

1962 OPENS WITH INTENSIFIED CLASS STRUGGLE

From a revolutionary point of view the new year started well. The fact that the Post Office workers and other Civil Servants have stopped short of strike action should not blind us to the immense importance, from a class point of view, of their actions. Like wise we should not miss the importance too, of the catholic general secretary of the T.U.C. when he says that 'the only thing which will make this Government reconsider the wages pause is force.' The Post Offices Workers Union is no left-wing organisation, it has a long record of class collaboration and has been a firm supporter of right wing policies within the labour movement. Yet, now its leadership threaten to 'use others means if the work to rule does not yield results'.

Undoubtably the dissatisfaction of the membership of the unions operating the work to rule is a most important factor in bringing their leadership to take this action. This may indeed be the most important factor at this stage. But, as has been pointed out in these columns before, the Government's wage pause policy undermines the social position and role of the trade union bureaucracy, that is why they will initiate struggles. However, these struggles if left to the trade union bureaucracy will not have the objective of full victory for the workers demands, but that of imposing upon the Government and sections of the employers a policy of full collaboration with the trade union bureaucrats. Moreover the trade union bureaucrats will at a decisive moment when the existing status quo is threatened in some way, always sell-out. Therein lies the positive and negative features of the situation facing us today.

The fact that 1962 starts with an intensification of the class struggle and with a perspective of even greater conflicts in the first few months of the year, notwithstanding the fact that they are led at this stage by a treacherous leadership, lays the basis for a new mood of militancy amongst the workers and a renewal of the workers organisations. Even if bureaucratically led, these struggles will bring thousands of workers, especially the youth, into class action for the first time. Moreover, the very act of official industrial ^{action} on a wide scale will help to create an atmosphere for all kinds of struggles at all levels. On the other hand the character of the leadership means that victory in these struggles will be achieved only in spite of them and not because of them. They could sell out a struggle simply because of a guarantee of greater 'consultation' and as soon as things 'get out of hand' from their point of view they will call off the fight.

Our task remains, as always, that of laying the basis for the creation of a mass marxist current in the working class and the construction of a marxist leadership on this foundation. We must avoid isolating ourselves in a sectarian manner by making infantile criticisms of the tactics adopted by workers' organisations and at the same time we would be accomplices of the right wing if we did not subject them to revolutionary criticism. A great responsibility lies upon the marxist left for the linking of the industrial struggles to a socialist consciousness and conditions are very ripe for such argumentation. We must link all the workers' organisations, especially the Young Socialists, to the industrial struggle. Thus the basis could be laid for the Labour Parties, etc. being converted into organs of struggle and at the same the industrial struggles politicalised. All in all 1962 promises to be favourable for our endeavours in all these fields.

DECLINE IN ECONOMY CONTINUES

In October the slow decline in industrial production continued, though strikes at Rootes and the Steel Company of Wales may have contributed to making the index of industrial production two points lower for the month instead of one (the seasonal average). In particular, apart from the Welsh strike, output of steel was low continuing the trend of 1961 (latest estimates put steel production as 9% down on 1960). It appears that engineering production was slightly down and there was a definite decline, as compared to 1960, in the volume of exports of engineering goods. Car output in November was 2,000 up on October, though half of this increase was accounted for by the resumption of activity at Rootes. Exports of cars were down and if the industry's expectation of an increase in home orders in the first few months of this year, as the new models come on the market, is not fulfilled a big cutback in production will take place. As it is home consumption of cars is 10% down on 12 months ago although the industry now has a much higher capacity. The fall of £85 million in the gold reserves (this question will go into in detail in the next issue of the bulletin) plus some new inflationary pressures - the campaign for an increase in the price of steel - all give a gloomy picture for British capitalism.

The following article is reproduced from International, the organ of the Australian section of the Fourth International, and was written for the Dec. 15th issue. At that time the final election results had not been published. These resulted in the Menzies party being returned with a majority of two with wide-spread speculation that there would be another general election in a few months time.

Resurgent Labour looks for results - Leadership confronts its testing time.

