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POWER STRIKE

POLAND

ORIGINS OF PLAID CYMRU

RAMELSON ON PRODUCTIVITY

number 34

Editorial: Power strike

The official work-to-rule by the 125,000 electricity supply workers lasted 7 days from 7 December to 14 December. The Unions (EPTU, G and MWU, T and GWU, and the AEUW--the EPTU having the largest representation) negotiated for a £5 16s per week increase in basic rates. This was about a 20% increase in pay, and was not an exceptionally high figure to start off negotiations, as F Chapple General Secretary of the EPTU stated.

It was an accepted fact that the Union side would settle for 12½ to 15%. And indeed the negotiations up to the work-to-rule were pointed toward settling at around this figure. At the time of the breakdown of the negotiations, the Electricity Council had made an offer which it stated would increase earnings by 9% while the unions stated it would mean a 12% increase. The Unions turned this offer down, broke off negotiations, and officially sanctioned a work-to-rule.

Why? First, all the Union officials needed to protect their flank--exposed by the militants' demand for a £10 per week increase and threat to call an unofficial work-to-rule. Second, the officials believed that the militants would probably have more support from the rank-and-file than usual, given the rate of increase in cost of living and the need to win large increases to simply maintain present wage rates.

The EPTU officials took the militants seriously because (1) the demise of L Cannon left a vacuum in the Union which the officials were anxious to show they could fill. (2) the unofficial militants had sponsored a motion at the EPTU Annual Conference committing the Union to a 25-30% increase in earnings demand.

The G and MWU officials had refused to take the unofficial strike at Pilkingtons seriously in the spring of 1970. As a result, the union nearly faced a mass exodus of men out of the official trade union. The combination of V Feather, a Government Court of Enquiry and calculated intervention on the shop floor by the management saved the union. The G and M learned its lesson. It now will act with the 'left' unions in officially supporting action which has rank-and-file support.

The T and GWU and the AEUW have led the rest of the trade union movement in adopting a position of support for the unofficial militant movement. This support has in no way hampered the officials' freedom to manoeuvre, it has in fact increased it.

When the unofficial movement makes a demand of its official leaders, those leaders are able to offer their full support and promises to pursue this demand. And because the unofficial leaders' ideas of how to win the demand are either the same as the officials' or not made plain, the official leaders never lose face. (Those militants with the same ideas as the officials are often involved in 'left' politics, e.g. shop stewards in the motor car industry, while those with unclear or unformulated ideas are found where there is a literal political vacuum like the Leeds clothing strike or Pilkingtons).

Thus the officials can merely lead the pursuit of the demands and 'in the course of the fight be forced to give ground'.

The official work-to-rule in the electricity supply industry illustrates the above statement. The 4 Unions gained the support of the unofficial movement and the rank-and-file by accepting the demand for industrial action and a large increase. The officials pursued this demand throughout initial negotiations and called the work-to-rule to back it up. In calling it off, they stuck to the demand for £5 16s and the Govt Court of Inquiry will hear them put the case for this demand. The return to normal work was followed as thoroughly by the rank-and-file as was the call to industrial action. Though presumably the unofficial militants opposed the return to work, they in no way attempted to oppose it in practice and to force the official leaders to either continue the action or lose the support of the rank-and-file. This would mean more than demanding the work-to-rule go on, it means explaining what part the action will play in winning the pay increase and defending this explanation against the officials' politics.

And it is definitely a matter of combatting the politics of the officials-- not their individual characters nor their pronouncements at the 'economic level'. Nowhere is this more clearly shown than in the power dispute.

The Government decided to challenge the work-to-rule politically. It took this decision (1) because it was a relatively easy thing to justify openly opposing the unions' position: electricity workers are not 'low paid' like the dustmen; they do not do an unpleasant job; their action 'jeopardised life' and squeezed the petty bourgeoisie while inconveniencing everyone immediately. (2) the Conservative backbenchers were giving the Govt trouble for not showing the working class the Conservative Govt would not be coerced by it. The Govt had funk'd this duty in the local govt strike and in subsequently granting the same increase to NHS workers. (3) the EPTU and the G and M were strongly represented on the Union side and could be counted on to give in after very little political escalation. (4) Any Govt should be seen by its constituents to 'govern', it is part of bourgeois democracy that the Govt must make political moves which the Opposition can counter and which become 'political history'. The power work-to-rule was a good opening and co-incided with the need to do something against the inflation. All in all, it was a move from which the Govt stood to gain much and lose relatively little if it misfired.

This political challenge took the form of Ministerial statements that the public was on the Govt's side against this irresponsible action and the offer of arbitration. When the Unions refused, the reply was the offer of a Court of Enquiry which would take account not only of the merits of the wage claim but also of the 'public and national and economic interest.' The Unions opposed this initially, but under continuing Govt pressure gave way. The reference was included and the work-to-rule called off...because as Mr. Chapple explained 'The Unions, he claimed, had no chance in the face of criticisms of their members by Ministers of putting their case over to the public. By withdrawing their action before they had got 'justice', the unions were 'making an action of good faith with the nation' said Mr. Chapple' (Financial Times, 15.12.70)

The only way to oppose the Union's position is to explain why the stopping the work-to-rule is not an action of good faith with the nation and also why the Govt can put its case and the Unions could not. This would be to counter bourgeois politics with working class politics and remove the ground from under the trade union officials.

A Brief Criticism of Trotsky's 'Literature and REVOLUTION'

"The bourgeoisie never wearied of crying out to the revolution what Saint Arsenius cried out to the Christians: 'Fuge, tacæ, quiesce!' Flee, be silent, keep quiet!" Marx: The Eighteenth Brumaire.

In October 1917, Trotsky faced the proletarian revolution in Russia, in a similar fashion. Like the eternal middle class democrat he is, he denied that it differed from previous revolutions. Furthermore he wishes things in 1924 to "evolve". This from a man who shouts continually about the 'permanent revolution!'

TROTSKY AND THE DICTATORSHIP OF THE PROLETARIAT.

Trotsky, even in the introduction of his book, states his fundamental position.

"It is fundamentally incorrect to contrast bourgeois culture and bourgeois art with proletarian culture and proletarian art. The latter will never exist, because the proletarian regime is temporary and transient. The historic significance and moral grandeur of the proletarian revolution consist in the fact that it is laying the foundations of a culture which is above classes and which will be the first culture that is truly human.

Our policy in art, during a transitional period, can and must be to help the various groups and schools of art which have come over to the Revolution to grasp correctly the historic meaning of the Revolution, and to allow them complete freedom of self-determination in the field of art, after putting before them the categorical standard of being for or against the Revolution."

