

NEW MOVES TO LIMIT DISCUSSION INSIDE LABOUR PARTY

In an interview given to the Observer, printed in the December 24th issue of that paper, Morgan Phillips, the retiring General Secretary of the Labour Party, suggested that the annual conference of the Party be done away with and replaced by a biennial one. Between the conferences a national council would be the supreme body. This national council to comprise of the National Executive, the Shadow Cabinet, the Women's Committee, the Young Socialist Committee and representatives of the of the regional councils, the unions and affiliated groups. When asked about the time taken for these changes to be introduced he said that the national council could be established at once and that the 1962 annual conference could be asked to postpone the 1963.

Morgan Phillips backed up his propositions by arguing that the preparations for the annual conference take up his staff for 8 months of the year, that 'Year after year, the same sorts of question are discussed, with the same speakers bringing forward the same arguments' and that 'Frankly, these debates serve little useful purpose.'

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In examining Morgan Phillips' arguments and suggestions we must remember that although he spoke as an individual it is unlikely that he would have brought forward such detailed proposals unless he had discussed them beforehand. It has been the practice of the present right wing clique to to have their propositions 'sounded out' before putting them forward, comrades will remember speeches in which Jay, Woodrow Wyatt and co. launched the right wing campaign on such questions as Clause Four. This interview could be a similar tactic.

If successful, the effect would be to enormously increase the bureaucratic grip on the Labour Party. The annual conference despite the ring wing ignoring it, has been an important obstacle to the complete bureaucratisation of the Labour Party. In striking at the right wing would be striking at the heart of the democratic spirit of the whole labour movement.

Another recent development was the decision of the National Executive to instruct the Scottish regional organisation not to place a miners' resolution on the agenda of a Scottish regional conference, to be held in the Spring. This decision, taken by a vote of 13 to 10, cuts across annual conference policy which came down clearly for a campaign against the Polaris base.

The Scottish miners are indignant about the move and statements by leading figures in the Glasgow Trades Council, etc. have been made in protest. If the Gaitskell clique got away with this there will be further attempts to stifle discussion at all levels in the Labour Party.

INDIAS POSITIVE NEUTRALISM.

The attack by India upon the Portugese colonies on the Indian sub-continent is noteworthy first of all because of the change in the relationship of world forces it indicates. Today it is the former colonial countries who attack the imperialists. In a very distorted way this is part of the world-wide colonial revolution and it is for this reason that the press of the imperialist nations howls against 'India's aggression' - the same press which is almost silent about the monstrous massacre of Africans in the Portugese colony of Angola. Whilst not in any way being fooled by the hypocrisy of the capitalist press, it is necessary to examine the reasons for the attack by India.

When Nehru was question^{ed} at an airport about the reasons for India's action, he said that it was forced upon them, the alternative was for anarchists to take over in Goa. Elsewhere in this bulletin we have reproduced the statement by the Goa League. The ultimatum it reports, translated into Nehru's language, was that unless the Indian Government sent in forces the 'anarchists' would liberate Goa themselves. This is something the Indian Government could not afford. No bourgeois government can allow the independent action of the masses themselves without running the risk that its own authority will be undermined. No doubt many considerations influenced the Indian Government when taking its action - Goa's mineral deposits, repercussions had she let the Portugese continue to persecute the Goans and many more. - but fundamental is that of fear of ^{the} Indian masses going into action.

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The affair is instructional, too, to those who have thought of India as a model of positive neutralism and an example to the world at large. In its way the Goan business illustrates the class nature of the Indian state. The Indian state is an instrument of the rule of capitalism in India, its policies are those which by and large the most far-seeing capitalist politicians consider necessary for the preservation of capitalism in India. Peaceful in the United Nations, warlike in Goa, threatening a military solution when the Chinese bring the revolution to India's backdoor by carrying out the land reform in Tibet - all these facets of India's policy can only be understood from this point of view.

P.J. 24/12/61

A 'PEACE CONFERENCE' IS HELD IN NOTTINGHAM

by a delegate.

There occurred on Wednesday the 13th December a peace conference, the precise significance of which escapes this journal's reporter. Convened by the Trades Council of Nottingham with John Horner, Secretary of the Fires Brigades Union, as the star attraction, the proceedings occasionally bordered on pure farce. John Horner was not there, Commander Edgar Young was and ^{the} somewhat bemused delegates were treated to 45 minutes of pro-soviet apologia. Delegates who, 50 megaton tests apart, were not unfriendly to Russia or China reacted restlessly. Eventually for ten minutes the meeting became a conference and C.N.D., Committee of 100 and trade unionists discussed the possibility of common action. The Trades Council had succeeded - they had brought together those elements in Nottingham most relevant for peace and the elements were fusing. At this point (9 o'clock) amid expressions of astonishment, the chairman Lionel Jacobs closed the meeting. Explanations? The Trades Council was a most jealous body which would resent a conference (convened by itself) taking decisions outside its scope. Farce or tragedy? I suppose it depends how seriously you take the prevention of war.

