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THE
BULLETIN

An Information Service
for
Socialists

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Letter to Readers

This week we have replaced the usual editorial page with a report written by an American socialist on the struggle of the Negroes in Birmingham. We feel that all readers will agree that this struggle is one of the most important in the U.S. for a whole period, especially from a socialist point of view. It demonstrates that not even the citadel of capitalism can insulate itself from the effects of the changing world situation. Although the demands the Negroes are putting forward are purely democratic ones, this struggle is going to have important social and political effects which will help to shake the whole structure of the American establishment.

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A victory for the Negro struggle for equality - even a token victory - is yet to be won in Birmingham. The May 10 settlement, which was hailed by Rev. Martin Luther King as "a great victory," has been sabotaged by the violence of Birmingham's white-supremacist officials. Even so-called 'moderates' like Mayor-elect Albert Boutwell have publicly dissociated themselves from the settlement. In addition, the white businessmen with whom the agreement was negotiated have now revealed its terms - at least their version of its terms - to be much less generous than Rev. Martin Luther King originally announced.

It is now clear that the agreement guarantees nothing for the Negroes. Whether anything positive comes of it depends on what mass pressure the Negroes can still bring to bear both in Birmingham and nationally - that is in forcing the federal government to put the heat on Birmingham's economic and financial rulers. According to Sidney Smeyer, the representative of Birmingham's white businessmen, the agreement provided for integration of facilities in downtown department stores within 90 days, but only on a trial basis. The stores agreed to the principle of hiring Negro sales help sooner or later, but guaranteed to hire only one Negro clerk in the entire city within the specified period. Even this clerk would be removed, said Smeyer in case of "violence on either side."

Even if all the terms of such an agreement were fulfilled in good faith, the Negroes of Birmingham would have gained only a token victory. So once again, just as before the mass demonstrations were called off in return for the settlement, everything now depends on the Negroes maintaining - in Rev. M.L. King's words - "a position of strength" from which to bargain. A key problem in this regard is that the positions of armed strength on the scene are held entirely by the white racists - the various city, county and state police forces. These do not protect Negroes in their lawful demonstrations, but attack them. Since last Sunday, indeed, the state troopers stand poised not with fire hoses, but with shotguns and carbines.

As one of Birmingham's Negro leaders, Rev. A.D. King, pointed out to newsmen May 14, it was known that the police would not protect them from racist violence, that caused Birmingham's Negroes to fight back after racists exploded two bombs the night of May 11. With the explosion of those bombs the question of self-defence ceased to be an academic issue and became the pivot around which the life or death of the movement - not to mention the lives of the Negroes involved in it - turned. President Kennedy's failure to provide federal protection to Birmingham's Negroes sharpened the crisis.

When these bombs exploded, the Negroes correctly understood that to do nothing would be to invite disaster. The local police were not on the side of law and order. They could not be expected to apprehend the bombers or to stop the organisation of further attacks. The Negroes could have been picked off piecemeal, intimidated, and the movement demoralised and scattered while the local police stood by and the FBI engaged in its usual stalling tactics.

The tactical problem posed to the Negroes at that point was not a simple one. But one thing is certain: mere preaching about non-violence under such conditions is dangerously irresponsible and is no substitute for serious disciplined preparations for self-defence. Only confidence on the Negroes' part that such preparations were being made, could have averted the riot which followed the bombings. That confidence did not exist and the Negroes' pent-up anger burst spontaneously when their racist oppressors, using the bombings as a pretext, invaded the Negro community like a punitive expedition, beating people indiscriminately with rifle butts and nightsticks. The Negro community's fighting back shocked the nation into a realisation of the seriousness of the Birmingham situation and partially forced Kennedy's hand on the sending of troops.

We are reproducing herewith the bulk of an article in the Economist of May 18th because of the detail and information it contains.

