

	Page
NOTES OF THE MONTH: What Next? by John Gollan	289
ILLEGALITY OF NUCLEAR WEAPONS, by D. N. Pritt, Q.C.	301
TRADE UNION PROBLEMS, by Frank Haxell	309
THE AMERICAN SCENE, by John Williamson	315
THE PEOPLE AT LARGE, by Sancho Panza	319
REMINISCENCES OF LENIN, by Elena Stassova	323
AN ARTIST IN KOREA, by Paul Hogarth	326
OLD CHINA, by R. Page Arnot	329
DRAWINGS OF KOREA, by Paul Hogarth	312-313
TWENTY-FIVE YEARS AGO	336

Book Reviews :

The Fisherman's Son, by Vilis Lacis: <i>Hugh MacDiarmid</i>	334
Diary of a Schoolteacher, by F. Vigdorova: <i>M. D. Clarke</i>	335
Moment of Choice, by Jack Lindsay: <i>Doris Lessing</i>	335

Shorter Notices :

The Right to Live, by Ralph Millner	336
Some Aspects of Indian Population, by V. B. Singh	336

Notes of the Month*What Next?*

JOHN GOLLAN *

'Overshadowing all else in the Year 1954 has been the emergence of the thermo-nuclear bomb. . . . New and revolutionary problems are posed requiring courage and imagination for their solution.' (Statement on Defence, 1955.)

'The Labour Party will not make this momentous question, the greatest threat to this nation and to the nations of this world, the plaything of politics.' (Herbert Morrison, Lewisham, May 23, 1955.)

'There has been a steady refusal to face the really difficult issues. . . . If there has seemed to be no great issues between the parties this is largely the cause.' (The Times, May 25, 1955.)

THE most serious issues confront the Labour movement as a result of the Tory victory in the General Election. Returned this time on a majority vote, the Tory Government, it is clear,

*The editor will resume the Notes of the Month in the August issue.

will aim to hold on for the full five years; and will try to use its power for an offensive against the working class and the nation. The sharpest class battles are opening up. The declaration of emergency powers against the striking locomotivemen is the symbol of Tory intent.

In international affairs a decisive stage has been reached. The dangers and opportunities in recent developments are equally obvious. The Big Four talks will mark a crucial point in these developments. Yet at this moment the Tories are back in the saddle. There was never a time when they could be less trusted with Britain's affairs. As the danger mounts the struggle for peace sharpens also.

The right wing Labour leaders talk now of five years of Parliamentary opposition—which would be in fact toleration and barely concealed support of the Tory Government. The real issue, the supreme need after the election is to rally the movement and the people for a new policy of peace and social advance and the strongest united fight which will guarantee that this Tory Government is driven out of office. For this the lessons of the election must be examined and mastered. The crisis of policy in the Labour movement is deepened as a result of the election and its solution made even more compelling and urgent if the movement is to advance as it must.

The Price

The election result is an even greater condemnation of official Labour policy than that of 1951. Right wing Labour in 'opposition' has been proved even more disastrous and bankrupt than when in office. All the objective conditions existed for a Tory defeat. The results show this in spite of the spineless defeatist official Labour campaign. Instead of winning votes the Tories lost nearly 500,000, although they won the election. Their total vote dropped to 13.3 millions.

The much-calculated 'swing' never materialised. . . . It is impossible to establish by figures that any electors who voted Labour in 1951 swung over to the Conservatives this time. (*The Economist*, June 4, 1955.)

Yet, despite this, Labour lost the election, dropping one and a half million votes, the first drop in the Labour vote since 1931. Eden could boast that for the first time in a century a British Government in power actually gained seats in an election at the expense of the opposition. This is the disgrace achieved by the Labour Party under the right wing leadership.

