conservative policy with a similarly resistless power.

ECLIPSE OF THE DIEHARDS

All the political commentators have noted the "progressive" character of the conference, meaning by this that the old type of Tory is giving place to men whose espousal of reactionary ideas is less openly wholehearted. Thus the Executive was considerably embarrassed by certain speakers who advocated an almost explicit anti-Semitism under the guise of anti-foreign and anti-Communist opinion, and received not inconsiderable applause from some quarters. But more tactful speakers from the higher reaches of the Party contrived to put matters in a rather less unattractive light.

Again, Sir Waldron Smithers has been made the Aunt Sally for a good many gibes. He merely put forward the traditional ideas of Conservatism untinged by any "progressive" fancy dress—and was overwhelmed by the younger leaders of the type of R. A. Butler. To us there seems no question that the reaction speaks openly through men like Sir Waldron Smithers, while it clothes itself in deceptive phrases in the mouths of the "modern" Tories. Straightforward reaction is far preferable—and far less insidiously dangerous—than the more practical reactionary who knows how to suit his policy to the "needs of the time". These latter know when to sacrifice the indefensible outposts of Conservatism in order to preserve the citadel of reaction; to sacrifice the part to preserve the whole. Labour leaders like Cripps show a similar elastic adroitness. The master opportunist in this line of business was Lenin. Hitler was good at it, too.

CONCESSIONS TO SOCIALISM

The clearest manifestation of this process of bringing Conservatism up-to-date was the wholehearted acceptance of the "Industrial Charter". The conference thereby committed the Tory Party to maintain certain measures brought in by Labour, notably the nationalisation of the Bank of England and of the mines, despite the fact that they were bitterly criticized by conservatives when first proposed and carried through.

Practical men among the Tory leaders, like Anthony Eden and R. A. Butler, recognize such measures as inevitable and necessary in the world economy of today. Their acceptance by the Tories shows that they are not a product of socialist theory as the Labour leaders contended when they were first brought in; instead they are simply necessary measures for the smooth introduction of the State Capitalist economy which is the social framework of contemporary history.

BIRDS OF A FEATHER

Anarchism teaches that government itself is evil because it deprives the individuals who compose society of all responsibility for the management of their common affairs. If this view is accepted it immediately obliterates the differences between the politicians of the Right and of the Left—for it is not how they rule that matters, but the fact that they rule at all. Of course acceptance of this

FRENCH BREAD RATION NEVER SO LOW

The conditions of French workers are deteriorating at an amazing speed and one cannot help being struck by the acute feeling of insecurity looming over the great majority of French people to-day. The fantastic rise in prices has come as a hard blow after government promises, a few months ago, that prices would be frozen and even decreased. The daily bread ration is down to 200 gr. (just over 7 oz.) and French people remark bitterly that even under German occupation it was never lower than 250 gr. The bread is moreover yellow in colour, containing a lot of maize and is not easy to eat. Milk is practically unobtainable even for people with doctors' certificates or mothers with small babies. Ration tickets are often not honoured, particularly for fats; meat is unrationed but costs about 8/- a pound, ham 10/- a pound, liver 18/- a pound. Coffee costs twenty shillings a pound in the black market.

Anarchist point of view depends on how one regards the relationship of the individual to society, and how one estimates the potentialities of individuals. But it is a suggestive pointer confirming the anarchist position to find that the policies of "Left" and "Right" also converge so strikingly under the pressure of developing State Capitalism, to the point of virtual identity. Labour "betrays" socialism because of the "needs of the time"; and the Tories "betray" conservatism under the same impetus. It is not surprising that the needs of the time often produce coalition governments of "all the talents" when the dividing line between them is so tenuous. The times are indeed propitious for the setting up of a single party as under the totalitarian regimes. General de Gaulle is openly demanding a single party government to suppress the struggle between parties in France.

British Democracy may as usual prove more subtle and preserve a two party system, both however having the same programme! Such an outfit would provide a traditionally perfidious cover for the advancing totalitarianism of the twentieth century.

THE CABINET CHANGES

After months of rumour, the Cabinet changes have at last taken place, and, while we are under no illusion that any alteration in the composition or political flavour of the Government will lead to advantage for the workers or will halt the speeding progress towards dictatorship and increased want for the masses, there are certain important tendencies revealed in the changes.

The first is the emergence of "strong men" in the key positions, and particularly of Cripps as "Economic Dictator". As is pointed out elsewhere in *Freedom*, Cripps is the man who, more than any other of the Labour leaders, has contended that the workers are incapable of managing industry. His advent to a position of almost absolute power in industrial affairs means a consolidation of managerial power, the advent of technocrats and "experts" to increased authority, and strengthening of the old capitalist industrial ruling class as part of the "Labour" autocracy, as has already happened in the case of the mines.