"Three facts stand out from the welter of complexity and confusion that surrounds last week's local election results. First, Labour broke a record by electing over 1,700 borough councillors for the first time in its history. Secondly, the Liberals elected only 250, or 200 fewer than their 1962 total. Thirdly, despite this long-awaited Liberal retreat, the Tories did not progress an inch beyond last year when, with their Independent allies, they dropped to the thousand mark for the first time.

"As usual, results were remarkably uniform over the whole country. Liberals elected fewer councillors than last year in every area except Devon and Cornwall; they fell back most in Greater London, the Eastern counties and the East Midlands, and least in the West Riding and the north. In much of the metropolitan area the Conservatives did better than last year and Labour's progress was small (though still quite adequate to give a safe Socialist majority on the new Greater London Council). But in the east and in Essex the Tories did much worse and Labour much better than last year, and Labour at last regained lost ground in the West Midlands and Cheshire.

".....In those boroughs where the Liberals had a foothold before the last general election, they actually returned fewer councillors in 1963 than in 1958 (losses in the north balancing slow progress in the south). This one major setback, which would be temporarily damaging to a securely rooted party, may well wipe out the enthusiasm and prestige generated by uninterrupted victories, and makes it difficult to resume their profitable forays into new territory.

"The Tories have awaited the Liberal decline with eager expectancy, the Socialists with some apprehension. Yet now it seems to have brought most grist to Labour's mill, except in the metropolitan area. In many boroughs - York, Grimsby, Leicester, Reading, Watford and Northampton are examples - Labour made most headway where Liberal candidates withdrew or lost votes, or even better in straight fights with the Conservatives than in wards where a new Liberal candidate stood. If the Liberal protest vote has come predominantly from people who voted Conservative in 1959 the protestors now seem likelier to vote Labour than Tory. Last year, Liberals gained 82 borough seats in Greater London and Labour 27; this year the Liberals gained 19 and Labour 66. In the Midlands, Liberals gained 40 to Labour's 23 in 1962, 3 to Labour's 74 in 1963; in the rest of southern England the Liberal took two-thirds of the gains last year (97 to 46) and one-fifth this year (37 to 153). Last year Socialists were still losing seats to Liberals, this year they were winning them back. New Liberal candidates at the general election could now take votes that would otherwise go to Labour, paradoxically it may be the Socialists rather than the Tories who now watch eagerly for a further decline in Mr. Grimond's appeal.

"In 1963 the Conservatives succeeded in electing more councillors than either of the rival parties in only 12 of the 83 county boroughs; Labour was ahead in 67, the Liberals in two (Exeter and Southport) and the other two were equally divided. In the 400 English and Welsh boroughs they elected barely half as many councillors as the Labour Party. Throughout the south and midlands the Labour vote rose while their own fell or stayed the same, and in the marginal parliamentary seats Labour's progress was as impressive as or better than elsewhere. The pro-Labour swing from the general election was from 7 to 10 per cent in Conservative marginals like Watford, Bristol North-west, Reading, Preston and York; even apparently safe seats like Southampton Test, Ilford South or Oxford would be in jeopardy if the municipal swing were repeated at a general election. Judging by last week's pattern Labour might make greater gains in southern towns....on this showing the next Parliament would have a Labour majority of over a hundred....."

A.S.S.E.T. GOES IN FOR INTERNATIONAL TRADE UNIONISM

Tentative steps towards a new form of international trade unionism are being taken by the Association of Supervisory Staffs, Executives, and Technicians, according to the Guardian industrial correspondent.

The union has already signed agreements with its counterparts in five other countries - four Scandinavian and Israel - for mutual recognition of union cards. This will mean that ASSET members employed in these places, by, for example, British airlines or civil engineering firms, will be able to go for help to the local office of the brother union; and, of course, comparable facilities will be extended by ASSET to trade union members from the five countries, working in England.

Discussions are also taking place with ASSET's American counterpart with a view to signing a similar agreement.

A further stage in international co-operation is expected to arise from a conference in Amsterdam in September, arranged by the International Federation of Commercial Clerical and Technical Employees.