But, the word 'Revolution' writ large, does not qualify one as a Communist and Marxist. Recognising the Revolution, particularly only after the event, is not a touchstone of political or social reliability, still less purity. Different strata of people accept the revolution. For after all, the Revolution

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is supported from all sorts of mixed motives, which represent as a result the desire of all classes for a change. But only those who support and recognise the dictatorship of the proletariat are truly Communist and Marxist.

To stipulate only that all Art should express itself either for or against the Revolution is striking one of the main weapons from the hands of the working class.

What is the weapon?

It is the right to exercise its dictatorship ideologically and practically in the field of art and culture.

Trotsky is denying the proletariat the possibility of completing its revolution. For what class, makes its living from, and is responsible for the artistic and cultural productions of society? Precisely the middle class, the petty bourgeois intelligentsia. Is it not true that this strata retains and is a breeding ground for bourgeois ideology?

Art and culture play a most important role in the propagation of ideology. According to Trotsky, persons in this field should merely be asked to recognise the Revolution.

As an example, on this basis the proletariat would have to be satisfied with an artist merely changing his subject, to that of having working class characters, or the revolution itself, but this is not necessarily a change in the content. This could be merely a mechanical acceptance of the prevailing power, with the topical subject a way of expressing the same old content. One is reminded of Thomas Carlyle's reply to an American lady, when she said she recognises the universe.

"By God madam, you'd better!"

Like the American lady writers and artists recognise the revolution; they have no choice.

To merely demand recognition, which cannot be avoided, would undermine from the beginning the proletarian dictatorship. All that had been won by suffering, struggle, would be lost eventually through ideas, ideology. Lost through "the head".

But there is more to it all. Trotsky wishes to abolish the dictatorship of the proletariat very quickly. He writes various contradictory things about this but in essence it is quickly. He refers to the working class 'regime' as transient, but even this is qualified by the word temporary, in case transient is conceived as a fairly long period.

Later in his book he states the social revolution is not exactly the same thing as the dictatorship of the proletariat.

To make sure that the reader knows that he means 'revolution' on a world scale, Trotsky writes of bitter 'struggle' and victims. But if this is true, and it certainly is, how can the working class go through all this struggle, consolidate itself, and complete the revolution without its own dictatorship to protect itself? How can it go through this without its dictatorship operating in every

field, in every nook and cranny of its own national society:

Obviously the working class must have such a dictatorship?

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This is at the beginning of the book. But Trotsky further underlines his position in the chapter "Proletarian Culture and Art". It incidentally shows that Stalin was a thousand times right to attack and wage a constant struggle against Trotsky. In Trotsky was concentrated all the non-proletarian elements that were against the proletarian dictatorship.

This is exemplified in the following at the beginning of the chapter.

"On the other hand, as the new regime (Trotsky refers here to the period after the working class has captured power) will be more and more protected from political and military surprises and as the conditions for cultural creation will become more favourable, the proletariat will be more and more dissolved into a Socialist community and will free itself from its class characteristics and thus cease to be a proletariat."

Trotsky thinks he can get rid of one side of a contradiction by suppressing it or 'freeing' it, or easier, still, write it away on paper.

What does this formulation of Trotsky mean in practice, concretely?

If there is a Socialist community surrounding the working class, this must mean that this Socialist community is another class. It can't be non-class! If there is a working class, then by definition there must be another class or classes. It follows that according to Trotsky the working class dissolves and abolishes itself into this other class or classes. That is the non-proletarian elements.

How 'slowly' does the proletariat abolish itself?

We have the answer in practice. According to the so-called Marxists in the leadership of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union at present, about forty years! Actually they tell us that it would have been earlier than this, but there was a stumbling block in their way. The stumbling block was Stalin and his proletarian leadership, his adherence to Marxism.

The present revisionist leaders of the C.P.S.U. utilise the formula: 'the state of the whole people'. If there is a state of the whole people there are no classes. The proletariat has been dissolved! In what way does the position of this leadership differ from Trotsky and all his various adherents in whatever form? None whatsoever. Except the monstrous fact that now they have state power.

But if it is true that the working class, is dissolved or has to be dissolved, into Socialist elements. Who does the main work in society? Surely there must be someone to man the big industrial plants! Someone must produce all the things that are necessary for the life of modern society: steel, coal, electricity, ships machinery, etc. In the Soviet Union now these things are also produced. What do we call the producers? What do we call this section?

The proletariat can be dissolved into the Socialist elements until doomsday, but they will still have to work, and presumably the 'rest', that is the Social-

ist community, will share the surplus that is created by this work, as the non-proletarian elements do not. But as the proletariat has been dissolved, has 'voluntarily' abdicated, it no longer constitutes the ruling leading class in society; therefore, the 'other' part of society, the Socialist community, will be the ruling class, because the state will still exist. If there are two sections, two classes in society, there must be a state, because two classes in society presuppose the state. As the state does not stand above classes, but is utilised by the ruling class to dominate the other class, or classes, therefore, the "Socialist elements" will become the ruling class; and as the working class has abdicated; therefore, it follows that the state, will dominate the working class or the workers; because we have just seen that some section of society will have to do the work.

This much can we draw from Trotsky's formulation so far: that the working class must abdicate its role as the leading class in society.

But this is by no means all that can be drawn from this extremely confused formulation of Trotsky.

It also means in essence that the proletariat is more backward as a revolutionary class than the Socialist community, i.e. non-proletarian elements. Because the proletariat is dissolved; not the other way about, if that were possible. According to Trotsky this community is Socialist. How can this be? The proletariat is the bearer of Socialism. No other class can be the bearer.

"The proletarian needs state power, the centralised organisation of force, the organisation of violence, for the purpose of crushing the resistance of the exploiters and for the purpose of leading the great mass of the population -- the peasantry, the petty bourgeoisie, the semi-proletarians -- in the work of organising Socialist economy." Lenin

Again in 'State and Revolution':

"Marxism educates the vanguard of the proletariat which is capable of assuming power and of leading the whole people to Socialism". Lenin

Another possible interpretation of Trotsky is either:

- A. The proletariat acts as a sort of catalyst for the rest of society. The proletariat organises and fights, gets slaughtered in the revolution. Then it crushes the big bourgeoisie, and carries forward society to the verge of Socialism, all for non-proletarian elements. But (and this is the point) after the revolution, as is the nature of a catalyst, remains the same as it was before the revolution. That is, works on as normally, produces a surplus which is, of course, appropriated by the non-proletarian elements and is still an oppressed class!

Or on the other hand:

- B. The proletariat carries forward, is the leading force in the revolution. Then by virtue of this, by virtue of its being a proletariat, maintaining itself as a ruling class, by this becomes reactionary. More, the proletariat becomes an anathema to other elements in society, becomes a drag on society, holds life back, becomes a backward element.