The full enormity of the crime should be grasped. Here is the classic example of Social Democracy's disruptive disorganising rôle in paving the way back to Tory victory. 1945 was a great political advance of the masses arising out of the anti-fascist war. But the weakness of this political advance was that it expressed itself in a right wing dominated Labour Government. Labour's huge parliamentary majority was based on 12 million votes to the 10 million gained by the Tories. A situation was created where, given a radical socialist policy, the defeated, dispirited Tories could have been further isolated and their bloc of 10 million votes broken open forever. This is precisely what right wing Labour could not do and had no intention of doing. Its policy was imperialism abroad and administration of capitalism at home. The result was a Tory gain of two and a half million votes in 1950 and a further one and a half million and the Government in 1951. Even then, however, the Labour vote was increasing as the people struggled against Toryism, rising to 13.3 million in 1950 and 13.9 million in 1951, the Tory Government being elected on a minority vote. The possibilities existed for smashing the Tory come-back given a change in policy and leadership. During the three and a half years of Tory Government, however, the right wing leaders in 'opposition' moved closer than ever to the Tories with a virtual identity of policy on German rearmament, the H-bomb, the wage freeze, opposition to strikes, etc., bringing about an ever-increasing revolt in the Labour movement against official policy.

Identity of Policy

The stage was reached in the six months preceding the election when *The Times* commenting on the issues for the coming battle could write:

The Labour opposition . . . is committed . . . to policies which, except in detail, do not effectively differ from those of the Government. (October 19, 1954.)

A Gallup Poll in December showed that 39 per cent. of the electors saw no real important differences between Tory and Labour official policy. In spite of the imminent election, the real concern of the official Labour leadership was not the preparation to defeat the Tories but the fratricidal campaign to smash and expel the left whatever the cost in disruption to the Labour movement and consequent advantages to the Tories. The mounting opposition to the suicidal right wing policies reached its highest point in the

challenge to German rearmament—at the Scarborough Conference, the great Parliamentary Lobby of January 25 and the ever-increasing votes against the official policy in the Parliamentary Labour Party. It was accompanied by a rising industrial movement and strikes against the employers to an extent not seen for years.

Sharp Contrasts

On the eve of the election, the sharp contrasts in the situation stood out. There was the virtual identity of Toryism and official Labour policy on all major issues giving rise to frustration and cynicism among sections of the electors. On the industrial and political field, on the other hand, in the trade unions and the constituency parties, there was a great advance of the widest sections demanding a change. While the Tories were switching from Churchill to Eden in preparation for the electoral struggle, the right wing eight weeks before polling day, were devoting their entire attention to the attempt to expel Bevan. This was how the right 'prepared' for the election. They paved the way to the Tory victory.

This was how the all-out united mobilisation of the working class needed to defeat the Tories and win a new policy was prevented. It was this identity of policy which stamped the character of the official election campaign and despite the splendid fight of the Communist Party, individual Labour M.P.s, trade union and factory organisations, resulted in one and a half million Labour abstentions.

Election Without an Issue?

This is an election without an issue, wrote *The Times* at the beginning of the campaign. Three days before polling day, the *Manchester Guardian* could write 'The golden days may yet return when parties find something substantial to differ about'. All the cynical leader writers meant, of course, was that there was no real point at issue between the official policies of the two Parties in the press and in speeches, on the radio and television. The real issues were excluded from the B.B.C. which denied facilities to the Communist Party and even to Labour M.P.s in opposition to official policy. Thus capitalist democracy works.

In fact never were the issues in any election so great or so grave. The supreme issue of all time was there. It was put in the Communist Party election manifesto which said:

The great issue of this General Election is whether there is to be peace or a world war waged with atom and hydrogen bombs.

But because of their complicity in Tory foreign policy and the manufacture of the bomb, the front bench could not make this the issue. To do so would have meant to struggle for a real alternative policy, real Four Power negotiations, no German rearmament, an end to war blocs, a peaceful united Germany, a genuine policy of disarmament. On the contrary official Labour emerged as the strongest supporter of the H-bomb. In Willesden East the Labour candidate, Maurice Orbach, dared to oppose the bomb. His Tory opponent approached Attlee and Attlee denounced the Labour candidate. Morrison broadcast of the danger of allowing 'the Russians to believe that we shall never use the bomb unless they use it first'. Little wonder then that Eden hardly made a speech without reminding his audience that Tory foreign policy was backed by the Labour leaders. And Churchill making reference to Attlee's support of Government policy pointed out that he could hardly do otherwise as Labour had initiated that policy. 'I have no doubt he wishes to do the right thing' patronisingly added Churchill. 'His real struggle is less with the Tories than with his own left-wing followers.'