Here, ASSET's aim will be to study the possibility of concerted action to make European airlines pay uniformly and well. As Mr. Clive Jenkins, ASSET's general secretary, commented yesterday: "Collective bargaining in airlines is going international."

N.U.P.E. CALLS FOR OVERTIME PAYMENT TO NURSES

An emergency five-point resolution on nurses' pay was passed unanimously by N.U.P.E. at its conference at Bridlington on May 13th. The resolution included the following points: (1) overtime for all hours worked over standard working week; (2) double payment for Sunday and rest day duty; double payment with time off for bank holidays; time and a quarter for night duty; (3) higher payments for split and shift duty.

These demands do little more than try to bring nurses into line with gains won by other sections of the working class long ago. Nevertheless, N.U.P.E. is the first union to come out in favour of overtime for nurses. The Confederation of Health Service Employees have been thinking on these lines since the Industrial Court recently took more from the lower and middle grade of nurses in higher food and lodging charges than it gave them in pay, but have not officially taken a position. Mr. Hill, N.U.P.E. general secretary denounced the award but said that the speed at which the union's policy would be implemented depended largely on the nurses themselves.

N.U.P.E. has only 35,000 nurses among its 230,000 members and is outnumbered by such conservative professional bodies as the Royal College which have welcomed the recent Industrial Court award.

GEORGE BROWN AGAINST STRIKES

It will not come as a surprise to anyone to learn that George Brown does not like strikes, but seldom has he been so explicit as when speaking at Overseal, Derbyshire, on May 12, he said that despite the Tory Government economic policy the temptation to strike should be resisted. It must be resisted, he said, partly because industrial friction harmed the national economy, and partly because in democracy political change could not be made that way.

SUPERVISORS "TOLD NOT TO JOIN UNION"

based upon press reports

Clive Jenkins of ASSET issued a statement on May 12th saying that several supervisors at the Pressed Steel factory at Oxford had been warned that it would not be in their interests to join his union. He continued: "These supervisors were called in by the group personnel manager at 15 minute intervals last Friday like erring schoolboys." and were told their promotion prospects might be affected if they joined the union.

1590

The Ras Tafari Brethren Repatriation Front, a "back to Africa" movement, has been singled out by the Bustamente government for savage repressive measures. The government drive began after six alleged members of the organisation conducted a guerilla raid April 11 in the tourist area of Montego Bay. They burned a gasoline station. In the fighting, two white civilians were killed. Followed by the police into the hills, they fought resolutely, killing three officers and suffering the loss of half their band.

The government seized this local incident as a pretext for a nationwide drive against the Ras Tafarians. We quote from a leaflet put out by the organisation:

"Right now in this country - Jamaica - along the North Coast from Montego Bay to St. Anns Bay, many hundreds of Ras Tafarians are being imprisoned, beaten and tortured - some brethren are being tied by hands and feet in the jail yards, in the sun and cold, molasses thrown over their skin attracting insects to bite them - this inhuman treatment has caused the death of three Ras Tafarians in jail at the time of making this report, and more are liable to die within the next few days."

The guerilla incident mentioned above "was an isolated event," declares the leaflet, which stemmed out of previous violence inflicted on those involved. Bustamente ordered a round up. "This started the brutal campaign of the police and soldiers - police operating in the towns and soldiers in the hills - beating with gun butts and jailing almost everyone with beards and who have been freshly trimmed and shaven; and anyone who opposes this ruthless action of the police is also beaten and carried off to jail. The breaking of human bones with rifle butts is a common occurrence, and no medical treatment given.

"Meanwhile many areas in the hills are sealed off by soldiers, and no one is able to tell the gruesome happenings."

The Ras Tafarians charge the Bustamente government with attempting to commit genocide. "We declare that if the Jamaican Government does not want us here then send us back home to Africa where we want to go -- it is the Government which is keeping us here against our will.

The movement demands that an impartial body "of just citizens and Ras Tafarians" be allowed to go into the areas of unrest to investigate the truth.

