

THE
BULLETIN

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for
Socialists

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Letter to Readers.

This letter is by way of being a 'stop press' item. On Thursday of last week, a Coventry correspondent reports, two shop stewards - one TGWU, one AEU - from Dunlop Wheel and Rim, No. 3 factory were sacked for alleged "industrial misconduct." It was a clear case of victimisation and the workers in the factory came out on strike in support of a claim for the reinstatement of the two dismissed men. We will give full details of this case in our next issue. In the meantime we ask readers to consider action in T.U. branches and C.L.P.'s in support of the two dismissed stewards and the strikers.

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1470 The developments in the dispute between the leaders of the Chinese and Russian Communist Parties truly entered into a new phase this week. We have produced elsewhere a summary of some of the points raised in Chinese criticism of Thorez so we will not repeat them here but we must try to assess them. This attack on Thorez has been followed by another document some hundred thousand Chinese characters long which is as yet not fully available. We hope to have this well in time to comment upon next week. The accusations in the latter of the jamming of Chinese broadcasts to Russia, are an indication of how sharp the line taken by the Chinese has become.

The Chinese attitude is no longer concerned merely with influencing the leadership of the C.P.s, it now appeals directly to the rank and file of the C.P.s. It seems inevitable that soon they will be seeking to establish the ways and means of getting their point of view over to the memberships of the C.P.s. They have introduced into the polemic a healthy spirit of letting people 'read both sides'. They have demonstrated that they are prepared to publish, for the Chinese people to read, the criticisms and theories of their opponents. This is to be commended and marks a major development in the process of returning to Bolshevik/Leninist norms in conducting a political discussion.

The polemic seems almost certain to develop, covering more and more fields. The Chinese accusation that the French C.P. is a party which turns 180 degrees and follows the baton must, if pursued to logical conclusion, raise the whole question of the policies of all C.P.s. This will give any group or section in these C.P.s the green light to wage a fight against any tendency by the leadership to blindly follow the 'Moscow line', but more of this in future issues.

Analysis of the issues at stake however shows that the Chinese are by no means right on every issue - we have had an occasion before to differentiate ourselves from ^{their} unprincipled and unmarxist attitude towards Yugoslavia. Their attitude towards Albania on the other hand, apart from aid which they give to replace Russian aid and without which Albania would face disaster, is to be deplored. This gives weight to the accusation against them that they are defending the worst aspects of Stalin's personal rule although they have not used the method of the trials themselves. They have taken no steps in China to modify the bureaucratic regime in the Chinese C.P. or state apparatus. Until these points are dealt with the Chinese C.P., no matter how correct they may be in their assessment of particular questions, can only be given critical support by marxists.

Their wrong attitude on the above questions is to be all the more deplored because it hinders the development of tendencies (especially in Western Europe) around the positive aspects of their position. These are notably: the view that imperialism has not changed and is still the source of the tendency towards war; further, that the risk of another war can be ended only by the overthrow of capitalism and imperialism; consequently, that the needs of colonial revolution and the workers struggle in the advanced countries/ ^{cannot be subordinated} to the needs of so-called peaceful co-existence; from this, no reliance can be placed upon the national bourgeoisie of colonial and semi-colonial countries and that the revolution once begun must be uninterrupted (or permanent); that it is illusory to believe in the peaceful road to socialism in the imperialist countries; and that, that a minority can exist side by side with the majority in the world communist movement and that the minority can be right against the majority and should struggle to become the majority.

This ideological struggle brings us in Britain the hope that many of the thousands of honest and valuable militants trapped in the C.P. can be liberated. This will be a process if we talk of masses of people, the first step of which will be to acquaint these socialists ^{with} the true Chinese position and of the attitude taken by other C.P.s. Readers of the Bulletin should find the means to do this and we shall help by producing material.

