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THE
Letter to Readers
 BULLETIN

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 for
 Socialists*

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ABRIDGED EDITION

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Letter to Readers

This week's Bulletin is an abridged one. The reason is a good one - the editor has gone to Algeria to participate in the proceedings of the International Conference on Economic aid to Algeria.

It is possible that next week's issue may too have to be an abridged one, it depends upon how long the editor has to stay in Algeria. However, after that special efforts will be made to fill the gap and there will be an extensive report on the Conference.

Readers and correspondents should not cease to send in reports for publication however, we need these for reference in addition to straight reporting.

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The government of Peru has announced the capture of peasant leader Hugo Blanco, an intellectual inspired by the Cuban Revolution, who has been organizing the landless campesinos of his own country. So far news about Blanco's capture is very scanty. Only two brief items have appeared to date in the U.S. press. The first, an U.P.I. dispatch of May 30th, datelined Cuzco Peru, stated: "Hugo Blanco, Communist leader and head of a band of guerilla terrorists seeking to set up a Castro type regime in Peru, was captured by the police today... "Blanco, who had slipped through a number of police dragnets during the last year, was seized in the agricultural area of Quallabama. The police gave no details of the capture, but the 29 year old guerilla was said to be ill upon the transfer to the military prison here. "Blanco controlled a total of 8,000 to 10,000 Indians who he lead with the slogan- 'Land or death'. His headquarters were in the Indian valley of La Convension in Southern Peru". The second item was a special dispatch to the New York Times from Lima on the 31st of May. It says- "Hugo Blanco, a Communist agitator who was captured yesterday after a long search, is being held incommunicado in the Cuzco army barracks. The police said he would be tried at Arequipa, for the murder of 5 rural policemen."

Brief though these items are, they contain several ominous notes. First is that Blanco was said to be undergoing transfer to the military prison. This may mean that he is extremely sick, that he was wounded, or that he has been tortured. That he is being held incommunicado, and that officials are so close mouthed about his capture and imprisonment could also mean torture or refusal of needed medical attention. The Peruvian police and military have a record of torturing political prisoners. This reputation became all the more sinister in the past year under the military dictatorship. It conducted mass round ups of leftists guilty of nothing but their opinions. They were shipped to overcrowded jungle concentration camps and left to sicken and die without medical attention, adequate food or facilities.

The brief news items contain a number of inaccuracies. Blanco has always opposed the policies of the Communist Party. He was an adherent, whilst a student, of revolutionary socialist movements led by Trotskyists. Indeed the May issue of 'World Marxist Review' contains an attack on Blanco. Moreover, in an interview carried by the Lima newspaper, Expresso, Blanco denied being a guerilla. When the reporters compared his course to that of Castro, he pointed out: "Cuba's agrarian reform was the product of the bloody war which was conducted from the Sierra Maestra. It was its outcome but here the opposite is true. The campesinos were carrying out their own reform here, but they had not killed the landlords. "We want to kill the system of big estates, Blanco told the reporters, "We don't want to kill gamonales (landlords). We don't feed on blood but the products of the soil!"

Telegrams demanding that Blanco not be tortured or held incommunicado, and that he get medical attention, plus the right to choose a lawyer, should be sent to the Peruvian Ambassador: Peruvian Embassy, 52, Sloane St., London S.W.1. (T.N. London BEL 1917) or private residence, 34 Porchester Terrace, London W.2. (T.N. London AMB 5018)

Editorial Note: The campaign against the arrest of Hugo Blanco will be hampered by lack of knowledge of the activities of the movement he leads. We will in future issues devote material to this question, especially if his detention is prolonged. In addition there have been several articles in the Militant on the question. Comrades should use this material to write letters to Tribune, Union Voice, Railway Review and other labour movement journals. We must act quick but with the knowledge that the set up in Peru is such that political prisoners can be liberated by mass pressure.