The leaflet charges that the radio and the press have been muzzled to prevent the facts from becoming known.

"We Ras Tafarians charge the Jamaican Government with attempting to use Ras Tafarians as a scapegoat to distract attention from its incompetence of not being able to give the masses of this country food, clothing and shelter and to resolve the country's economic problems. Today it is the Ras Tafarians -- tomorrow it will be everyone."

HUGE MAY DAY CELEBRATION IN CEYLON

The May Day rally in Colombo exceeded all expectations. Galle Face Green was almost completely filled. It may have been the largest rally ever held in Ceylon. Even conservative estimates put the crowd at 100,000.

The huge turn out was attributed to enthusiasm among the masses at the prospect of a united front between the LSSP (Trotskyists), the Communist Party and MEP (a smaller grouping led by Philip Gunawardene), the organisations which jointly sponsored the rally.

Separate rallies were staged by the SLFP (left-bourgeois party now holding government power) and the UNP (right-wing bourgeois party). The UNP meeting drew a crowd of five or six thousand. The turnout at the SLFP rally was about two thousand.

1591

The Algerian government has announced a campaign to reorganise the Management Committees which in many cases were appointed when they first began to form. The campaign will begin May 10 in meetings throughout the country with the participation of the Party of the National Liberation Front, national organisations, local government officials, the trade unions, commissioners of the National Office of Agrarian Reform, and representatives of the Bureau of Socialist Enterprise and the National Popular Army.

The text of a circular issued by the government, specifying how Workers' Councils and Management Committees are to be elected in accordance with the reorganisation campaign is as follows:

"In view of the establishment of the first Councils and Management Committees provided for in decree 63-95 of March 22, 1963, concerning the organisation and management of industrial and mining enterprises as well as vacated agricultural holdings; and within the framework of the national campaign which will soon open for the democratic reorganisation of the organs of self-management, it is necessary to undertake the following safeguards and measures:

(1) An electoral commission composed of three to five members unanimously designated by the workers of each enterprise or holding, or by the community in the case of small holdings, shall be charged with drawing up the electoral slates and conducting the balloting. No member of such a commission can be a candidate in the elections.

(2) The elections in the Workers' Councils and the Management Committees shall be made on the basis of slates of candidates chosen among those who have the right to be considered as members of the General Assembly of Workers.

(3) These lists shall be drawn up either by representatives of the UGTA (trade unions) in each enterprise or holding or by groups of workers, or by joint action.

(4) In enterprises or holdings comprising up to 50 permanent workers, each possible group of ten workers has the right to present its own complete or partial slate of candidates for the Workers' Councils or Management Committee (in cases where a Management Committee is to be elected) different from that which may be presented by the UGTA.

(5) The election of Management Committees by the Workers Councils shall be done similarly on the basis of slates. Each member of the Workers Council has the right to propose a complete or partial slate of candidates for the Management Committee.

(6) The slates of candidates for the Workers Council or for the Management Committee, once established, are accepted by the electoral commission which posts them in the enterprise or holding for three days prior to the day of voting. On the day of the vote, the electoral commission will conduct a secret poll by ballots.

Each ballot must contain the name of all the candidates, separated according to the slates. On the ballot, the elector indicates the candidate for whom he is voting by encircling the number of order preceding the name of the candidate, and choosing among the different slates a number equivalent to the number of members of the Workers Council or Management Committee.

(7) If the elector is illiterate, he can present himself to the place of vote accompanied by a member of his choice among the electoral commission, who will help him to indicate in the desired manner, the name of the candidate of his choice. He himself then place the ballot in the box.

(8) Counting of the ballots as well as announcement of the results is done by the electoral commission at the assembly of the workers.

(9) The electoral commissions enters in the record, during the three days following the announcement of the results of the vote, any disputes and then submits its papers to the authorities charged with legalising or rejecting the results of the vote.

