Labour's Fifth Column

Labour Manifesto Group

CAMPAIGN FOR DEMOCRATIC SOCIALISM

78 Sandfield Road, Oxford

Telephone: 61077

11th January 1961

Confidential

BY CLIFF SLAUGHTER

Dear Friend,

May we first wish you a Happy New Year - and let's make it a better one for the Labour Movement than 1960.

Here are a number of points which we would like to bring to your notice.

- 1. We are enclosing a copy of the first issue of <u>Campaign</u>. This will appear monthly and will carry the sort of short articles which we believe will be helpful to our supporters (please let us know whether they are). You will receive a free copy regularly but we are also anxious to sell it as widely as possible. Single copies are 6d each (plus 2d postage) and discounts can be arranged for larger numbers. Buy copies for your friends and get organisations to order bulk supplies.
- Many supporters have asked what sort of resolution would best sum up the views of the Campaign on defence. The following seems to us most suitable:

PRICE: THREEPENCE

'This (organisation), recognising that Britain should remain a member of NATO and that the western alliance should not renounce nuclear weapons while the Russians retain theirs, urges the Labour Party to intensify its efforts to bring about all-round multilateral disarmament.'

A NEWSLETTER PAMPHLET

- 3. Within the next two or three weeks, we shall be circularising all constituency Labour parties, enclosing a copy of the Manifesto and offering to provide speakers on the whole of it, or on defence policy alone. Please do what you can in your local party both to ensure that the Manifesto is discussed (and extra copies sent for) and that the offer of a speaker is accepted.
- 4. Constituency parties should also be receiving (from Transport House) copies of the Scarborough debate on defence, re-printed from the official conference report. Try to get these circulated and, in particular, draw attention to the closing paragraphs of Hugh Gaitskell's speech which have been so consistently and unscrupulously misrepresented. Here are the two key sentences:

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- 5. In the next two months, new General Management Committees are elected in most of the six hundred odd constituency parties through the country. These are key bodies on which the voice of sanity must be heard. You <u>must</u> accept nomination as a delegate, and then as an officer of your Party, even if this means giving up your only free evening or if local government or trade union responsibilities seem to give you no more time to spare. For every serious supporter of our Campaign, this is the <u>first priority</u> in the coming year.
- 6. Our confidential directory of supporters (and mailing list) continues to grow. But we know that there are many people who are with us in spirit but have not yet sent us their names. Try to get them to write and keep on sending us names yourself.

Yours sincerely,

W.T. Rodgers for the Campaign Committee

Cover and inside cover (in black only): Reproduction of confidential circular of a secret Right-wing faction operating in the Labour Party on the basis of a confidential directory of names, 2,000 agents, ample funds and a conspiratorial organization. The contents of the document are self-explanatory.

Its aim—to disrupt the Labour Party.

This document was first published in The Newsletter of January 21, 1961.

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LABOUR'S FIFTH COLUMN

by Cliff Slaughter

GAITSKELL AND CO.—ENEMY AGENTS

FOR many years, the Right-wing leadership has been able to condemn the Left as opponents of discipline, disrupters and enemies of the unity of the Labour movement. Now the same defenders of unity and the 'majority principle' openly defy the decisions of conference, and use the organization and resources of the movement to peddle their own minority view.

A very dangerous line on the Left is to see this conflict purely as a debate. If this was all that was involved, then it would be reasonable to hope that the Right could be persuaded to behave themselves and once again blessed peace would reign—presumably without a change of leadership.

But Gaitskell and his clique are not misguided comrades. They are a fifth column in the Labour movement. The future of the movement depends on the removal of Gaitskell and his minions. All talk of 'compromise' and 'unity' is dangerous nonsense.

Gaitskell's bid to split the Labour Party represents the fundamental needs of the British capitalist class. Ever since the Party's foundation, it has been dominated by politicians who guided it along the lines of class collaboration. That was necessary for the capitalists. They were faced with the most highly organized working class in the world, a working class which was the overwhelming majority of the population. As recently as the 1880s and 1890s the unskilled had been organized into trade unions, and national unions of older trades like the miners were in the process of formation.