Eden's Election Stunt

The result was that when Eden perpetrated the great election stunt around the Four Power talks, official Labour was silent, made no protest or exposure. American comment on the election manoeuvre involved was cynical and open. The London correspondent of the *New York Herald Tribune* (May 11) wrote of the suspicions 'that Sir Anthony and Foreign Secretary Harold Macmillan had frightened American Secretary of State John Foster Dulles and President Eisenhower with the thought that the Conservatives might lose the election unless they helped call for a top level meeting at this time'. Yet when *Pravda*, in a powerful editorial, denounced Eden's use of this vital question for electoral purposes, it was Sir Hartley Shawcross who denounced *Pravda* for daring to impute such methods to the Tories. 'Sir Hartley Defends the Conservatives' ran the *Manchester Guardian* headline. Shades of Baldwin and the election lie of 1935!

But Eden's decision on Four Power talks reflected the incessant popular pressure for negotiations as well as the desire to win electoral advantage. It also reflected the increasing contradictions and difficulties of the Western war policy and the need to counter the expanding peace initiative of the Soviet Union over disarmament and the Austrian treaty and the policy of People's China at the

Bandung Conference. The very fact, however, that Eden saw in this step a powerful electoral advantage showed how peace was the real issue of the election forcing its way to the fore, forcing the Party leaders to pay it lip service. But official Labour in basic agreement with the Tories on foreign policy could not grasp this, the issue of the election.

Labour's Farewell to Social Reform

It was exactly the same on home affairs. No one could deny that the cost of living was an issue. But for the right wing Labour leaders it was one which rebounded back on them. They accused the Tories of forcing up living costs. The Tories answered that under Labour rule prices went up too. Both were true. Neither had a programme for bringing prices down. Because the right wing leaders are tied to the war programme and the crippling level of war expenditure, their days of social reform programmes are over. Only the most modest proposals were advanced and these in vague general terms. And when Tory spokesmen produced (completely false) figures of costs, Gaitskell's defence was to denounce as a big lie any suggestion that Labour's programme would cost much. Not only would it cost little, he indignantly denied, but it would be spread over five years and with education even longer. It was practical, flexible and in no way extravagant, was his plea. In fact the programme would cost little because it *was* little.

For the real poverty of the old age pensioners or the burdens of the lower paid, there was even less to offer. There was no pledge to repeal the Tory Rent Act. Workers engaged in strike struggle to wring out of the exorbitant profits of the employers some advance on wages were looked on as an embarrassment. They were denounced in terms as shrill, vicious and menacing as those of any Tory. The few feeble proposals for nationalisation in Labour's programme were never mentioned while the Tories maintained an incessant barrage against nationalisation. With less and less to choose between the official policies, the Labour leaders were reduced to vague meaningless generalities in explaining the difference between them and the Tories. An eve of poll article by Morgan Phillips in the *Daily Herald* boldly titled 'What this Election is about' concluded:

There is a basic difference between the two Parties in the manner of approach to the problems of the world today. Labour's policy meets the

needs of the future. The Tory approach is half-hearted and slow-conditioned to suit an age which is passed. That is the issue.

In other words for the right wing there was no issue, only a difference of approach.

The Real Fight

The sham fight at the top made the electoral struggle of the Communist Party doubly significant. Here was the real challenge to Toryism, the real alternative programme. Faced with great difficulties because of the policy of the right wing Labour leaders, denied access to the radio and television, restricted by the electoral laws in putting its case fully in the constituencies where it was not contesting, the Party nevertheless conducted a great campaign. 350,000 electors were canvassed, over 1,300 meetings held in the seventeen constituencies contested. There was a widespread welcome to the Party policy. The British electoral system puts the greatest difficulty before the Party in expressing its support in votes. Nevertheless, it is significant that in nine constituencies where comparison is possible with previous contests, the Communist vote went up.