1471 After holding their fire for a few weeks, the Chinese have now replied to the criticisms by the European and Russian CP s. The reply is far too long to reproduce in full and we have to limit ourselves to a summary indicating the main aspects. The Chinese address their attack via Thorez, the French CP leader. The Russians are never referred to specifically, but are alluded to as "certain comrades" after the style of Castro. It begins by listing a large number of articles and editorials by the French CP leadership in recent weeks, many of which, together with like articles from other critical countries have been reprinted in the Chinese press this last week or so. For the first time the Chinese appeal to the reason of the rank and file of the CP s, sidestepping and criticising the leadership. "They (the Thorez leadership) always turn about unconditionally following the baton (i.e. they are K's marionettes and obey his commands like automata) and make a complete turn of 180 degrees in response to the baton." This is representative of feudal, patriarchal relationships between fraternal parties. Some comrades apparently believe that the interests of the proletariat and of the people of the world may be completely disregarded and that it is good enough just to follow others. Here there is all too much ability to parrot and all too little of Marxist-Leninist principle." Thorez is challenged to print the Chinese reply as the Chinese have done with the Western criticisms. Will they: "let all the members of the French CP and the French working class decide for themselves what is right and what is wrong?"

The Chinese again make their suggestion that the difficulties can be solved at a conference of the Communist countries and world workers parties. But they make this difficult to achieve by their demand that the other parties should acknowledge publicly the errors of their ways and recant. They say that the dispute first became public when "a socialist country" issued a statement on the Sino-Indo dispute at the time of the Camp David talks in 1959. "Are you or are you not ready to admit this mistake and to apologise to the fraternal parties you have attacked?" The Chinese offer to organise the conference themselves. The request for a conference is their real reply to their critics as there is little discussion of the actual issues involved and the bulk of the article is an onslaught against Thorez. The desire for this conference does not seem to fully fit in with the demand for apologies which will certainly make it more difficult for the "fraternal countries" and "certain comrades" to come to terms. The net result is likely to be an exacerbation of the dispute.

One of the main features of the reply is the harshness of the language used to describe Yugoslavia, and those who support/tolerate this country. "There are some people who on the one hand want to oust the fraternal Albanian Party of Labour from the international Communist Movement but on the other hand want to pull in the renegade Tito clique." And again later: "the traitorous Tito clique" is referred to. In particular it must be pointed out that the question how to deal with the Tito clique is a major question of principle of what attitude to take to traitors of the Communist cause."

Finally whilst the Chinese are certainly justified in answering their critics, and their call for an international conference would represent a major breakthrough for left policies in the Communist political world, it cannot be said that the Chinese method of working for this objective is likely to yield results very easily because of the harshness of their criticism.

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Of books being published in the Soviet Union, one of the first publications which is expected is the first part of the memoirs of General Alexander Nikolayevitch Poskvebyshev, who was Stalin's private secretary at the time of the Russian leader's death. Whilst the anti-Jewish measures form only a chapter in the book and are, in a sense, only incidental to the account of two decades of terror, this chapter is reliably reported to be of such a nature that it will help to clarify why Stalin thought it necessary to use anti-semitism as one of his weapons. Professor Lins Stern, about whom we wrote in an article on Stalin's medical obscurantism a few weeks ago is also having a volume of her memoirs published. Stern was rehabilitated after previously being persecuted for crossing Pavlov's medical theories.

"THE ESSENTIAL TROTSKY" TO BE PUBLISHED IN BRITAIN.

The Spring 1963 list of books being published by George Allen and Unwin includes an 8/6 paperback entitled the "Essential Trotsky". This follows their previous publication of the "Essential Left". The advance blurb reads: "In this volume are reprinted three of Trotsky's best known historical pamphlets, 'The Russian Revolution to Brest-Litovsk', almost a straightforward narrative; 'The Lessons of October' in which he analysed the conduct of the revolution and criticised colleagues who failed to read the lessons aright; and 'Stalin's falsifications of History' in which he is again concerned with the events of the revolution up to Lenin's death."