1619 Peace News of June 7th reproduced from I.F. Stones Biweekly the following extracts from hearings before the U.S. House Appropriations Committee. This remarkable testimony throws a completely different light on the charges of Chinese aggression, taken up so readily by such papers as Tribune, and justifies the stand taken by this publication of supporting the Chinese workers state against Nehru's capitalist India.

"Mr. (Robert L.F.) Sikes (Democrat, Florida): Let me talk about Red China and the Indian operation. Did the Indian actually start this military operation?

Gen. (Maxwell D) Taylor (Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff): They were edging forward in the disputed area; yes, sir.

(Discussion off the record)

M. Sikes: Is the area of the neutral zone on territory that was formerly claimed by India or claimed by China?

Gen. Taylor: In most cases claimed by both.

Mr. Sikes: Where is it in relation to the generally accepted international boundary?

Gen. Taylor: This is hard to say because there is no generally accepted international boundary. I am sorry to be vague about this but I can assure you that I spent several hours trying to find out where the McMahon line is. Actually you find the maps differ on this. The terrain is so terribly rugged: there has been no accurate mapping and no accurate boundary lines or markers placed.

Mr. Sikes: Is the proposed neutral zone generally within territory which was occupied prior to all of this activity by Indian or Chinese forces.

Gen. Taylor: Most of it was unoccupied by anybody. General Hall are you an expert on this subject

Gen. Hall: Yes, sir. I would say in general it was occupied by neither force, but that the N.E.F.A. (North East Frontier Agency) was occupied predominantly by Indian forces. One thing I think it is very important to point out is that the Chinese Nationalists, when they were in control of China, did not recognize this line either. So it is not a question of the fact that it is a Chinese Communist vis-a-vis an Indian line. It is an Indian line that has never been recognized by either the Chinese Communists or the Nationalists.

Dept, of Defence, 1964, appropriation hearings before House Appropriations Committee, P.T.2, released April 19, pps. 9-1 .

South Africa Increases Her Trade With.....China

The Chinese C.P. talks very left, especially in relation to the Colonial Revolution, and the African revolution in particular. However, the following, which appeared in the Observer of June 9th, shows that just as the Russians put diamond trading interests before solidarity with the international Boycott campaign, the Chinese are capable of similar hypocrisy.

"Faced with increasing competition and trade boycotts in the West, South Africa is turning to the Far East and to the Communist countries as alternative markets. Exports to Communist China have jumped dramatically. Peking is buying large quantities of maize grown by South Africa's predominantly Government-supported farmers. Now the Langeberg co-operative, which has a decisive influence over the prosperity of perhaps 60% of South Africa's deciduous fruit industry, as well as over a large sector of this country's exports of canned goods..." "It is an open secret in the deciduous fruit industry that Langeberg is going to sound out the market possibilities in Communist China."

We are reprinting some of the details concerning the form and aims of the Organisation of African Unity defined at the Addis Ababa Conference, for the information of our readers. The provisions arrived at will come into effect when two-thirds of the signatories have ratified the Articles. Figures in brackets refer to the actual numbers of the 33 Articles.

(1) The Organisation is to consist of the continental African states and Madagascar. (2) The purpose of the O.A.U. is to promote unity and development, to defend the sovereignty of members, to eradicate colonialism, and to promote international cooperation "having due regard to the charter of the United Nations and the universal declaration of human rights". Members are to coordinate and harmonise their economic, diplomatic, educational, health, welfare and scientific and defence policies.

(3) Declaration of the principles of the equality of members, of non-interference by members in each other's affairs, of peaceful settlement of disputes between members "by negotiation, mediation, conciliation or arbitration" (see 19), of condemnation of political assassination "in all its forms" and subversive actions by members against each other, of affirmation of non-alignment with existing power blocs and emancipation of "African territories which are still dependent". (5) and (6) concern Rights and Duties of members.