The Party's campaign and especially the splendid struggle for the real alternative policy waged by the *Daily Worker* was an outstanding factor in the major working class centres generally. In contradistinction to the shadow-boxing at the top, the fight down below was waged by the active militants of the Labour movement, the shop stewards and active trade unionists in the factories, pits and depots. They brought out the real issues of the election, combating the defeatism spread by the right wing, rallying the workers against the Tories. And wherever there was a Labour candidate campaigning for the real alternative policy the fight was intensified. This was the real election fight. It did not succeed in preventing a Tory victory. But in spite of the defeatist campaign at the top and the millstone of official policy, the militant fight brought about the position that the Tory proportion of the total poll increased by less than 2 per cent. and their vote actually fell. This shows that had there been unity of all the left forces to compel a change in Labour policy the Tories would have been decisively defeated.

What Next?

The great debate on the future has started. This is no academic exercise. It is a matter of life and death. The political position in

Britain sharpens as a result of the Election and with it the position inside the Labour Party. A crucial stage in the struggle for a new policy and the defeat of right wing influences and leadership in the Labour movement opens up. It is one which will coincide with a great development of the movement for peace and the defence of economic standards against the Tories and the capitalist class. It is a situation which urgently requires the broadest united movement for a new policy and the greatest mass activity to win that policy in struggle.

First and foremost is the struggle for peace, made doubly urgent by the nature and circumstances of the Big Four meeting in mid-July. The peace forces have been powerfully assisted in their task by the ceaseless peace initiative of the Soviet Union. The Austrian Treaty, the agreement with Yugoslavia and the decisions of the Warsaw Conference on mutual security show the new alternative positive peace path for Europe. Of the greatest importance is the invitation to the German Federal Republic to resume diplomatic relations, warning of the suicidal results of Western policy in using Germany as the spearhead of an anti-Soviet war. Its repercussions on public opinion in Western Germany already searching for an alternative to N.A.T.O. and rearmament will be enormous.

But the very intensity of the Soviet efforts underline the gravity of the war danger. For they arise out of the menace to peace caused by the ratification of the Paris agreements and the decisions of the N.A.T.O. Council meeting last December on the speeding up of the preparations for nuclear war.

Western Manœuvres

Western tactics regarding the coming Four Power talks are only too obvious and ominous. The U.S. State Department talks of attempts to revise the constitution of the People's Democracies, a proposal patently designed for wrecking, not for negotiation. Dulles discounts the possibility of agreement from the start with his propaganda that 'It might take months or years' to solve the issues. Eisenhower talks of the Four Power meeting as 'only a beginning' in a campaign 'which might last for a generation'. And the *Manchester Guardian* correspondent states 'The British view is that, at best, the meeting of the heads of Government should be the first in a continuing process of East-West negotiation which might continue over months and, if necessary, years'. The intention is clear, to drag out the talks while pressing ahead with the war preparations. This

is the reason for the exceptional sharpness of the Soviet Note agreeing to the talks. It condemns the U.S. wrecking proposals. All this, it declares, can only discredit the very idea of a conference. It warns that the U.S. is proposing the conference on the one hand 'and on the other hand it is already now coming out with plans which deliberately doom the Four Power conference to failure'. And it concludes (for obviously agreement can only be achieved if all interested states are striving toward the end of genuinely relieving international tension) 'only in this case can the conference of the heads of the Governments yield positive results'. There could be no clearer and unmistakable warning of the need for a great campaign of public pressure if real negotiations are to take place. From this point of view the World Peace Congress at Helsinki could not have taken place at a more appropriate time.