9. What follows from this? The proletariat having fought a revolution, raised itself to the position of ruling class, organises its own state form; is against Socialism!

Trotsky is also saying that a Socialist Community 'grows' round the proletariat. Against it. Despite it. One could not take a more contemptuous attitude than this to a class which is the only bearer of Socialism.

The essence of Trotskyism is expressed in the theory of the degeneration of the proletarian class and its instrument the Communist Party. This is described clearly by Stalin:

"Well, then, since there is still no victory in the west, the only 'choice' that remains for the revolution in Russia is: either rot away or to degenerate into a bourgeois state. It is no accident that Trotsky has been talking for two years now about the degeneration of our Party."

Stalin: October Revolution and Tactics of the Russian Communists.

On page 190 of Trotsky's book we come across this: "But in its essence, the dictatorship of the proletariat is not an organisation for the production of the culture of a new Society, but a revolutionary and military system struggling for it."

Clearly Trotsky denies the role of the dictatorship of the proletariat for any period, except the period of the revolution and the period of any more or less protracted civil war. That is the period of the actual physical fighting. He will not have it that this stage commences almost immediately after the revolution, (even possibly in the civil war period). Not at any cost will he have the working class sharing in the fruits of victory. In his style of Socialism, there may be a working class, but certainly not as a ruling class.

No! The petty bourgeoisie go on for ever and ever!

Trotsky, in the final analysis is denying the class character of the revolution and society. He denies that the relations of production must conform with the new economic basis, which in itself is determined by the productive forces. The proletariat is called into being by capitalism, only the proletariat can man the large industries, etc. In capitalist society production is social, the product is owned by private individuals or groups. This relation is not satisfactory for the new productive forces produced by capitalism; it becomes "a fetter on their development." Therefore the working class who work these new productive forces, who develop with them, have to change the relationships, their conditions of life force them to; they change them in the shape of the appropriation of the social product. Instead of it being in private hands, it is in the hands of the working class for society. This very briefly and very sketchily is what takes place. This point is made to show that a new economic basis arises after the proletariat makes its revolution, and this economic basis, given a chance to develop, must give rise (even if with many setbacks, even against great ones) to a new culture. Whether Trotsky or anyone likes it or not, new relationships come into being.

Trotsky's formulation is against the possibility of building Socialism in one country. Because he conceives the dictatorship of the proletariat as being

only a sort of spontaneous military detachment arising out of a war situation ('revolutionary and military system'). He obviously is thinking of the Civil War in Russia and the approach of "European and world revolution". In other words nothing can be done, nothing commenced, nothing developed in Russia because they, the Russian proletariat, are "merely soldiers in a campaign.....most important of all the rifle has to be cleaned and oiled." Trotsky sees the dictatorship of the proletariat in only one temporary aspect, as a sort of military division on the march.

Stalin is quite clear concerning the dictatorship. Here is the final point of his classic formula on the three main aspects of the dictatorship of the proletariat:

"The utilisation of the power of the proletariat for the organisation of Socialism, for the abolition of classes, for transition to a society without classes, to a society without the State." Stalin: Leninism

Note here that Stalin's definition shows the proletariat leading society forward to the abolition of classes.

Not as Trotsky would have it, the proletariat becoming submerged in the non-proletarian elements, and the non-proletarian elements leading society to Socialism.

But Trotsky's theory is pernicious because non-proletarian elements, (in the main, the petty bourgeoisie) would lead society back precisely to a bourgeois state. This would happen inevitably, because of the very nature of the petty bourgeoisie.

Finally, as far as this section is concerned, the dictatorship of the proletariat takes many forms and aspects, depending on the stage reached; the direct military and repressive aspect is only one of them. But the fundamental principle of Marxism must be recognised: that the dictatorship of the proletariat is the continuation of the proletarian class struggle in new forms.

TROTSKY, THE OCTOBER REVOLUTION AND CLASSES.

All that Trotsky sees in the October Revolution is a clearing, a completion of an ordinary bourgeois democratic revolution. A completion of certain tasks left over from the February revolution.

In the introduction he refers to his policy on Art as "complete freedom of self-determination in the field of art."

This is the cry of all petty bourgeois intellectuals. This is the cry of the bourgeoisie. The bourgeoisie in their struggle against the feudal order inscribe this and similar slogans on their battle banner, Notice it is complete freedom. The shopkeeper demands complete freedom to sell his wares. The factory owners want complete freedom to manufacture anything, but freedom for their workers to be sacked, freedom to leave one capitalist, but freedom for the capitalist to bind him completely to the entire capitalist class. The capitalist desires his religion to be completely free from the state. And so forth. It is always freedom in general.

11. Does not Trotsky refer to the October Revolution as being profoundly national? What is this in essence but the desire of the bourgeoisie to have its own national market, the emphasis on the national which was not the content of the revolution. Does not the bourgeoisie learn its patriotism in the market place? Trotsky is actually confused, he has misunderstood the Revolution. The reality was the peculiar interweaving, which happened during the course of the Revolution, of

"the direct Socialist tasks of the dictatorship with the task of completing the bourgeois revolution."

Stalin: Leninism

Again,

"completing the bourgeois revolution was a 'by-product' of the October Revolution, which fulfilled this task 'in passing'."

Stalin: Leninism

Writing about the various schools of literature which existed for quite some period during and for some considerable time after the revolution, Trotsky criticises from a liberal position. These schools, and this should not be forgotten, are precisely left-overs from pre-revolutionary days, or derive from the confusion that afflicts the vast mass of the petty bourgeois intellectuals in a Socialist Revolution. Almost without exception any proletarian writers that are writing at these periods are lumped with these schools. It is unfortunate but possibly inevitable that these writers whilst attempting to learn technique whilst attempting to embrace all previous art, would gravitate to those circles that knew, or seemed to know, about culture and art. On the other hand there was Gorky, the first proletarian writer in the real sense, and the founder of Socialist Realism. But Trotsky precludes himself from discerning the new, by statements like the following:-

"History shows that the formation of a new culture which centres around a ruling class demands considerable time and reaches completion only at the period preceding the political decadence of that class. Will the proletariat have enough time to create a proletarian culture?"

Trotsky has already prejudged the issue! According to him there will not be complete proletarian rule.

Trotsky explains this by stating that in the fierce class struggles of the transition period, the proletariat will spend more time in destruction than in construction. Because of this, runs his argument, the proletariat will have no time to create a culture. Later, this is to some extent contradicted by Trotsky saying that the proletariat will be so confined to economic and political construction that it will again have not time for culture.