British capitalism needed two things above all. First, to preserve her colonial empire and turn it into a modern imperialism, safe for the export of capital and the extortion of super profit. Second, the base at home must be secured against the working class. These jobs were tackled together. The riches flowing from imperialism were the basis of the growing 'labour aristocracy' which dominated the trade unions, and of the growing state bureaucracy and officialdom into which the trade union officials, Labour parliamentarians, and local councillors were absorbed. Millions of men were called up for imperialist wars only with the help of the reformist leadership of the Labour movement.

The essence of this relationship was this: a special group of political and trade union leaders, committed to the preservation of capitalist rule, dominated the Labour Party and prevented the working class from recognizing its true interests. Instead, the temporary interests of particular sections were taken up—particularly revisions of the law, wage increases, pensions, educational reform and so on. When the Labour Party was founded as the political wing of the trade union movement in 1900, this did not mean that the trade union leaders had taken the political step of deciding to organize the overthrow of the capitalist state. They simply wanted an independent voice for trade union, working-class interests in the House of Commons, remaining part of the capitalist state.

Although the Fabian programme was disguised as gradual democratic transformation of the state and society through Parliament and local government, what it constituted in fact was collaboration in capitalist rule, through helping to stabilize that rule by conceding some of the demands of the working class. For many vears Fabianism paraded as socialism of a sort apparently differing only in the method of getting it, i.e., gradual reform rather than revolution. It was really a recognition that free-enterprise capitalism could not continue to exist unless the state took over many of the foundations of society and protected the immediate material interests of the workers and their families. The 'Welfare State' of the post-1945 period is the endproduct of this act of self-preservation by capitalism, carried through by middle-class, reformist politicians in alliance with opportunist working-class leaders.

At every major crisis of capitalism since the Labour Party became a political force, the Fabian leadership. disguised as the representatives of the working class, has helped to preserve the system. In the first world war, social democracy in every Western European country persuaded its workers to fight other workers in the interests of patriotism, i.e., native capital. In 1926, when the workers of Britain rose against the bosses, the Trades Union Congress General Council did a straightforward sell-out. In the depression of 1931 Ramsay Macdonald went over to the Tories. During the war of 1939-45 Attlee, Bevin and their colleagues organized the 'war effort' and suppressed all strikes and working-class political activity. 1945 they came to political power on the crest of a great wave of anti-Tory feeling and proceeded to ally the nation with American imperialism and to salvage capitalism.

What we see in the Labour Party crisis of today is a desperate rearguard action by Gaitskell and his supporters to preserve this state of affairs, in the face of growing recognition by the working-class movement that its true interests are separate from those of the capitalists on defence as well as domestic issues. Crosland, Jay, Healey, Strachey and the other bright boys behind Gaitskell have long been preparing the ground for this situation. For many years they have been developing the theory that capitalism has been transformed into something else, that Marx's predictions were wrong and that socialist programmes are survivals from the Victorian era. This 'revisionism' or 'new thinking' is only the expression of their capitulation to modern bureaucratic monopoly capitalism. In subsequent articles, we will take up the ideas of Crosland and others and estimate their significance for the working-class movement.

CAPITALISM AND MR. CROSLAND

LAST week I said that far from Labour's 'new thinkers' being new they represent the oldest Rightwing trend in the movement—Fabian reformism. They see social change not as the result of a struggle be-

tween classes, but as something which results from the application of moral principles. Capitalism, according to them, no longer represents exploitation or oppression, but a more and more rational system of supplying men's needs. Anthony Crosland, the pet 'theoretician' of the Right, says for instance: 'Private industry is at last becoming humanized'. Humanized or not, private enterprise in the motor car industry makes its first cuts not in profits, not by selling its capital assets, but by sacking men—who are, of course, 'human'—and reducing 100,000 to short-time within a few weeks.