Another book of some interest to be published this spring by the same publishers is Raphael R. Abramovitch's "The Soviet Revolution 1917 - 1939". The blurb says: "This history by the lone remaining figure in the leadership of the Russian Social Democratic Party is an important contribution in understanding the Soviet October Revolution of 1917. (45/-)."

VENEZUELAN Y.C.L. LEADER VISITS CHINESE Y.C.L.

According to HSINHUA, Reinaldo Montila, Secretary of the National Secretariat of the Venezuelan Communist Youth League is visiting China on the invitation of the Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Youth League.

DOCUMENTS OF THE ITALIAN C.P. CONGRESS PUBLISHED IN CHINA.

The People's Daily in Peking, and other Chinese organs have been reprinting without comment during the last ten days or so, many of the speeches and criticisms of the Chinese made by European and the Russian CPs. This is preparatory to the Chinese reply to these criticisms made this week on Wed. 27th. On the 24th of February they published the theses of the 10th Congress of the Italian Communist Party, Togliatti's report to this Congress, and his final speech. These have been published in pamphlet form.

"RIGHTIST DESIGNATION RELIEVED".

The New China News Agency, without humorous intent presumably, reported on Feb. 25th: "More than 100 rightists who have truly reformed have recently been relieved of rightist designation by Central Government organs and central organisations of various democratic parties. This is in accordance with the decision of the Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party and the State Council on 'Measures regarding rightist elements who have shown that they have truly reformed themselves'".

RENT STRUGGLES IN SOUTH LONDON.

From a South London reporter.

Deptford Borough Council and Wandsworth Borough Council,

While the opposition to recommendations for rent increases was defeated in the Labour Group in Deptford, and had to be withdrawn, in Wandsworth a different situation has arisen. On Tues. Feb 5th, Labour's newly won majority pushed through a rent increase ranging from 5/- to 10/- a week. The housing deficit of £352,000 - inherited from the Tory party's previous administration - is now to be carried by the luckless tenants of all the Council's estates. Two Labour councillors voted against these increase which were approved with both the Tory minority and the Labour majority ganging up in the same lobby against the "rebels". The motion was carried by 51 to 2 with 9 abstentions.

A petition opposing these increases was handed into to the Council by Councillor Winstanley on behalf of the Federation of Wandsworth Council Tenants' Associations. It contained 1,399 signature. A row has broken out in Putney Labour Party (part of the Borough of Wandsworth) and big support has come for the rebels from Putney, Wandsworth Central and to a lesser extent from Streatham Labour Party.

LONDON COUNTY COUNCIL RENT INCREASES.

From a South London reporter.

Rent increases ranging from 3/6 to 12/6 a week - to be paid in two instalments - were pushed through at the County Hall on Tues. Feb. 19th. Labour holds a two to one majority. The Tories moved an amendment to the motion put jointly by the Housing and Finance Committees, calling for a rent rebate scheme (which would have meant the introduction of the differential rent system and the operation of a means test).

Once again the Council's housing revenue deficit of over £4,000,000, in the financial year 1961-1962 was used as the lever to force the Labour majority into acquiescence. The day after the Longford petition against the abolition of the L.C.C. had been presented to Parliament, the Chairman of the Housing and Finance Committees, Mr. N. Pritchard and Mr. R. Goodwin held a Press conference announcing the Council's intentions. Opposition within the Labour Group to the Housing and Finance Committees, and in the main body of the Party was widespread but not well co-ordinated. Despite this, however, the Finance Committee which has a 2 to 1 Labour majority had to get the casting vote of the Chairman of the Committee before its recommendations for rent increases could be passed by a majority of 6 to 5. On the Housing Committee, the recommendations for the increase was carried by a small majority. Tenants' Associations are being alerted and a number of public meetings are being held in which a number of left-wing Councillors will be speaking on the increases. The rent rise recommendations were passed by 63 vote to 33. The maximum vote Labour is able to muster is 83. A number of members, having spoken out against the intolerable position into which local authorities are being put by the Government policy of high interest rates, high cost of land and building and refused to vote the increase. The echo of these rent battles will be felt at the London Labour Conference at the end of March.