But is it not true that a rudiment of literature, of art, can be developed even before the Revolution? This can be done by the advanced workers. Precisely those workers who can assimilate Marxism. Was not Gorky in this category? This is despite the fact that he was not immediately a Marxist!

It is certainly true that for the proletariat it is a thousand times more difficult for them to acquire the knowledge of art etc; that in general unlike the bourgeoisie they cannot within the womb of the society previous to the Revolution develop a fully rounded art and culture. They are a propertyless class,

because of this have to do the work of modern society; and therefore have no time to acquire all the knowledge of mankind previously. They may have no habits of study and the bourgeoisie wish to keep them away from knowledge as far as possible. But against this the proletariat revolution is the most conscious in history.

Trotsky of course says it is shallow and liberal to make analogies with historical forms; and that because Marxists state that culture develops from a definite social basis, we cannot on that account say that because bourgeois society gives rise to bourgeois art, that proletarian society will give rise to a proletarian art.

Trotsky does not in the final analysis concede that the proletarian regime can exist for any period at all. His conception is from a revolutionary period, with the proletariat fighting, to the brotherhood of man, to a state of the whole people. With naturally, the petty bourgeois as artist, Because the petty bourgeois has the technique, the knowledge and appreciation of art!

But if we look deeper, it is Trotsky who is making false analogies. It is he who is being liberal! Trotsky is saying:

- a. A new economic basis of society gives rise to new formations of culture. This takes a great deal of time. In other words culture lags behind, does not run exactly parallel with economic development.
- b. He applies this to the proletarian state. But as the proletarian society is not that long-lived before classless society this cannot happen. (Actually talks of decades and not centuries, for the length of the proletarian society.

This is the law of uneven development. It would be contrary to Marxism to say that this law does not exist even in socialist society. But it certainly does not exist in the form he puts it. No society having a higher economic level than the preceding one has had at the same time a lower cultural level. Marxism states that social development as a whole leads from a lower to a higher level. This applies to 'spiritual culture' as well: or else historical materialism is nonsense!

R. Rivers

(This article will be concluded in the next issue of the Communist).

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The HISTORICAL ROOTS OF PLAID CYMRU

PLAID CYMRU has now decided that it is the radical, Trade Union Party for Wales. In a recent radio debate, Phil Williams, the new Chairman of Plaid Cymru, described the Tories as 'continuing the Labour Party policies', and Labour as 'Pink Tories', and called for a two-stage programme for Plaid Cymru: first a free Wales, then a socialist Wales. Plaid Cymru is for the first time going out to win working class support on the basis of appearing as a working class party. (The substance of this 'swing to the left' is dealt with in Communist Comment No. 23). This makes it essential for the working class movement to examine the credentials of Plaid Cymru, to see whether or not its claim to be the party of the Welsh workers is justified.

This 'socialist' image is something new for the Plaid. Formerly it was very strongly and sometimes fanatically anti-socialist, although still claiming to be 'anti-capitalist'. It would never have tried to appeal to Welsh workers on a class basis, as it held that class differences were an English imposition on Wales and alien to Welsh society. Of course this meant that it had very little support among the South Wales working class, which was one of the most militant and class conscious sections of the working class in Britain.

This series of articles is an attempt to analyse the class role of Plaid Cymru since its foundation, on the basis of its political and economic demands, and its relations with the Welsh working class movement. This first article attempts to put the foundation of the party, as Plaid Genedlaethol Cymru, in 1925, in its historical perspective.

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When the Nationalist Party seeks historical roots, as in an article on the foundation of the Party in October's WELSH NATION, it usually calls upon Owain Glyn Dwr, in the 15th century, and then skips

-14- 450 years to talk about Lloyd George and Tom Ellis. If it is called upon to account for the long gap between the two 'nationalist' campaigns, its reply is usually a moral and subjective argument about Welsh 'lack of self-confidence' and English 'corruption' of the Welsh gentry. Occasionally a more economically minded nationalist will explain the rise of the Welsh nationalist movement as we know it, in the 19th century, as the result of the rapid expansion of English capitalist exploitation of Wales at that time, and resistance to this by the 'classless' Welsh people. In fact the main English capitalist exploiters in Wales - the ironmasters and others - had been established in Wales for some time, and the event which most clearly paralleled the rise of Welsh nationalism was the growth of the Welsh capitalist class - i.e. of Welsh exploitation of Wales. So much for Welsh classlessness. Lloyd George, the lawyer, and D.A. Thomas, the coal owner, - the 'extremists' of 19th century Welsh nationalism, represented nothing but their own class interests - the interests of Welsh capitalism. The great 19th century Welsh nationalist movement, effectively channeled into support for the English Liberal Party by its opportunist leaders, reflected a massive expansion of capitalist development in Wales from a country with negligible capital to a highly industrial nation, exporting on the world market. In terms of class forces, the 19th century accomplished three main changes in Wales.

- 1) The creation of a vast urban proletariat
- 2) The destruction of the peasantry
- 3) The rapid rise of an industrial bourgeoisie and an urban petty bourgeoisie.

Each of these three classes gave rise to its political expression, but the third, the rising Welsh bourgeoisie, was able to keep firmly in control of the other two, and to channel the economic movements of the rising proletariat and the declining peasantry into support for the Welsh national bourgeois movement. This movement was not in antagonistic contradiction with English capitalism (which had achieved these social changes years before) and its spearhead was directed against the landlords, whose political monopoly in Wales they proceeded to overthrow, using the landlord/peasant contradiction to promote the interests of Welsh Capital. Previously the landlords had channeled Welsh votes and political support into the English Tory Party (which was not itself a landlord party, but the conservative wing of English capitalist politics).

The Welsh bourgeoisie was a heterogeneous mixture, including big coal-owners etc., exporting to the Imperial and European market, and a large urban petty bourgeoisie controlling the Welsh market, and their associated intellectual and administrative strata. Politically, however, they acted as a homogenous class and were dominated by the big bourgeois interests. These were not in contradiction to English capitalism, and the Welsh bourgeoisie threw its weight behind the English Radical Liberals, against their common enemy, the English and Welsh Tories.

The dominant section of the Welsh bourgeoisie was producing for an export market, not for the Welsh market, and thus did not suffer from English encroachment on the Welsh Market, as the petty bourgeoisie did. Their nationalism was not a defensive nationalism against English economic oppression. It was first and foremost the nationalism of a rising national bourgeoisie ambitious to gain political power in their own nation, in order to carry through certain radical reforms rather faster than the English Parliament was willing to concede them. Economically they were fully Unionist. The second aspect of Welsh bourgeois nationalism was opportunist. It was a way of channeling nationalist sentiment among other classes and strata into support for their movement, and for the British Liberal radicals.