Industry cannot be humanized until it is owned in common and planned according to human needs. Crosland is impressed, perhaps, with the shop-front of welfare facilities, personnel management and so on, but the real test is: what comes first, human need or private profit? Under capitalism, men are considered only as instruments for the making of profit. A man can live only by selling his labour, and if the capitalist cannot sell the product at a profit, he will not employ the worker. This is what the motor car crisis is about. But Mr. Crosland may not accept this argument, for he says: 'And so, to the question "Is this still capitalism?" I would answer "No".'

Socialists who think they are anti-capitalist might like to know when this great event took place. Mr. Crosland says, 'By 1951, Britain had in all the essentials ceased to be a capitalist society'. Perhaps we will be forgiven for wondering how it was that the value of Ford stock in London went up £93 million in one day on Monday, November 15, 1960, exactly nine years after the death of capitalism. But perhaps 'the essentials' are something different from what we thought. After all, Mr. Crosland said in his book 'The Future of Socialism' (1956) that most socialists had got it all wrong and ownership of industry wasn't the important thing.

All this, of course, was a very important part of the preparation of the campaign to abandon Clause Four. If ownership isn't the important thing why bother to nationalize? Why not use the democratic state to co-operate with 'humanized industry'? This is what the German Social Democratic Party decided a year ago. They abandoned their 'Clause Four' and announced their intention of simply planning a more

efficient relationship between the state and financialindustrial monopolists, including all those arms manufacturers who supported the Nazis. Is it any accident that at the Scarborough conference Denis Healey and Hugh Gaitskell invoked the support of the German Social-Democratic Party for their H-bomb policy?

Crosland's attempt to prove that capitalism has disappeared, Gaitskell's attempt to cut out Clause Four, the Right-wing's marriage to the H-bomb, all of these are part of the same thing: the role of Right-wing Labour in tying the working class to capitalism, and of doing away with socialist opposition to the latest strategy of world capitalism.

Crosland concludes his book 'The Future of Socialism' by asking socialists to turn their attention to educational, cultural and other spheres, because of the 'declining importance of economic problems'. That sounds very scholarly and 'theoretical'; in essence it amounts to serving the needs of the capitalist class, who have decided that there has been enough nationalization. Crosland backs up his view that socialism is a steady growth of moral values in a transformed capitalism by a long argument about 'the loss of power by the business class to the state'.

Here the confusion must be deliberate. Does Crossand think 'the state' is a neutral, God-like arbiter between the classes? The whole question for socialists is 'Who controls the state?' 'Who holds the state power?' The state is the political instrument of the ruling class. In the important things, i.e., the preservation of the property relations which enable capitalists to go on exploiting workers, the state acts on behalf of the 'business class'; openly during Tory rule, in a more disguised manner under the last Labour government.

Perhaps a good point on which to end this particular article would be to look back at 1951, the year in which Crosland says capitalism in Britain ceased to exist. In the first place, a Tory government was elected that year, as if to celebrate the end of capitalism! But secondly, the government carried out a census. Some of the results of that census are difficult to interpret for those who believe that ownership has become 'democratized' or, like Crosland, 'There is no longer a bourgeoisie (capitalist class) in the Marxist sense... there is no proletariat in the Marxist sense, or rather there is only a remnant to remind us of past miseries.'

But the census classified the occupied population as follows:

Occupation	Number	Percentage of Total
Employers	459,900	2.04
Managers	748,200	3.31
Operatives	19,800,600	87.05
Working on own ac-	• •	
count	1,124,600	4.98
Out of work	445,200	1.97
Total occupied		*****
population	22,578,500	100.00

It is clear that, excluding high-level managers, and including the unemployed, 90 per cent. of the occupied population have to sell their labour power in order to live. The number of those who live by exploiting them is very small, and capital gets concentrated into fewer and fewer hands. In 1952, a year after capitalism 'ceased to exist', one-third of all Britain's workers were employed in less than 1,000 plants, and those were owned by an even smaller number of firms. Of the total profit made in this country in 1950, 47 companies took one-third. Half the total capital in this country is owned by less than 1 per cent. of the population.