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The resolutions contained in the preliminary agenda for the Young Socialist Annual Conference at Easter show the overwhelming left bias which has characterised all the other conferences. Of the 137 resolutions nearly one third are on organisational matters and no less than 22 criticising disciplinary measures which have been taken (especially the proscription of "Keep Left" and the expulsion of three members on the National Committee.) Only one of the 22 is right wing, from Hendon North Y.S. which calls for the ending of "factional newspapers" and for full support for "New Advance". It is however followed by a resolution from Newburn Y.S. which calls upon Y.S. members to boycott "New Advance". As noted in last week's "Bulletin" there are three resolutions calling for a NALSO type constitution and relationship with the Labour Party.

Under general resolutions we are immediately confronted with 5 right wing ones from Gravesend, Tonbridge, Romford, Cardiff West and Dewsbury all of which more or less call for the Young Socialists to be good boys and follow right wing policy. Under nationalisation, particular industries are itemized: Aston (Birmingham) - car industry; Paisley - shipbuilding; whilst Walton (Liverpool), Craigton (Glasgow), Ruslip-Northwood, Croydon South, Acton, call for the nationalisation of the so-called commanding heights of industry. Others qualify this with various demands: a programme against unemployment - Leeds South-East; workers control and no compensation - Hornsey, workers' control - South Fiddington; and Swansea recognises that nationalisation under workers control is part of the process of removing the capitalist system. Under Transport, South-West Herts. calls for free rail travel (we wonder if they recognise the revolutionary significance of such a policy?). Two branches want workers control for existing nationalised industries - Newcastle North and East Ham South, the latter also wants the Labour Party to give a political lead in industrial disputes.

On Housing and Land, 5 branches want nationalisation of the land, building industry, etc. - Isle of Thanet, Ealing South, Withington (Manchester), Maghull, and Woodside (Glasgow) all of them qualifying this demand with various other measures. The subject of unemployment has no less than 19 resolutions. These put forward a great variety of ideas on the fight against unemployment. Work or full maintenance is called for by four branches - Camberwell (Dulwich), Govan (Glasgow), Rutherglen and Renfrew. A comprehensive plan of fighting unemployment, which covers a variety of points ranging from strengthening union organisation, a sliding scale of hours (with no loss of pay) to action by local authorities, is contained in a resolution from Paddington North. Many of the resolutions link the fight against unemployment with the fight for socialism, and most pose work sharing, reduction in hours, and training for young people.

Foreign policy attracted 14 resolutions of which nine are specifically unilateralist - Hackney Central, Holborn and St. Pancras, Southgate, Twickenham, Clydebank, Reigate, Kirkdale (Liverpool), Harlow, and Putney. Hackney Central as previously reported in the Bulletin has a long resolution covering many aspects including opposition to pacts and foreign bases. Several resolutions call for strengthening U.N.O. despite the latter's impotence over Cuba and counter-revolutionary role in such countries as Korea and the Congo. The fight against colonialism does poorly this year in that only five branches have submitted anything on this subject. Even then the two on Vietnam (from Bromsgrove and Redditch both opposing U.S. action) and the two on Apartheid (from Islington South-West and Garston, Liverpool both calling for decisive action against the South African Government) are not specifically anti-colonial.

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Following our item a few weeks ago on HUGO BLANCO, the left-wing revolutionary active in Peru, we are reproducing part of a translation of an article on this subject which appeared recently in the Cuban paper "Bohemia."