The second is the increasing upper middle-class composition of the Cabinet. Now, no less than six out of the eighteen members of the Cabinet are old public school boys, which means that they come from the more select stratum of the old capitalist ruling class, trained in institutions which have the avowed object of turning out young men who will be able to wield authority over the "lower orders". This move undoubtedly is an attempt on the part of the Labour Government to try and regain the support of the middle class in the next election, and to counter the clearly increased influence of the Tories in those marginal constituencies where a middle class vote assured the Labour parliamentary majority.

But Attlee and Morrison are not neglecting their old centres of support entirely. The three Co-operative members of the Government, who have shown an ineptitude unusual among even ministers, still remain in their positions. The "Left" of the Labour Party is thrown a sop by the retention of Bevan and the elevation of G. R. Strauss to Cabinet rank.

In other words, the new changes show

ANOTHER MOSCOW HOAX

IN 1943, the stinking corpse of the Comintern, with its long record of betrayal of the workers and service of Russian foreign policy in all parts of the world, was buried with great ceremony, as a magnanimous gesture on the part of Stalin to his new friends, Churchill and Roosevelt.

Of course, the decision did not mean a great deal. The Comintern policy had served its turn, and now the Russian government, assured of the temporary co-operation of its capitalist allies, could well afford to throw overboard this temporarily useless piece of machinery, particularly as the various national parties were already well disciplined enough to carry out Soviet orders with any international organisation.

The Communist parties thereafter served Soviet interests by supporting the various capitalist interests and entrenching themselves as strongly as possible in resistance movements, trade unions, and all kinds of labour movements, so that when the time of need arose they would hold as many keys as possible.

The situation has since changed. The common interests of Anglo-American capitalism and Soviet authoritarianism have dwindled away, and their imperialist interests clash at a dozen points in the world, from Germany round to Korea. Soviet policy has changed, and the policy of the Communist parties changes

with it. For some time it has been clear that a return to a pseudo-revolutionary policy was imminent, in an attempt to use the workers of Western Europe, Asia and America as cats' paws in the imperialist struggle.

That phase has now been officially declared open, by the formation of a new Communist International, at present only consisting of the parties in countries where Communist influence is strong. Denunciations have been made of the Western democracies and of the right-wing Socialists. The talk of popular fronts is dropped, and we are back where we were in the early 1930's, back to the old phase of "Social Fascism" which preceded the campaigns for "United Fronts" with the Socialists and the later participation in coalition governments.

It is clear, from the present international situation and the past record of the Communists, that this new adventure is nothing more nor less than an attempt to utilise working-class feeling for furthering the ends of Russian imperialism.

Once again, the workers will have to be on their guard not to play into the hands of the Communists not to allow their genuine rebellions against the capitalist governments to be used by the Communists for their own ends. The Communist spokesmen will once again talk revolution while it suits them; they will cynically make use of every working-class movement they can dominate for their own ends, but they will certainly contribute nothing to any genuinely revolutionary cause.

The workers should remember how they were betrayed by the Communists in factories and workshops during the war, how for their own ends the Stalinists were ready to ally themselves first with the Nazis and then with the capitalist democracies. The new Comintern is merely another of these manoeuvres. It will certainly destroy any genuine revolutionary movement that comes under its sway; the workers can protect themselves only by making their own organisations which are free alike from Trade Union bosses and Communist stool pigeons, and by refusing consistently to be used as the tools for Russian or American foreign policy.

NATIVE IMPERIALISM IN INDIA

The character of the new regimes which have arisen in India and Pakistan is shown very clearly in the rush to take over as many of the Native States as possible.

The Indian Native States, it is true, are islands of mediaeval autocracy, where a small ruling class of the richest men in the world live in luxury at the expense of the poverty-stricken masses of their people. But there is no real evidence that the Nehru government, for instance, wishes to change that. There is no suggestion that the rulers will be deprived of their riches or the major part of their privileges. It is their inclusion within the new empire, as collaborators, that is desired.

This is shown clearly in the attitude of the Nehru government towards Junagadh. If the Congress leaders were really concerned with the happiness of the people of this little principality, they would call on them to resist their ruler

and would set out a programme of freedom from autocracy. Instead, their objection is not to the autocracy of the ruling prince, but to the fact that he wishes to adhere to the rival state of Pakistan, and they try to solve the matter by a show of military force which reminds one of the British in the pearly days of their rule in India, and which is certainly a strange culmination to the passive resistance that was once the cherished programme of Congress.

Furthermore, while the Congress leaders object to the ruler of Junagadh adhering to Pakistan, they show their insincerity by not attempting to dissuade the Hindu ruler of Kashmir from attempting to carry out his plans to put a Moslem majority under Hindu rule.

These incidents of power-grabbing and scuffling to get the largest slices of territory reveal the imperialist potentialities of the new set-up in India. Nehru and his associates are following in the true path of Clive and Wellesley.