What was Crosland's case really about? Since 1951 the Tories have secured capitalist rule still more firmly, by tying the nationalized industries to the needs of private capital. Crosland now writes, in 1960, in the American 'New Leader', before Scarborough, that Gaitskell should defy the conference.

'The Parliamentary leadership would have asserted at least some degree of independence and the policy-making role of the conference would be to some extent devalued.' Precisely! Some way must be found for the Right wing to command the allegiance of the working-class movement, without in fact representing its interests. Crosland's theories have been a softening-up process for the split which Gaitskell is now busy provoking. The Left wing must be clear about the nature of the enemy, and find the best way of ridding the Labour movement of these 'Labour lieutenants of capitalism'.

'NEW THINKING' AND THE 'NATIONAL INTEREST'

CROSLAND, Gaitskell and their friends do not see socialism as a system of society built by the working class after the conquest of state power by that class. As we saw last week, they accept the class division of capitalism, trying to make out that these divisions are no longer important. Unless the Left pursues an uncompromising class line against the Right wing, there will be no victory for socialism.

If we test the statements of some of our 'Left-wingers' against the touchstone of class interests, what do we find? Not only Crosland and the Right, but many of the 'Left' start from an idea of 'national' interests in terms of which socialist policies can be carried out. Tribune's front page on November 18 carried an article by Maurice Edelman, MP, against the take-over of Fords at Dagenham by the parent United States company. He says socalists should fight for a retention of shares by English shareholders. Why? Because 'the minority British shareholding . . . could demand its rights. It could demand that Ford (England) should follow a policy in harmony with Britain's national interests.' (My emphasis—C.S.)

There is NO such national interest. For the working class the issues are (a) the nationalization of the motor industry, and (b) the fight for solidarity with American and European motor workers, to organize on the same scale as the employers do. The working class is essentially **international**, and it is betrayal for representatives of the working class to hail British shareholders as defenders of our 'true national interests'. The enemy is international capital, and the forces which we look to as allies in this fight are the workers of all other countries, including those of the U.S. and Soviet Russia.

Crosland's book 'The Future of Socialism' did not, of course, discuss the question in this way at all. Steadily advancing standards in Britain itself are his justification for saying that the era of catastrophies is long since dead, that Marx's idea of revolutionary change is simply out of date. And so we just gently modify capitalism without class struggle. This ignores the whole international position of British capitalism: all the Western capitalist countries are dependent on

their ability to exploit the underdeveloped countries. But these countries, from Cuba to Africa, Viet-nam and Korea, are aflame with revolt, demanding their independence.

Not only that, within these idependence movements there will grow socialist parties, leading the masses beyond political independence to the taking over of foreign investments. This is a threat to American as well as British capitalism, and so the whole set of international conditions on which British standards of living and political stability depend, is being undermined very rapidly. Denis Healey, who writes alongside Crosland in 'New Fabian Essays', thinks that all this confusion must be cleared up before we can start on socialism: 'Socialists must build a world society before they can build a socialist world.'

What on earth does this mean? The essence of socialism is that society remains divided by profit and national states as long as capitalism exists, that only socialism can end war. Healey's statement is another way of saying something else, namely, 'If things go on as they are, the working people of the world are going to defy authority and take things into their own hands. We must find some way of bringing order and stability, so that everything can be quietly handled from the top.' Again, the Right-wing theorists express the interests of the capitalist class, but in terms more palatable to working-class and Left-wing opinion. Like Healey, the capitalists want stable regimes and a halt to the spread of revolution, in order to go about their business in peace.