Towards the end of last year ".....8,000 campesinos gathered in the Capital of the department (Cuzco) to demand agrarian reform, under the slogan "Land or Death". The police attacked them with bombs and tear gas. The campesinos fought back with stones and clubs, and they held the police at bay for three hours. The government sent 40 tanks, made in the United States, to reinforce its military units and to prevent by force any demonstration by the people." Blanco has been able, as we reported in our previous item to resist fully all attempts by the Peruvian authorities to put down the revolt. "A very complicated entrance to la Convencion is made through the valley of Lares, on the road which goes only as far as the town of Ampares, entering through Calca. The narrowness of the valley, surrounded by high mountains, exposes any troops which enter to the risk of being killed by avalanches started by the campesinos.

"The chief characteristic that strikes have in this region is that there is no work stoppage, instead the strikers work for themselves. Immediately the harvests are multiplied five-fold. And that is how, two years ago, an agrarian reform was started in Peru by the campesinos themselves. Unpaid labour, called 'pongaje' a custom by which the campesino is forced to work for nothing for the great latifundists, without remuneration of any kind, not even of food, has been eliminated. At the same time, the unions of the region demanded and won the right of the campesinos to pay the landowners with money and not with work. This marks a great advance compared with the former semi-feudal situation. The landowners in some regions no longer dare to exercise their right to kick the campesinos"

"Near Chaupimayo there is a large sign which reads "Free territory of Chaupimayo". There the campesinos have a large short-wave radio set with which they keep informed of events occurring in a world which until a short time ago was unknown to them. In the liberated areas the union controls production as well as relations among the campesinos. It distributes the land, pays teachers, administers justice and it issues a newspaper. The first guerrilla detachment is led by Hugo Blanco. It is very mobile and operates in the valley of la Convencion and Lares. Leadership of the brigade of the future Army of National Liberation is exercised through a united front wherein different political tendencies are represented."

BRAZILIAN PEASANTS SEIZE LAND.

From the Hsinhua Agency.

A violent armed clash has recently occurred between landless peasants and landowners in Sape, State of Paraiba, North-East Brazil, according to a report from the state capital, Pessoa. The report said that some time ago, landless peasants in Sape seized the land of a local Latifundist called Aduato Gomes and established homes and began farming on it. With the help of the local authorities and other landlords, the owner drove the squatters off by force. But the peasants mustered their forces again and, better organised came to grips with the landlord's gang. During a fierce engagement which lasted more than forty minutes, a landlord known as Reubens Regis received fatal wounds and died.

SCOTTISH COMMUNIST MINERS LEADER CONDEMNS UNOFFICIAL STRIKES.

In an attempt to end unofficial strikes the Scottish Miners' Union (which is under CP leadership) is to ban pit-head meetings in Polkemmet Colliery, the largest in West Lothian. Because of the stoppages, the Coal Board has switched Polkemmet Colliery from the 'A' (safe from closure category) to the unsafe 'B' category. The ban was announced by Abe Moffat, president of the Scottish area of the National Union of Mineworkers. He said: "geological difficulties and experiments with new machines are factors. But we consider the unofficial strikes at Polkemmet have been unnecessary. We regret them, as it was absolutely unnecessary for the men to lose wages as we have always resolved our dispute through the machinery."

As the unofficial strikes arose from pithead meetings on miners' disputes - the Scottish area executive has ordered that no more pit-head meetings will be held without its authority. "We do this in order to protect the colliery which is the main source of employment in the area," said Moffat.

GLASGOW PARTY SUPPORTS GUS. MACDONALD. From a Scottish correspondent.