This nationalist sentiment arose in three quarters. Firstly the petty bourgeoisie, who were suffering from the growing English invasion of the Welsh market. Secondly the peasantry, which was in the process of being eliminated in the interest of more efficient capitalist farming, by landlords who despite their long Welsh pedigrees were regarded as English because of their English Language and culture, and their use of the English Parliament, judiciary and church in their own economic interests. Thirdly the rising working class, in their economic struggle against the ironmasters and coal-owners etc., because the first big capitalists to arrive had been either English or anglicised landlords, and these tended to exploit them more intensively and effectively than the new Welsh capitalists. These three sources of National feeling were channeled into support for their own movement by the dominant sector of the Welsh bourgeoisie, which was itself firmly controlled by the English liberals. Thus 19th century Welsh Nationalism was made effectively to promote the interests of Industrial capitalism in Wales and England.

The great national movement died away around the turn of the century, and its leaders, like Lloyd George, became pillars of British imperialism, without any new movement to replace them. A small number of intellectuals kept up a certain amount of continuity in the Nationalist ranks; but effectively the Welsh nationalist movement was more or less non-existent until the Nationalist Party was founded in 1925. What caused this change?

Economically this period marked the transformation of English industrial capitalism into British Monopoly capitalism - imperialism, in which finance capital dominated. This had many implications for the Welsh bourgeoisie. The leading sector of Welsh capital - that relying on the export market, especially the coal producers - was quite capable of expanding indefinitely alongside English industrial capital, and in fact it expanded so fast that it could no longer be contained by the South Wales coalfield and expanded into England. Extensive Welsh interests in English capitalist production, and extensive English investment in the big Welsh producers eg Cambrian Collieries, and Powell Dyffrun, soon eliminated any distinction between the English and Welsh industrial capitalist classes. Secondly, Welsh capital was never strong enough to produce a Welsh financial system, and as concentration of the monopolies preceded London finance tended more and more to become the real owner of Welsh industry. Thus the leading sector of the Welsh capitalist class became totally identified with British capitalism. At the same time the need for opportunist nationalism had disappeared, as nationalism among the petty bourgeoisie and working class had declined.

Welsh manufacturing, for the Welsh market, had been almost completely eliminated by English competition, and the petty bourgeoisie was more and more confined to

-16- the spheres of distribution (of English produce) and administration etc., and was thus dependent on English capitalism. The landlord/farmer contradiction was resolved effectively after the report of the Welsh Land Commission in 1896; and the landlords had become reconciled to loss of political power, while the poor peasantry had disappeared. The Welsh working class had meanwhile discovered that there was no difference in content between exploitation by English ironmasters or by Welsh coal owners, especially now that both were controlled from the city of London. Hence it ceased to support its exploiters (like D.A. Thomas of Cambrian Collieries) politically, in their nationalist campaigns, and set about creating its own political class movement. The spread of socialist ideas among the working class movement made them the enemies of 'their own' nationalist exploiters as well as the English, and they could no longer be diverted by nationalist politics.

So from the point of view of capitalism in Wales there was no longer any need for a nationalist movement, either to promote its own interests or to contain and control a popular movement. Far more urgent was the necessity to stifle the working class political movement at birth, by the creation of an opportunist pseudo-socialist political party. Thus social democracy gradually replaced nationalism as the means used by capitalism to control and contain the Welsh working class and to use their class consciousness in the service of radical capitalism. Between the demise of Cymru Fydd and the 1st World War social-democracy (Lib-Labs, the Independent Labour Party, and finally, the Labour Party), gradually grew to prominence in the Welsh industrial zone, ^{resulting in the} ~~becoming the~~ L.P. principal instrument of bourgeois politics in Wales.

"Wales followed Lloyd George into the First World War", the Nationalists often say. Welsh nationalist mythology holds that Lloyd George sold out his national interest when he became a political leader of British Imperialism before and during the 1st World War. While there is no doubt that he was thoroughly opportunist, it is wrong to see Lloyd George's championship of British imperialism as a betrayal of the Welsh national interest. The political leadership of the Welsh nation was in the hands of the dominant section of the Welsh bourgeoisie, who Lloyd George represented. The 'national interest' was their class interest. These capitalists produced for the world market. The 1st World War was a struggle between the European imperialist powers for control of the world market. The Welsh capitalists had everything to gain from an English victory, in which they would share, and everything to lose from an English defeat, which would cut them off from their markets. It was the same class interest which made the Welsh bourgeoisie nationalist in the 19th century that made them support the British imperialist war effort in 1914.

To sum up:

The conditions which gave rise to the 19th century nationalist movement were:-

- 1) The existence of a rising Welsh capitalist class
- 2) A period of rapid expansion of both the world market and the Welsh home market, allowing the unity of the Welsh industrial and petty bourgeoisie, and the unity of both with English radical capitalism.
- 3) The existence of nationalist sentiment among the mass of Welsh people of all classes.

In contrast, the formation of the Nationalist Party in 1925 took place in quite different conditions: -17-

- 1) A period of general crisis of British imperialism, contraction of the world market and destruction of the Welsh home market.
- 2) The virtual elimination of Welsh capital, and the destruction of the Welsh petty bourgeoisie.
- 3) The existence of a class conscious Welsh proletariat, and a consistent working class party, gaining ground among the Welsh workers.

The keynote to the 19th century movement was the rise of imperialism, and the expansion of Welsh production in response to the expanding world market. The keynote to 1920s nationalism was the crisis of imperialism and the contraction of production for the world market.

What effects did the crisis of world capitalism have on Wales?

The contraction of the world market hit the imperialist export industries hardest. The bulk of Welsh capital was in this sector - coal, steel and tinsplate production for the world market. These industries virtually collapsed from lack of market outlets. Thus the leading sector of Welsh capital - which had led the great 19th century nationalist movement, and had later become incorporated into British imperialist monopoly capital, was now eliminated from the effective political scene. Now in charge of declining and unprofitable industries, its controllers became part of the most reactionary section of the capitalist class. Their struggle for elusive profits within their own declining industries led them into conflict with the more advanced sectors of British capital, who required their products at low cost. Hence their abandonment by the radicals, and the growth of the radical bourgeois demand for the nationalisation of the basic industries in the interests of British capital as a whole.