This kind of thinking is behind Healey and Gaitskell's appeals of 'multilateralism' and 'collective security' rather than unilateral renunciation of the H-bomb. After all, unilateral renunciation means that the working class takes policy into its own hands, refuses to identify its own interests with those of the capitalists who rely on the bomb to defend 'Western democracy' (i.e., their own stocks and shares). Negotiations between the heads of states, at the same time preserving the NATO war alliance, all made more presentable by the presence on the war councils of responsible civilians (like Gaitskell and Healey)—this is their idea of a peace policy.

Just as on Clause Four and socialism, also on the defence issue, the Left must reject all compromises.

Kingsley Martin's recent New Statesman article (November 12) ends up by calling on Gaitskell to lead a unified party on an agreed defence policy. Quite apart from Gaitskell's clear intention of not compromising on any terms, let us examine Kingsley Martin's argument.

First he shows the terrible dangers of Britain supplying a base for the Polaris-carrying submarine, in terms of the retaliatory power of the Russians. The latest plan to have mobile Polaris rockets roaming round Britain exposes us even more, since the enemy would have to bomb more indiscriminately to deal with the launching base. After clearly demonstrating all these dangers of total annihilation, the opposite of defence, all resulting from NATO, surely Kingsley Martin's conclusion should be: 'Out with Gaitskell! He is prepared to use the Labour Party to swing the working class behind a policy of mass suicide'. But his conclusion is very different! Instead, we must appeal to Mr. Gaitskell to lead a unified party against these worst features of the NATO alliance, on which, of course, we are all agreed.

In the guise of a plea for unity, Kingsley Martin seeks to provide a formula for Gaitskell to disarm the Left. Such is the role of many writers, spokesmen and publicists who often provide a good radical commentary on the Right wing's manoeuvres, so long as the Right wing is secure and it is only a battle of words. But as soon as a strong Left appears on the scene, with the possibility of asserting the class interests of the Labour movement, these 'Left-wingers' become running-dogs for the Right wing. As Trotsky once said of the liberal-socialists of his own country: 'They want all good things for the peasants, but they do not want the red cock to crow.'

The Left's greatest need is for firm leadership and organization to mobilize the Labour movement behind the decisions of Scarborough on the H-bomb and on socialist nationalization. On these, there is no compromise. Each is meaningless without the other.

SOCIALISM AND A LABOUR GOVERNMENT

ONE of the commonest arguments used by Gaitskell's clique against the Labour Party majority is that the policies of large-scale nationalization and unilateral renunciation of the H-bomb will make it impossible to win a general election. They try to pose as the hardheaded leaders, telling the airy-fairy, old-fashioned socialist idealists that **power** is the important thing. 'Have all the radical policies you like,' they say, 'but unless you get into power they are just a dream.'

In the first place, it should not be forgotten that we have already lost an election with Gaitskell's policy! Secondly, the Ebbw Vale by-election showed that the electorate will vote for a socialist candidate on these issues. How much bigger would the majority have been if we had had a party leadership united on the majority policy put forward by Michael Foot instead of the 'leaders' using their position to sabotage the movement?

But there are more important arguments than these. When Gaitskell, Healey, Crosland, Brown and the others talk about power they mean something different from the Marxists. They do not mean working-class power against the capitalists, but power for the Labour and trade union officialdom to administer capitalism in a more reasonable and 'moral' way. This is possible, they say, because capitalism has already changed into something else (Crosland), or will inevitably do so. Crosland says, for instance, 'Capitalism . . . is forced to give birth to a new society: first, because the political pressures against it are so strong as to make its position untenable; secondly, because the capitalist class has lost the will to resist of its confident heyday: thirdly. because in any case the absolute power of private property has had to give way, under the impact of technical change, to managerial control.'

By 'political pressures' Crosland means the Parliamentary activity of people like himself. In his picture of the transition to socialism there is no room for the political and industrial action of the working class. Capitalism changes almost naturally. It is strange that people like Crosland constantly attack Marxism for its 'determinism', and yet it is they, the Right-wingers, who condemn the ordinary people to a passive role in

history. Marxism says it is the masses who make history: for the Fabians, the people are only pawns in the game played by the ruling class and its paid supervisors. Marxists see their task as bringing scientific consciousness and the will to power into the working-class movement: Fabianism lulls the working class to sleep with a lullaby of gradual and inevitable reform.