The following is the text of a resolution passed in support of Gus Macdonald who has been refused permission to transfer his membership to the East Islington Labour Party. "This C.L.P. protests most vigorously at the N.E.C. upholding the Action of the East Islington Labour Party in refusing to transfer the membership of Angus Macdonald. Comrade Macdonald is a bone fide member of the Labour Party and was held in the highest esteem in the Gorbals C.L.P., Gorbals Y.S. and in Kingston Ward Labour Association. He represented the Y.S. in the City Party E.C. and the Scottish Council of the Labour Party. He was also the National Committee member of the Y.S. representing Scotland. Since no charge of any kind has been presented to deprive him of membership of the party, the action of the N.E.C. in upholding the East Islington decision, contrasts strangely with their action in relation to the upholding the application of certain members of Kingston Ward. The N.E.C. reinstated them against the unanimous wishes of the Ward and Constituency Labour Parties. This decision was loyally accepted by the Constituency Labour Parties and the Ward. We call on the N.E.C. to reverse the decision with regard to Angus Macdonald

25,000 NOT TO GET DOLE INCREASE.

By an industrial correspondent.

Approximately 25,000 of those unemployed at the moment will not receive the increase in dole money which is to come into operation on March 7th. This is because they have run out of benefit under the National Insurance scheme and are now having to draw National Assistance. The increase in N.A. rates does not come into effect until May 27th. This means that those who are in greatest need are those who are to be denied what benefit there will be from the rise in dole money. This reveals the whole farcical position of National Insurance and National Assistance - a juggling with human misery in the true Tory fashion. Marxists should be continually advancing the slogan of "Work or Full Pay".

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The struggle of Italian engineers for better working conditions and wages which lasted for months and included several one day strikes ended on 18 Feb 1963 by an agreement signed between management and union representatives. Under the agreement more than 800,000 metalworkers will benefit from a working week reduced from 46 to 43 hours in almost all sectors without loss of pay; an increase in basic wages from 10 to 12 %; and the introduction of a bonus of seniority equal to 1.5 % of wages which workers will receive after every two years of service. Young workers obtained special advantages, and new over-time and piece-work conditions have been introduced.

More than 4 million Italian industrial workers struck on the 8th Feb. 1963 to support the demands of the metalworkers.

MINERS AND DE GAULLE CLASH.

Based on Financial Times Reports.

The French capitalist class is frightened of the inflationary pressures which have been building up in the last year or so getting out of control. De Gaulle has responded by personally supervising economic policy for the first time. The first test of his determination will be the coal miners' strike which is developing into a severe head-on clash between the Government and unions. The Communist C.G.T. has called a two-day strike, but the Catholic and Socialist unions have called their men out on strike indefinitely. The miners are demanding an 11 % pay rise to bring their wages up to the level of those in private industry. The French coal board has had the matter taken out of its hands and the Government has retaliated with a requisition order. Workers in coke plants have been told to work right through the strike while all miners have been ordered to return to work on March 4th. The miners have announced that they will defy the order.

STRIKE WAVE IN SWEDEN.

Based on Financial Times Reports.

On Feb 28th the strike of white collar workers and foremen in the Swedish liquor manufacturing monopoly passed its second day with no official moves or negotiations. It seems certain however that the Government will at some stage have to step in, at least if the strike spreads to all the eight State owned manufacturing companies involved in the dispute. The foremen at the tobacco manufacturing company are also out for the second day in this conflict which concerns the length of holidays for staff and foremen and if there is any serious interruption of the sale of spirits wine and tobacco it is clear that the State will lose substantial revenues - an estimated 8 million Kronen per day. This loss will however only be incurred if production ceases in both the companies. Another motive for government intervention is the possibility that the Staff at the State-owned steel works in the north will be called out next, for when that happens 3,000 will be put out of work in an area where there is already a high level of unemployment.

WEST GERMAN WORKERS DEMAND WAGE INCREASE.

The Federation of West German Trade Unions with a membership of over 6 million has demanded a wage increase for all industrial and office workers. The Union of Public Service Workers and Transport and Communications, the Union of German Employees and the Railwaysmen's Union have demanded a wage increase of 3d per hour. The Postal Workers Union has demanded a 6-8 % wage increase. The paper Neue Rheinzeitung reported that the Trade Unions were coming out in a United Front. Their demands for wage increases were prompted by a considerable growth of prices for food, higher fees for municipal services and rent.