The Welsh petty bourgeoisie was left by default with the leadership of the Welsh national bourgeoisie; as the only coherent and specifically Welsh sector of the bourgeoisie in Wales. The world crisis had catastrophic effects on the Welsh petty bourgeoisie. The decay of the big industries meant that large numbers of Welsh workers became redundant, and either remained as unemployed, with little money to spend, or were forced to emigrate to England to find work. Thus the Welsh market, consisting primarily of 1) the effective market demand of Welsh industry, plus 2) the effective market demand of the Welsh workers, was drastically reduced on both counts. Moreover the loss of export markets forced English capitalists to seek outlets for their products at home, and they intensified their penetration of the Welsh market. The Welsh bourgeoisie were in grave difficulties. Not only was their home market contracting, but what little was left was increasingly being captured by England. Thus they were in economic conflict with English capitalism; in fact, their very existence as a national bourgeoisie was threatened by the everyday operations of English capitalism in Wales. Their response to this was naturally enough a defensive nationalist response; and the conditions were ripe for the foundation of a Welsh nationalist political party, led by the petty bourgeoisie, to promote their class interests against those of English capital. For the first time the Welsh National Bourgeoisie was in economic conflict with English capitalism; so for the first time the Welsh nationalist movement was in conflict with English radical capitalist politics. Hence for the first time an independent Welsh nationalist party, independent of the English radical parties (Liberal and Labour) was called for. These

-18- . were the conditions which gave rise to the foundation of Plaid Genedlaethol Cymru in 1925.

The passing of the leadership of the Welsh Nationalist movement from the big imperialist bourgeoisie to the petty bourgeoisie did not mean that imperialism lost its political control of the Welsh People. Rather it was the nationalist movement which lost its influence when it ceased to serve imperialism. British monopoly capitalism still remained firmly in control of Welsh politics, through its principal instrument in Wales, the Labour Party. Despite the small number of Welsh workers who supported the new Communist Party, the bulk of the organised working class was mobilised behind the Labour Party. Thus through the means of Social Democracy imperialism retained its political dominance in Wales, even though it no longer represented the interest of the leading stratum of the Welsh bourgeoisie.

The petty bourgeois nationalists were therefore in a sticky position. Their class interest required that they challenge imperialism, which was destroying their market and threatening their existence; yet they were far too weak to think of doing this. They were a declining class, fighting a defensive battle against an imperialism which was forcing them out of existence. They were getting weaker all the time; imperialism, through the Labour Party, politically controlled the mass of the workers, so they could rely neither on their own strength, nor on a mass movement to promote their interests. In this situation the only realistic policy was to compromise - to persuade English imperialism to allow them to continue to exist; to seek a role within the imperial framework of English domination of Wales, which would allow them to make profit without threatening the greater profits of English capital.

It is against this background - the contradiction between the Welsh petty bourgeois class interest, which demanded a bourgeois-led anti-imperialist movement, and practical politics, which showed this to be impossible in Wales at this time, that the evolution of Plaid Genedlaethol Cymru's political, social and economic policies, between 1925 and 1930, must be seen. This will be dealt with in next month's Communist.

A third article will deal with the rise of the new-look opportunist, social-democratic policies which rose to prominence and dispersed the older policies after the second World War which have turned Plaid Cymru at last into a credible, vigorous and expanding instrument of imperialist politics in Wales.

LAWRENCE FRY

BACK COPIES OF COMMUNIST COMMENT NUMBER 23, CONTAINING THE ARTICLE ON THE 'SWING TO THE LEFT' OF PLAID CYMRU CAN BE OBTAINED FROM:
G. Golden, 28 Mercers Road, London N. 19

PRODUCTIVITY DEALS: Ramelson's Utopianism

Bert Ramelson is the Industrial Organiser for the British revisionist CPGB. Some time ago he wrote a pamphlet on productivity deals, in which he comes out very clearly against them. The questions to be asked, however, are: is this critical position based on the interest of the working class, and will his recommendations defend or advance the workers' interests?

Productivity deals are the 'latest and greatest swindle on the wages front' proclaims the subtitle to Ramelson's work. This suggests, as does the introduction, that this is all new. Among the publications of the CWO, however, is a reprint of an article written by Les Cannon in 1955 when he was a member of the CPGB on the subject of...productivity deals! Cannon's opening remarks date productivity deals back to the late 1940's.

This apart, what is the substance of Ramelson's objection to productivity deals? The old method of collective bargaining meant that wages rose steadily as output grew; "In the absence of productivity agreements workers would share the benefits of increased output." (Pamphlet, p 6). For the old method was just and right--it reflected the true balance of power. The productivity deal's purpose "is to replace traditional bargaining based on a true reflection of the balance of strength between the organised workers and employers" (p 16); it is dishonest, or, as the pamphlet is called, a 'swindle'.

But the bourgeoisie do not operate a swindle--the wages system is not a swindle as Marx was at pains to explain. The worker receives the value of his labour-power.. Nor has it been a swindle in practice since the mid-nineteenth century as Engels explained in the second preface to the Condition of the English Working Class. Productivity deals are moves by the capitalist class to raise even further the rate of exploitation. Ramelson recognises this, though it is obvious he dislikes using the term 'rate of exploitation', a bit old-fashioned for the 'forward looking communism' of the CPGB.

Productivity deals do represent the balance of strength, for the balance of strength is basically political. Since the victory of revisionism over the communist movement, this balance has swung more toward the bourgeoisie than before.

Productivity deals are no swindle, they are but part of the results of political defeat for the working class internationally--a defeat aided and consolidated by characters like Ramelson.

To show up Ramelson's revisionism let us look at his suggestions as to how to fight them: government policy must be changed. Now, even the social democrats go as far as to say the government should be changed (as opposed to the bourgeois state). Ramelson doesn't even do that.

The new policy must be one of economic expansion (i.e., a bigger market). Now this is a common notion among Left Wing Social Democrats, and many resolutions calling for this have been passed at TUC Conferences etc. All that is necessary, Ramelson tells us, is to put a bit of struggle behind these resolutions: 'Mass activity by rank and file trade unionists is an essential of the struggle' (p 23), but not too much!, '...it must be made clear that such activity is no substitute for official trade union action. Its main function is to stimulate and assist the official movement.' (p 23). Leaving aside Ramelson's 'change of government policy' for a second, what this means is, oppose productivity deals by all means, but remain under the control of the official leadership. What does Ramelson say about the official trade union movement? 'At best some trade union leaders are passive, while others are co-operating actively with the employers and the government to facilitate their members' acceptance of so-called productivity agreements.' (p 4).

Ramelson, then, knows exactly what he is doing when he advises workers not to oppose the official leadership. He cannot plead ignorance. His opportunism is deliberate and conscious.