(7) The structure of the organisation. (8) to (10) concerns Provisions for the Assembly of Heads of State and Government, meeting once a year to be the supreme organ to coordinate African policies (or modify the O.A.U.). Members can request extraordinary meetings. Each member to have one vote. Resolutions to be determined by two-thirds majority, procedure to be determined by a simple majority, as is the question whether the matter is procedural; two-thirds of members to constitute a quorum at any meeting. (12) to (15) are provisions for a Council of Foreign or other designated Ministers, meeting twice a year with provision for extraordinary meetings; to be responsible to the Assembly and implement its decisions, voting for the Assembly (16) to (18), provision for an administrative Secretary-General appointed by the Assembly. (19) Provision for a Commission of Mediation, to settle members' disputes to be defined in a separate protocol. (20) to (22) Provision for specialised commissions on education, health, economics, etc., composed of the ministers concerned.

(23) The Budget, to be prepared by the Secretary-General, is to be met by contributions from members in accordance with their U.N. assessment, except that none shall be assessed for an amount exceeding 20% of the total budget. (25) to (27) Ratification, interpretation and entry into force and registration with the United States under article 102 of the U.N. charter. (28) provides for adherence by any independent sovereign African state. (29) to (31) Official languages to be English, French and African languages. (32) States can serve one years notice of renunciation of membership. (33) Amendments to the Charter to require a two-thirds vote of all of the members.

NOTTINGHAM Y.S. FEDERATION:- SCHOOL ON ALGERIA.

Dennis Anderson will be speaking on "Algeria Since the Revolution" in the Guild Room, at the Co-operative Education Centre, Broad St., Nottingham. He visited Algeria last year, and was one of the founding members and the first secretary of the 'British Aid to Algeria Committee'. The times of the sessions are 10.30 a.m. until 12.30 p.m., and 2.0 p.m. until 5.0 p.m. The last hour is to be devoted to questions and discussion. All Nottingham comrades should attend.

It is expected that socialists present at the International Conference for the Organisation of Aid to Algeria will be at the meeting to give a report.

NOTTINGHAM COMRADES EXPOSE VICIOUS PROPAGANDA FILM

Labour Party members and Young Socialists handed out leaflets outside the Odeon cinema, Nottingham after the showing of "The Legion's Last Patrol". This film, starring Stewart Granger glorifies the role of the French Foreign Legion in Algeria and portrays the F.L.N. as a gang of murderers, rapists and degenerates.

The leaflets, well-laced with quotations from French military men displayed the true attitudes and activities of the Foreign Legion. Short accounts were given of atrocities committed against individuals such as Henry Alleg, and a nurse of the Algerian Red Crescent who was raped with the neck of a bottle by several French soldiers. Accounts are given of the infamous regroupment camps where two million Algerians were herded together. But perhaps the leaflet got nearest to describing the true nature of French imperialism and exposing the colourful distortions of "The Legions Last Patrol" when it pointed out the stark fact that one million people lost their lives in the war.

RAILWAYMEN ANGRY WITH C.D.S.

An article appearing in last weeks (June 7th) Railway Review makes it plain that the railwaymen are not at all pleased with C.D.S.'s attitude to the Beeching Plan. In a front page article entitled "An Honest Attempt" they attacked the C.D.S. statement that if the unions want to quarrel with the Plan they should have a go at the Government. But at the same time, "industrial action in this case would be open to all the objections against its use for political ends." Commenting on this "mixture of supercilious advice and pretentious expertise" Railway Review says "So what. The writer seems to be unaware that the N.U.R. has been carrying on a campaign against the Government's proposals for a very long time." In reply to C.D.S.'s claim that "Dr. Beeching did no more than faithfully carry out the terms of reference set down for him by the Tory Government" and that "whatever the faults of the report, it is an honest attempt to adapt a railway system created in the 19th^{century} to the urgent industrial needs of the 20th" they pose the very relevant question "do they not agree with the Government? And what are they doing calling themselves socialists when the Labour Party has come out so strongly against the Government" When C.D.S. come out with the statement that "The railway unions ought not to give the impression that they are trying to resist the course of history and are opposed at any price to change" Railway Review can be excused drawing the conclusion that "It is time the C. .S. wound itself up, clarified its thoughts, or changed its name."