1592 Editori Riuniti, the publishing house of the Italian Communist Party has just brought out a new volume in its Socialist Thought and Action series. It was as part of this series that just a few months ago an account of the meetings of the Bolshevik Central Committee from July 1917 to March 1918 was published.

The new volume is entitled The Permanent Revolution and Socialism in One Country. It contains the following: The Lessons of October by Leon Trotsky (in full), On the Theory of the Permanent Revolution by Nicolai Bukharin (in full), four chapters of Leninism by Gregory Zinoviev, The October Revolution and Tactics of the Russians Communists and some extracts from Problems of Leninism by Joseph Stalin.

Bukharin and Zinoviev, among the top leaders of the Bolshevik Party, were executed by Stalin after the frame-up trials of the mid-1930s. Trotsky was assassinated by Stalin's GPU in Mexico in 1940.

The introduction to the new volume as well as the notes on the various articles are written by Giuliani Procacci, a member of the Italian Communist Party and a well-known historian. They are characterised by a noteworthy factual honesty, even though certain of his evaluations will not be accepted by revolutionary Marxists.

CHINESE RENEW ATTACK ON JUGOSLAV "SOCIALISM"

from a London reporter

An article in People's Daily dated May 10th, made the sharpest attack yet on the Yugoslav claim to be a socialist country. It described the claim as "the trick of selling dog meat while hanging up the sign of a sheep's head..." It further claimed: "in the new constitution the Tito group copied the hypocritical phraseology and abstract concepts of 'freedom' and 'equality' much used by the bourgeoisie to gloss over the actual class antagonisms in Yugoslav society." Jugoslavia still had, said the article, a system of exploitation, a rich peasant economy and large numbers of privately owned industrial enterprises. Publicly owned plants were "capitalist enterprises of a special type."

BELGIAN C.P. LEADERSHIP WORRIED BY GRIPPA GROUP

Although ^{the} leadership of the Belgian C.P. succeeded in getting Grippa and three other left-wing members of the Belgian C.P. Central Committee expelled from the party at its Easter Congress, they are worried about these men's activities. In the May 20th issue of Drapeau Rouge, the official paper of the Belgian C.P., a central committee statement accused the four men of trying to split the party. The committee appealed for members to defend the party's unity against "schismatics" and accused the four of calling upon party members to "question the policy line and all the decisions adopted by the national congress and ----to organise themselves outside the regular party structure." The four have been called the "China lobby", but information we have received indicates that their opposition to the leadership of Belgian C.P. goes much deeper than merely echoing Chinese views. We hope to be able to give readers a comprehensive summary of their views very soon.

TITO SAYS CHINESE FOLLOW VARIETY OF TROTSKY'S THEORY OF PERMANENT REVOLUTION

Tito in his speech of May 18th to the central committee of the Yugoslav League of Communists devoted himself almost entirely to the question of Russo-Yugoslav relations and the Chinese criticisms of his regime. After lining himself up with Khrushchov, in the latter's efforts against dogmatism, he attacked the Chinese for following a variation of Trotsky's theory of Permanent Revolution which rejected negotiations in international disputes.

1593

Although Ted Hill and his pro-Peking allies were not expelled at the Victoria State Communist Party Conference, further steps were taken along the path of isolating him. The usual fiction of firm but comradely criticism that gives the dissenter the opportunity to re-establish himself was still maintained, but the savage blows, that either drive deviationists from the party or force them to humiliate themselves with separate confessions or their errors, will continue until the process is complete. State Secretary Frank Johnson, who tried to keep a foot in both camps, was named as a pro-Hill man and removed from position. His place was taken by Ralph Gibson a long-time C.P. intellectual, usually active in front organisations, took over. It is widely believed that this is only a caretaker job and that after he has held the job long enough to weld the organisation together again, Bernie Taft will take over the job.

The decision not to expel Hill at this stage came as a surprise to some. The national leaders probably thought that his supporters are too numerous and not sufficiently isolated just yet without causing a major split. Among his supporters are important trade union leaders as well as C.P. functionaries; the loss of the former would be especially serious. The Hill faction openly distributed editorials from Peking papers at the conference.