NORTH NOTTINGHAM LABOUR PARTY DISCUSSES IMMIGRATION

At a meeting of the North Nottingham Labour Party held Thursday the 21st of December, Dick Skyers of the Afro Asian West Indian Union spoke on the question of immigration. He pointed out the hardships and humiliations that coloured immigrants suffer after having been forced to leave the country of their origin because of the terrible economic and social conditions, brought about by the vicious exploitation of the people by British and American imperialism. He outlined at length the attitude of racialists like Cyril Osbourne and the support given to them by the Tory Government and the capitalist press with the aim of trying to confuse the working class of Britain as to the real reasons for unemployment and the bad housing conditions. He went on to say that this was being done to create as much division as possible among st the working class in order to strengthen exploitation of all workers, white and black. He said finally that people in the labour movement should always try to give a socialist answer to the racist and tory propaganda otherwise the job of countering this propaganda would be ineffective. For all these reasons the labour movement should reject the Tory Immigration Bill.

After numerous questions the meeting condemned racial discrimination and pledged itself to work more actively amongst coloured people in the factories, etc. and in particular to explain more about the trade union movement and to impress upon ^{them} the necessity of ^{joining} the unions and taking an active part. There was considerable discussion too on the need for economic development of the colonies and it was pointed out that this would be the responsibility of the next labour government. It was agreed that private enterprise would never provide for the economic development of these countries. The members at the meeting were well aware of the role of American imperialism in the West Indies. The chairman pledged himself to raise the question in the Trades Council and get them to ^{be} active on the problem. The meeting which was attended by some 20 odd people was throughout sympathetic to the point of view put forward by Dick Skyers in his statement.

SOME NOTES ABOUT THE BULLETIN

A horrible clanger was dropped in the last bulletin when it was numbered 3 instead of 4. We understand that M.I. 5 is to send a complaint to the editor because it has mucked up their files. Anyway for those who keep files the issue starting 'Right launches attack on democracy.....' should be numbered four.

Some comrades have said that they did not receive No. 3 (starting 'Committee of 100.....' it appears that a batch must have gone astray in the Xmas rush, please write in if you didn't get No. 3, we have some left.

This issue is only four pages because of the Xmas holidays. We will resume 6 pages with the next issue. However, we are making up with a supplement of the first two pages of a summary of 'The Permanent Revolution' written by Trotsky. This will be completed as a supplement to the next issue.

The following items have been extracted from I.C.F.T.U. Press and Radio Service Bulletin.

Partial victory of Basque workers.

Significant victories have been won by Basque workers in a strike action although striking is punished as 'military rebellion' by the Franco dictatorship. The labour conflict in the state-owned railway rolling stock factory at Beasain in the Basque province of Guipuzcoa, where about 3,000 workers held a sit-down strike early in December, is on the way to being settled outside the state-controlled trade union organisations. A provisional agreement has been reached between factory managers and a workers' delegation with the approval of the Provincial Governor. Pending a final solution, the management promised to accept the workers' demands for a wage increase.

The workers in some factories in Villafranca de Oria also returned to work after the managements agreed to a provisional pay rise. A similar agreement has been made by the management of the Orbegozo factory at Sumarraga, where workers also gave warning that they would strike if their wages were not increased.

Despite the provisional settlement of this dispute, the workers continue to boycott sporting events, cinemas and cafes until final arrangements are made.

About 1,000 workers of a machine-tool factory in Irun, near the French border, also decided to boycott cafes, cinemas and sports as a first warning that they will go on strike if the management does not agree to a general wage increase.

Growing tension in Asturias province.

According to reports from the Asturias, important centre for the mining and metal industry in Northern Spain, the discontent of the workers is steadily growing as the miners have had their wages cut - in some cases by as much as 40 per cent - since the application of the Governmental economic "stabilisation" plan in 1959. Although the authorities keep repeating that the economic situation has definitely improved, the workers are still having to bear the full effects of an economic plan which has benefitted only the employers. The metalworkers of La Felguera plant in Gijon and in the Aviles factory are showing increased dissatisfaction with wages, especially since the metalworkers employed in the Altos Hornos plant in Bilbao won some wage increases and bonuses by determined industrial action. Despite the fact that the Government has sent strong police units to the area, it seems that it is hoping for results by persuasion and will not use force in the early stage, in order to prevent disputes breaking out simultaneously in many places in the Asturias.