The Right to Strike Threatened

Equally vital is the struggle on the home front. One of the most sinister aspects of the Tory election campaign was the ceaseless propaganda, only thinly disguised, against the right to strike. Now that the Tories are back in power the moves against the right to strike are proceeding apace and should arouse the alarm and spur on the action of every trade unionist. Eden's declaration of war on the railwaymen by emergency powers was followed by his statement, amounting to a typical employer's ultimatum, that even in the locomen's strike (an official strike) work must commence before negotiations could begin. The threat was in his broadcast on June 5, clear and unmistakable. 'The board will be ready to help in discussions the moment work begins again. But work must begin again.' No trade union worth its salt would agree to this doctrine, which would make the right to strike a farce. Attacked in Parliament on the issue, Eden's subsequent explanations have only made matters worse. In moving the address to the Queen's speech in the House of Lords, Lord Runciman condemned the strike as a 'brutal and indiscriminate weapon' and demanded another method of settling disputes. The intention is to impose limitations on the right to strike unless the movement rallies unhesitatingly to smash the attempt at birth and defend this right untrammelled. For this is what the Tories fear, the organised might of the working class used in action, the very antithesis of the traditional ineffective right wing Parliamentary opposition, the real menace to their continuance as a Government.

They are reckoning without the will of the working class. The need is to use the full power of the movement to develop a counter offensive against the Tories and the employers for higher wages, the 40-hour week and an end to dependence on overtime to meet the rising living costs. For all this the widest unity and common action of all trade unionists is vital.

Which Way?

The way forward is bound up with the solution of the crisis in the Labour Party. The debate opens up. The issue is simple: further to the right, which means further Labour disruption with consolidation of Tory power? or to the left, the way of socialism and unity, the way of victory over the Tories? It is this battle of policy which is decisive. The conclusions being drawn by the right wing are obvious—further to the right, the continuation of the attack on the left, a ‘united’ party based on the capitulation of the left. All this emerges clearly in the declarations of Gaitskell and Morrison. It is a mistake, says Gaitskell, to say that Labour can only win an election when times are bad, policies and their presentation must be adapted to more prosperous times as well:

This does not mean abandoning our faith in social equality and social justice—but it does mean expressing it in modern phrases which ring a bell instead of out-of-date slogans which make no impression today. (At the A.S.W. Conference, June 2.)

Morrison echoes Gaitskell with the demand for ‘the expression of Party policies in the light of modern conditions’.

Alleged ‘New Thinking’

But the need for alleged new thinking and modern phrases demanded by the right wing leadership was their conclusion after the 1951 defeat. It was ‘new thinking’ which produced ‘Challenge to Labour’, the manifesto for the defeat of 1955. The new thinking of the right wing is the betrayal of socialism, the path to further defeats. It is an effort to get the Labour movement to accept the Tory picture of prosperity, to portray the Tories as the new supporters of social advance, to enter into competition as to who are the best administrators of capitalism. The Tories were able to claim convincingly that things were better, complains Gaitskell, while the basis for this was laid by Labour. The Tories, says Attlee, have had to ‘accept what we have done. They have had to accept the

Welfare State'. The dilemma here seems to be to advance a Tory policy but to find words to make it look Labour to the rank and file.

Prosperity—for the Rich

What is this prosperity, which even the Tories are warning may collapse by the autumn? It is prosperity for the rich. Never were class contrasts so acute and exploitation so great. It is not only that the upper one per cent. of the population own 50 per cent. of the wealth and that for every ten who die millionaires, half a million die leaving virtually nothing. Twenty million people have incomes of from £3 to £10 a week, not including the four and a half million pensioners, living in poverty conditions. Wage rates barely keep pace with rising prices. The better paid workers only get their money by excessive overtime or arising out of methods of super-exploitation which means extra millions for the employer for every partial advance won by the workers. Not only is it an era of unprecedented profits but 4 per cent. of the companies take 83 per cent. of total company profits. And the Tories are preparing a new offensive on conditions, a new onslaught on social services. This is what the right wing want to perpetuate.

The real need is for a bold new socialist programme making a fundamental attack on profit, privilege and ownership of wealth, for a decisive advance in wages at the expense of profits, a shorter working week, to lift the lower paid and advance pensions and social services at the cost of war preparations. Such a decisive challenge could rally the overwhelming majority of the people, isolate the Tories and open the way for a great new advance.