The pro-Chinese tendency is not confined to Victoria but it is only there that it dares reach open and aggressive forms. Not so long ago the Central Committee of the Australian Communist Party abolished the N.S.W. State Committee and started to operate directly through District Committees - the main one being the Sydney Metropolitan Committee. It has been suggested that this was done to prevent a possible base for the pro-Chinese faction in the N.S.W. State Committee.

One of the most interesting aspect of the Conference was the draft Resolution, which in 15 closely-typed foolscap sheets spelt out the present line of the Communist Party of Australia with special reference to Victoria. It started with an appeal for unity:

"Conference calls upon all members to carry out the Party Line, to safeguard party unity and uphold democratic centralism which have been under attack by a small group in the Victorian Party Organisation. It reaffirmed the leadership by the Soviet Union, and castigated the line adopted by the Chinese as "adventurist, dogmatic and Left Sectarian." But while it attacked Hill and his adherents, it carefully worded references to China and Russia in order to give least offence to rank and file members who had supported Hill

The resolution baldly stated that Peaceful Co-existence as envisaged by Khrushchev is a tactic in the fight for socialism, and concluded: "Conference decides to do more to popularise the Soviet Union." There was a long harangue urging a United Front with the A.L.P. and expressing concern that some leading members in the Victorian A.L.P. were changing their sympathetic attitude towards the Communist Party. The resolution called for increased industrial struggle. One of the last items was an attack on the Bulletin - but not our publication - an Australian reactionary publication.

from Melbourne correspondent.

1594 A Melbourne correspondent has drawn our attention to the following editorial in the May 14th issue of Financial Review entitled "Sinister trend in Policies":

"Although the immediate effects of the British decision to abolish the Australian and New Zealand butter tariff preference may not be disastrous the move has a significance which Australians can ignore only at great risk. The British are reported as saying they are going to adjust butter quotas in such a way that Commonwealth trade will not be unduly harmed.

"That may be the case for the time being. The British decision needs to be understood not only in the light of the pressure from the Danes for better access to the British market - part of the price the British must pay for buying their way into EFTA markets - but also in the light of the pressure for reductions in British agricultural subsidies.

"It is now expected that the British Government will gradually change its agricultural support policy towards an arrangement similar to that of the Common Market. Britain may gradually abandon her system of relatively free imports of agricultural products and of deficiency payments to her farmers for a system of higher domestic prices for agricultural products and controls over imports.

"The significance of last week's decision on butter is that it extended the principle that quotas will be the dominating control over imports, not tariffs. The policy of quota controls and a gradual abandonment of the deficiency payments system in its present form would, if carried through, mean that the British consumer would gradually move away from the present relatively cheap food to a dear food policy, thus bringing Britain in line with the Six.

"But, for the British balance of payments, the imposition of import levies and quotas on food imports would not mean an abandonment of the cheap food policy. For, although the British consumer would be paying more for his food on the British domestic market, Britain as a country would be increasingly able to play one food exporter off against the other to get food landed in Britain for the lowest possible cost to the British balance of payments.

"The decision to extend the quota control over butter imports must therefore be taken as evidence of a most sinister trend in British commercial policy, and one which holds the gravest dangers for Australia. There is growing evidence of British determination gradually but inexorably to curtail the right of free Commonwealth access for foodstuffs to the British market in order to cut down on agricultural subsidy payments, to prepare for entry to the Common Market and to gain more freedom of manoeuvre in negotiations. Thoughtful Australians must therefore, understand that failure of British entry to the Common Market has provided only a temporary interruption to the continuing danger to our export trade from British commercial policy."

Thus we have it from a reliable source that British commercial policy is to (1) reduce agricultural subsidies by increasing food prices; (2) to counter the subsequent increased competition from cheaper Commonwealth food imports by abolishing free entry and imposing import quotas; and (3) to use quota system to play off one food producer against the other.