Campaign in Spanish state railways.

Over 2,500 employees of the Spanish state railways have sent letters and telegrams to General Franco, protesting against the recent decision of the Minister of Labour to cancel the regrading of railwaymen. The regrading, which had been a long-standing demand of the workers, had been previously approved by the labour courts of Barcelona and Irun. The state-run transport workers' trade union, however, refused to support the workers in their postal campaign, thus proving once more that the Spanish trade unions are not trade unions at all and not prepared to defend the workers interests.

Journalist versus the authorities

Cesar del Arco, chief editor of the Seville edition of 'Pueblo', paper of the Spanish state-run trade unions, was arrested for having published - despite a ban by the censorship - an article protesting against the failure of the authorities to take measures to prevent floods in Seville. After two days he was released but fined 12,500 pesetas (£74).

BOYCOTTING SOUTH AFRICAN GOODS - KHRUSHCHEV STYLE

Whilst the Communist Party of this country supports the call to boycott South African goods, their Russian counterparts have just set a very bad example. They have just renewed, this time for an indefinite period, that is, until further notice, an agreement whereby the all the diamonds Russia exports are marketed by the South African diamond corporation De Beers. A secrecy clause prevents the world from knowing how money is involved, but last year when the agreement was first made, the Economist estimated that over £5 millions ^{per annum} was involved. The diamonds will, no doubt, help to pay for the South African oranges which have been noticed on all Russian ships taking holiday-makers to Russia.

REBELLION IN GOA.

The following statement issued by the Goa League (London Branch) is dated 13/12/61 and was issued before the Indian Government's invasion of Goa. It was sent to us for our information and is commented upon elsewhere in the Bulletin.

"Seven thousand miners are on strike; and the manganese and iron ore mines are at a standstill. Several miners who have managed to escape into India described the chaotic conditions inside Goa.

"Goan civil and military personnel are abandoning their posts. They are threatened with arrest and death under the new emergency powers. All Goan personnel is under police surveillance.

"Several Portuguese police posts have been attacked by Goan fighters within the last six days. Several bridges have been blown up.

"On December 8th the people of three villages near Polom in Southern Goa stoned the house of the regedor (Parish authority) and hoisted the Indian flag. On the following day they were "evacuated" by Portuguese troops. It is not known how many people were killed during the "evacuation" or to where they have been taken. Three other villages - Surla, Tiraco and Rawan, in different parts of Goa - have also rebelled against Portuguese authority.

"The Portuguese have evacuated the families of their European troops. They have also taken away art treasures from the museum of Pangim and historical records to Portugal.

"The Goan Political Convention, the united front of all Goan organisations inside and outside Portugal, sent an ultimatum to the Government of India that unless it ordered troops to enter Goa to assist the nationalists there within a week, it would itself send 5,000 Goan volunteers to do so. It has drawn the attention of the Government of India to the terrible massacre that would ensue and for which it would be responsible. Reuters erroneously reported that this ultimatum came from India's opposition parties and that the Goan Political Convention was a Communist body. When the Goa League pointed out these errors, Reuters corrected their report as above."

ARGENTINE STRIKE VICTORY

After a 42 day strike, the Argentinian railway-workers' unions - Union Ferroviaria and La Fraternidad - have emerged victorious. The strike ended on 10th December and the result meets a large part of the workers' claims. The new agreement provides a 20 per cent wage increase and a monthly indemnity bonus of 1,000 pesos per worker. All those arrested during the strikes are to be released at once and a new railway board, which will include two workers' representatives, is to be set up within 30 days.

The strike was originally called to protest against the massive retrenchment proposed by the Argentine Government in the reorganisation of the railways. As the strike developed the Government submitted the strikers to increasing pressure, but they were supported nationally and internationally by the workers' movement. The Argentinian Federation of Labour came out on a three-day general strike and the Argentinian Maritime Union threatened to refuse to sail Argentine ships.

The largely victorious outcome of the strike, despite the weakness of sections of the Trade Union leadership, shows the tremendous combativity of the Argentine working class. The present ruling clique in the Argentine have been thwarted once again by the working class in their attempt to solve the problems of the Argentine economy at the expense of the working people.

PUBLICATIONS RECEIVED

Several periodicals have arrived since the last bulletin, namely, Young Socialist (1/6), journal of the Ceylon section of the Fourth International; International Socialism (2/6), Winter 1961, No. 7; New Left Review, Nov/Dec. 1961, No. 12 (3/6) and Workers World (3d), an American Marxist paper Dec. 8th issue. We have also received a quantity of "Marxist theories on Imperialism and their bourgeois critics" by E. Germain. This has been duplicated by our comrades in Australia and costs 1/3.