Returning to the 'government policy' business: Ramelson alleges that the drive for productivity dealing owes much to the stagnation of UK capitalism in recent years. 'It's precisely in such conditions, when the greed for increased profits is hard to satisfy by increasing total output that the employers see increased exploitation through the means of productivity agreements as the main way of increasing profits.' (p 6). Ramelson, however, has lost touch with reality. It is the nature of capitalism to exploit workers. That is the essence, the core of the system. 'Increased output' means one of two things: firstly, there can be a hiring of men from the dole queues; that is, men who were previously not in work, not exploited, are now employed, i.e., they are exploited. As there is ^{only} 2.5% unemployment, capitalism's avenues of expansion are limited here. Historically capitalism has increased production not so much by employing more workers, but the second method of setting each worker to work greater quantities of machinery. Productivity has gone up. And so, of course, has exploitation. Increased output means increased exploitation, by whatever means output is increased.

Of course what Ramelson would like to see is capitalism increasing its output without the exploitation. He wants capitalism to lose its 'rough edges' like exploitation. This 'rough edge' happens to govern the rest of the system. To want to see it go while capitalism stays is to lose contact with the real world--to become a utopian. This is what has happened to Ramelson.

He attempts of course to cover this up, by making it look as though his reforms are revolutionary. He does this by proving that the opponents of his reform (the expanded market) are the entire capitalist class. 'Policies designed to hold back the growth of the economy' are 'a deliberate policy reflecting the interests of big capital.' Now, UK capitalism would like to expand: 'Accumulate, accumulate, this is Moses and the prophets.' (Marx, Kapital, Vol I). But, because of balance of payments difficulties etc, the state has had to stop this process temporarily--so that it may, in a year or two adopt Ramelson's programme and expand. So much for the revolutionary reform.

Note the phrase 'big capital'. Ramelson's utopianism criticises the big bourgeoisie, not the petty bourgeoisie, from whence it springs.

Ramelson also deals with technical change. Ramelson complains that the workers don't get their just share of the benefits of technical changes, and wants to see hours shortening and basic wages rising smoothly as productivity rises (real petty-bourgeois utopianism for you!). For Ramelson is in favour of productivity increasing, the only drawback is worsening working conditions and rising unemployment. Here he has an aspect of the truth. When capitalism introduces new machinery, thus increasing output while laying off some workers, there is no guarantee that the new output will be sold, especially as men are out of work and so (to a large extent) out of the market. Since 1945 capitalism has kept its home market buoyant through Keynesian policies (the consequences of which--inflation--are now coming home to roost); but, the disruptive effects of technical change still remain in the wings. Bourgeois economic management would have surpassed itself if (and solved all of capitalism's problems) it had reached the 'stage' where it could adopt Ramelson's programme of 'regular annual...increases in basic wages with no strings attached.' Let us examine this further: 'The amount of the increases must be related to changes in the cost of living, profits of the ...firm, increases productivity..., changes in comparable spheres of work, as well as an improvement in the worker's share of the wealth he produces' (p 21). Dismissing the last as the most utopian reformist rubbish ever written, it is interesting to consider the other factors. For, if increases are linked to 'increased productivity' in the 'right' manner, all the other factors become unimportant--what you have is nothing less than the Incomes Policy the Social Democrats chased for four years. Small wonder Ramelson protests he is not a 'luddite' (p 19)! (Incidentally, Ramelson, earlier, describes wages restraint as a 'class-biassed policy'. Talk about blurring over the fine edges of Marxism!)

Ramelson's position can be seen to be a comprehensive petty bourgeois one. This is in contrast to Cliff whose advice to shop stewards is resist at first, then, because the men will not back you, give in. But in practice they amount to the same thing--capitulation. As Stalin said, the left and right deviations are but different sides of the same coins.

This article seeks only to explain what revisionism means in relation to the economic struggle. The only way to fight productivity deals--and the rest of the class struggle, of which productivity deals are but a part--is to develop a political opposition to capitalism--until that exists, workers can only fight with the weapons that are at hand against the worsened conditions, redundancies etc.

D.R. Stead

Unity on the 'Left'

To the casual observer at Friends House on 12 December 1970 it might have looked as if deadly enemies were locked in mortal combat. In reality, all that was happening was the scoring of debating points and the going-through of the motions. Something more substantial was in the air, a bit of...er...mutual understanding.

The parties involved there were the revisionist CPGB and a gaggle of trotskyist students--otherwise IS (International Socialists). The subject of their discussion: 'socialist strategy for Britain'. What emerged was suggestions for tactics for left social democrats. Monty 'multi-party dictatorship of the proletariat' Johnstone started the ball rolling by giving a quick summary of the British Road to Socialism for the CPGB: unity with Left Labour elements etc. Duncan Hallas (IS) demonstrated quickly, logically and beyond any possible shadow of doubt, that the British Road had nothing in common with Marxism. One of his best techniques for doing this was to quote resolutions from the Unity Conference about the means of revolution, the role of Left Social Democracy etc. (The Unity Conference in 1920 which founded the CPGB.)

Hallas went on to tell us that the British Road represented the change in the CPGB from being a 'Stalinist' party to a left Social Democratic party. He is right about the CPGB being a left Social Democratic party now (the British Road says so). He is also right that before that it was 'Stalinist'. But, that to Hallas, of course, means counter-revolutionary (or 'deformed'); this is not (and cannot) be proved. If anything, it was the other way about--the CPGB did not function effectively as a communist party for 3-4 years after its inception in 1920 simply because it took that long for the amalgam of 'marxist' sects and syndicalist shop stewards to get organised etc. Thus it is true to say that the CPGB did not begin to attempt, even, to practice Leninism until Lenin was dead, i.e., until the start of 'Stalinism'.

Hallas didn't try and prove any of the hoary old trotskyist chestnuts about the history of the working class movement; he merely rattled the bag a few times. But that was enough to send Johnstone scuttling for his box of soothing phrases ('get over this childishness' etc). For behind the phrase-rattling was the spectre of discussion of the history of the movement. The CPGB have a large collection of skeletons in that particular cupboard, having completely reversed their position on the Soviet Union 1926-53 and in particular Stalin. The last thing they wanted was historical discussion.

What they did want was a bit of action. Johnstone and Co know they aren't communists, that they are left Social Democrats. They don't need Hallas to tell them that; they admit it in their programme. After all, they are a fairly large organisation and face the responsibilities of power (under bourgeois democracy). Their moderate actions must have (enough, not too many) moderate words to go with them. The revolutionary words must be there as well of course, the trick is to get the right mix.

IS, on the other hand, don't have as many responsibilities. Their moderate action can go along with much more revolutionary wordifying--which is what they were doing in the meeting. But their action, like all (no exceptions) the other trotskyist groups, show them also to be Left Social Democrats. One small example will do: on June 18 IS' advice to the workers was...Vote Labour. (see Socialist Worker that week).