A New Policy, with New Leaders

The battle on policy coincides with the struggle for succession in the Parliamentary Labour Party, now made doubly acute by the electoral defeat. The results were hardly declared before the top group which have dominated the Labour front bench for so long were accusing each other of senility. But the effort to unseat Attlee at the opening of the new Parliament was not only due to his age. It was already visible in the struggle over Bevan's expulsion when Attlee's proposals did not go far enough for the most extreme right wing. The matter is not only one of the extreme right wishing to replace Attlee by Morrison or Gaitskell on account of age but because the latter above all is the new chosen instrument for right wing policy.

The battle requires to go forward in every section of the Labour movement, in every trade union, in every constituency party for the new socialist policy to advance the movement and to win a new leadership pledged to that policy. Decisive for victory in that struggle is the place of the Communist Party in it. The overwhelming necessity in developing the great mass movement required to defeat the Tories is unity of all the working class forces. Nothing less can meet the needs of the situation. In the struggle against German rearmament and the H-bomb, in the wages fight, in the movement against the Tory Rent Bill, the Communist Party and the *Daily Worker* played a decisive rôle. Its members played a leading part in the factories and the trade unions in association with militant labour workers to develop and strengthen the great left movement. It carried forward that struggle in the General Election campaign. It goes without saying that the Communist Party will do all in its power to see that the struggle is organised against the Tory Government in the new conditions.

Sweep Away the Bans

A successful fight for the new socialist programme and a new leadership in the Labour movement cannot be waged as long as the left forces are prepared tacitly or openly to tolerate the bans and proscriptions imposed on the Communist Party by the right wing leadership. This is their great weapon of disruption to impede the full effective mobilisation of the united forces of the left. Continued toleration can only pave the way to further attacks on all sections of the left. The fight for the militant programme demands a new concerted effort to sweep away all bans and proscriptions. More. The successful united fight needs Communist representation in Parliament. A growing understanding has been created among wide sections of the workers in this election that Communist representation is vital for the British working class, vital for the future of the Labour movement, vital for peace. That understanding now requires to be carried into every section of the movement.

June 15, 1955.

ILLEGALITY OF NUCLEAR WEAPONS

D. N. PRITT, Q.C.

THE use of atom and hydrogen bombs is universally condemned by the mass of mankind everywhere, and those who propose to use them stand on the defensive. They are driven, indeed, to the century-old argument that terrible weapons are really weapons of peace because governments will refrain from using them. The fight against the atom bomb on the basis of humanity can find important support in the rules and principles of international law. International law has in fact rendered some service through the centuries to the cause of peace, and far more substantial service to the struggle to keep the practices of the war-makers within some limits, and thus to mitigate the destructive effects of war. The appalling destructiveness of nuclear weapons thus makes them an especial target of international law. So let us examine the application of international law to the use of such weapons.

To apply principles of law to any problem, one must begin by seeing the facts. The present situation has become more precise, and more extreme and horrible, as a result of three decisions taken in recent months by the powers grouped round the United States of America. These decisions are: (1) to equip the forces of the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (N.A.T.O.) with nuclear weapons, and that, too, on a scale which amounts to organising these forces to wage war primarily with nuclear weapons; (2) to proceed with the policy of re-arming Western Germany, and of equipping that army, with the rest of the N.A.T.O. forces, with nuclear weapons; and, above all (3) to use nuclear weapons, not merely by way of reprisal, after they shall have been used by other belligerents, but from the start of any war, without waiting for what any other combatant might do.

This was made clear by Field Marshal Lord Montgomery in October, 1954. He said:

I want to make it absolutely clear that we at S.H.A.P.E. (Supreme Headquarters, Allied Powers in Europe) are basing all our operational planning on using atomic and thermo-nuclear weapons in our defence. It is no longer a question of 'they may possibly be used'. It is very definitely 'they will be used if we are attacked'.

('If we are attacked' is not of course a limiting condition of the policy; it is the formula employed by all potential aggressors to