Once again, Crosland and his friends only express in more high-sounding terms the direct interests of the employing class, of international capital. If the preservation of international capitalism requires a safe military base in Britain, France and West Germany, then of course it is important for them to prevent any possibility of the major opposition party being committed to the overthrow of private enterprise. And so pro-NATO policies go along with the attempt to rescind Clause Four. If capital is to have freedom of movement from one country to another, to play off motor-car workers in one country against those in another, then of course nationalization of engineering is a demand that must be rejected. And so Gaitskell and Crosland must try and break conference discipline, to be free to carry out capitalist policies more effectively.

In all the NATO countries, the Right-wing Labourites are driving to destroy the working-class character of their parties. In Britain they have received a major setback at Scarborough, and Gaitskell is fighting a desperate rearguard battle on behalf of capitalism in order to have a 'safe' alternative government available for the next election. Because they are impelled by the objective historical needs of the enemy class, he and his friends are capable of any manoeuvre, any combination. They receive the 100 per cent. support of the capitalist press in their campaign. There will be no compromise.

In return, the Left must fight for a Labour government on a socialist programme. The Scarborough decisions are the basis for this, with the nationalization of the armaments industries as first priority. That is a programme which is utterly incompatible with Crosland's and Gaitskell's idea of a reformed capitalism. It will have to depend on the dispossession of the capitalists by the organized working class itself, forming its workers' councils and committees as the basis of a new state, the working-class state that will abolish class society.

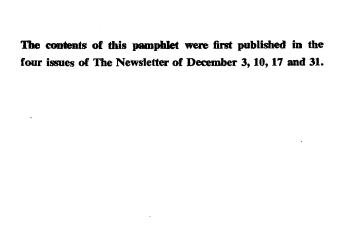
Crosland is after something that sounds similar, but is in fact very different. In New Fabian Essays he says, 'The purpose of Socialism is quite simply to eradicate this sense of class, and to create in its place a sense of common interest and equal status.' As we have seen, Crosland, one of Gaitskell's apostles, thinks capitalist society no longer exists, and so ideas about class are only a hangover from the bad old days: it is only the sense of class, not class divisions themselves, that he wants to abolish.

Naturally, such a different task requires also different methods, and Crosland thinks that Parliamentarians working within the capitalist state will be able to do this 'Public Relations' job. While he is absolutely wrong about the path to socialism, there is a basis of fact in what Crosland proposes. His theory in fact summarizes exactly what he and his friends are doing! They sell modern capitalism to the people; they channel the energies and activities of the Labour movement to making the capitalist system work; they help to nationalize and organize those industries which are unprofitable and are needed as efficient, cheap services by those remaining in private ownership; they collaborate in welfare services, conciliation machinery, productivity councils, the NATO Parliamentarians' conference, all in order to try and swing the working class into accepting the capitalist system.

This, then, is the meaning of the 'theoretical' work of Crosland, Jay, Healey and the rest of Gaitskell's top supporters. The gradual, peaceful path to socialism they describe is an illusory dream, arising out of their own role in society. Modern capitalism, requiring larger-scale state intervention, industrial arbitration, indoctrination of all kinds, a show of democracy to hide a growing bureaucracy and concentration of wealth and power, needs a caste of officials, public relations men, social and political confidence tricksters who parade as moral saviours—'humanizing private industry', as Crosland put it.

It is this new middle caste, servile to monopoly capitalism and the international military machine of imperialism, that is the social basis of Crosland and Gaitskell. The Scarborough decisions are the starting point of a process that will free the British working class of these agents of the enemy; that process will end

in a Labour government in which the working class will rule, and not, as before, the salvage experts of the middle class and the bureaucracy, time-servers of capitalism.



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