So we have two groups of Left Social Democrats...what more natural than that they should come together? This was the question lurking behind the meeting. While the smoothly-dressed IS intellectuals buzzed around like gnats, scoring debating points like little gnat-bites, the main thing was that they were there. And of course there have been many such meetings, not to mention practical co-operation, e.g., December 8th one day strike. The logic of the situation is there; whether it will work itself out given the other forces (subjectivism etc) is another matter. (Continued on bottom of page 25)

COMMENT: POLAND

The rise and fall (twice) of Wladyslaw Gomulka is a useful mirror of the ups and downs, and zig-zags, of opportunism in its 'Communist' form in Eastern Europe since 1945. This comment will concentrate on the result of Gomulka's re-emergence in 1956 and his service to international capitalism since then. In future articles we'll attempt to deal with the reasons given for his present redundancy and what he replaced in Poland.

In 1948-49 Gomulka and Co (Klszko, Spychelki & Bienkowski) were purged from the leadership of the Polish Communist Party (then the PPR), expelled and later jailed, for nationalist deviations. These consisted of

- 1) Support for Tito's revisionism
- 2) Proposing a separate Polish Road to Socialism
- 3) Opposing the communist proposal for tackling the peasant question in Poland i.e. intensifying the class struggle in the countryside through the worker-peasant alliance against the capitalist farmers.

It comes as no surprise then to see Gomulka & co. re-emerge as leaders of the Polish party in 1956 at the same time as revisionism announced its dominance in the international communist movement i.e. the CPSU 20th Congress in 1956. What remains to be explained is how Gomulka emerged as a 'popular reformer' in 1956, after 10 years of communist rule, on a wave of working class discontent. His reinstatement in the leadership of the Polish Party in October 1956 on the face of it, appears to have flowed directly from a crisis brought on by the repression of workers' demonstrations in Poznan, June 1956 by the 'Stalinist' government. It had however more to do with the effects of the 20th Congress inside the P.U.W.P. An attempt to explain this will appear in a future article.

What is clear however is that the net result of Gomulka's 'reforms' was to disrupt what socialist gains had been achieved and open the way for the growth of capitalism in Poland.

In the industrial sector Gomulka's regime immediately halted any further social-

ist measures. Then, utilizing any weaknesses or mistakes that had appeared in the communist government's application of the general principles of Marxian economics (of which there were many, undoubtedly), used these as propaganda to undermine ideologically and in practice the centrally controlled planned economy. A policy of de-centralization gave greater decision-making power to local managers (itself not necessarily a bad thing) with capitalist principles of management replacing socialist ones. A spontaneous development of 'Workers Councils' among the working class was utilized to divert workers' attention from the political counter-revolution that Gomulka was directing. When Gomulka had consolidated his position, he moved to emasculate the Workers Councils through the revisionist controlled Party and trade union movement. Material incentives became the only effective motivation to increase production for the workers of Poland.

In agriculture, the regime was even more 'radical'. True to the charges for which he was purged by Stalin, Gomulka immediately halted the attack on the capitalist farmers by the worker-peasant alliance. Next, he reversed all the socialist measures initiated by the communist governments and disrupted the worker-peasant alliance. In its place he restored the capitalist farmers as an independent party. State-owned agricultural machinery was sold to those farmers who could buy it (up to then they were for hire, acting thus as a lever for the working class in the countryside). Collectivisation, even then at a very early stage halted ^{and} revers^{ed} so that to-day over 85% of arable agricultural land is privately owned in 'socialist Poland'. Market relations unrestricted by any state control became dominant and every subsequent attempt by the regime to encourage capitalist concentration of agricultural holdings had little impact. The only effective capitalist answer to this question is one where the mighty swallow the small. This has gone on in Poland ever since.

So we see that in the 1956-60 period, the Polish revisionists were a beacon in the sphere of restoring a capitalist economy to the other East European revisionist controlled countries (replacing Yugoslavia, though with essentially the same approach). The Polish economists, Lange, Brus and Lipinski, were 'pioneers' in the application of market socialist political economic theory.

Gomulka's services to international capitalism did not end there even. In the sphere of politics, he made a distinct contribution as noted by the capitalists:

"In one respect there is little doubt that Gomulka has exercised an important influence on Khrushchev. By accepting the leadership of a revisionist movement and then controlling it he showed Khrushchev by his Polish example that revisionism was something which could benefit Communism (!) and yet be kept in hand. By the very severity, therefore with which he curbed revisionism after October he served the cause of revisionism in the Soviet bloc as a whole".

(R. Hiscocks, Poland: Bridge for the Abyss. p331)

At the same time as Khrushchev was crushing the Hungarian revolts in 1956 and replacing Nagy by Kadar, Gomulka rose to power. (He escaped Russian intervention by political argument i.e. bourgeois political.) He convinced Khrushchev that he would toe the line in questions of foreign policy (a realistic approach at the time, considering Poland's strategic military significance in Russian/German relations). Furthermore, if given a free hand internally, he would ensure political control while implementing 'the Polish Road to Socialism' ie as well as removing any communists left in positions of power, he would control the ultra-revisionists, who were over-reaching themselves with open bourgeois

demands (restoration of the multi-party Parliamentary system, free elections, unlimited free speech etc.) These, led by people like Bienkowski, Kolakowski, threatened Gomulka's flank in the Party by revealing the logic of Gomulka's programme to communists who would otherwise remain confused. In 1959 he purged many of these ultras from important propaganda Ministries and organs of the Party, replacing them with former Stalinists, now come over to Gomulka.

Under a screen of rigid 'Stalinism' the definite restoration of the capitalist economy continued into the early 60s. It is important to remember also that Gomulka ruled Poland with the blessing of the most reactionary Catholic hierarchy imaginable. From his release in 1956, Cardinal Wyszynski and the Polish Church in return for massive concessions (ending of compulsory Marxist education, restoration of religious education etc.) consistently urged the Polish people (largely Catholic) to support the regime (and vote at elections). Relations between the regime and the church deteriorated in the 60s. This coincided with the freezing of the rapid economic and political moves back to capitalism from 1963. The reasons for this development will be gone into in the next article.

So this is the man then who is no longer of any use to the Polish bourgeoisie today. The essential difference between the events which brought Gomulka to power in October 1956 and his present eclipse is that while his rise represented the bourgeois counter-revolution, his present demise represents no such change of class power. Next month we'll attempt to explain Gomulka's present redundancy and what he is being replaced with.

JIM MOHER

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Unity on the 'Left' continued from page 22

But it can be seen that there is a 'rapprochement' between these two bodies, and between them and social democracy: revisionism and trotskyism functioning as the 'left wing' of social democracy. And why not? Historically, all three are mere deviations from Marxism: the splits of 1914, 1924 and 1956.

D.R. Stead

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In the next issue of the Communist:

Capital
Plaid Cymru's Plans for Capitalism in Wales

The Socialist Labour League Part II

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