The continuing decline of the Australian economy and the failure of the Menzies "Liberal" Government to halt it, produced evidence of petty bourgeois resentment indicating a probable reduction of the Government's strength in the elections of December 9th. A gain of 6-8 seats by the Labour Party was widely anticipated together with the loss of the Government's Senate majority, which latter would make real the perspective of forcing a double dissolution and new general elections in 1962.

Senate election results are determined by the aggregate vote in each of the six States and more accurately reflect Labour's voting strength than does the House of Representatives elections, where big Labour majorities in working class electorates are wasted. In the event, a much bigger swing to the left was demonstrated by a Labour gain of at least 16 seats at this stage and a likelihood of a deadlocked House (61-61) necessitating a further election in March or April.

In the event of the count ending in a majority of 1 or 2 for Labour in the lower house, a great danger exists in the already-canvassed right wing perspective of aiming to hold on to the reins of government in face of a hostile senate both before and after July, when the newly-elected senators would be installed. Menzies' advisors would be well aware that he would meet a worse fate in new elections at this stage, whereas a Labour Government may well be constrained by a strong opposition and a hostile senate to avoid contentious legislation, and so be allowed to hang on to office.

As time dragged on (granting the economy continued to stagnate) the upshot would be that the Labour Government, eschewing initiatives aimed at seriously tackling the problems pressing on the people, would not be measuring up to electorate's expectations, would invite an increasing scepticism as to its bona fides, and would prepare the basis for an anti-Labour ascendancy when finally came round. On the other hand an early general election would inevitably increase the number of Labour gains. More of the doubtful voters will get on the winning side if Labour projects an image of determination to seriously get on with the job.

While the proportional representation set-up of the Senate may slightly improve the D.L.P. numbers (D.L.P. is the Democratic Labour Party, an extreme right wing catholic action inspired breakaway from the Australian Labour Party:ed. note) this will be offset by the preponderance of A.L.P. members over "Liberals" who will be elected. The fate of the outside workers' party seeking electoral support, the Communist Party, was a sorry one. We have previously expressed the view that the attractive power of the workers' states due to their scientific achievements and the superior tempo of their development because of their nationalised planned economy will not induce a parallel growth of the Australian C.P.

The adherence of the workers to their traditional party built over long years is a fact of life that the C.P. leaders do not even begin to understand. They do not understand that only a major historic failure or betrayal by the party and this means one that the masses appreciate as such, will produce any substantial shift in allegiance from the mass party.

In failing to appreciate that the main arena for the struggle to establish the validity of the socialist objective and policies really transitional to its achievement is in the mass workers' party, the C.P. leadership misleads and miseducates militants, divorces them from the sphere of effective activity and so disorientates and weakens the forces of progress in the struggle against the right wing adherents of the capitalist status quo.

The catastrophic drop in the figures of voting for the C.P. precisely when the electorate was moving to the left, should cause C.P. members and supporters to re-examine the pretensions of their leadership to a capacity for scientific marxist analysis. On another plane the C.P. leaders have done the left a disservice in this election. This was in their uncritical endorsement of the election policy enunciated by the Labour leadership which promised the

elimination of unemployment in twelve months and increases in social services payments, whilst repudiating a Labour Government's right and duty to take whatever measures the situation demands to implement its pledges.

The fact is that only in the fortuitous circumstances of a new economic boom can these promises be realised without encroachment on capitalism's self-proclaimed rights, a circumstance that only a perennial optimist can envisage. Labour cannot afford to fail to measure up to its responsibilities to justify its claim to being a people's government. In the critical days of the new period now opening up Labour will have need of its repudiated platforms, particularly in respect to nationalisation and planned economy, essential to economic advancement. And a viable platform cannot make its way if its adherents fail to advocate it, let alone when the leaders openly repudiate it. In underwriting such an attitude, the C.P. leadership is misleading the workers, failing to alert them to the policy requirements of the times, and is demonstrating its unworthiness to any claim to be a socialist leadership.

The excuse of the need to placate the D.L.P. voters with a right wing policy needs critical examination when we consider the results in seats such as PARKES (New South Wales) There Haylen, MP, was the target for the most vindictive concentration of D.L.P. morons with their hate campaign labelling him "Communist" and "fellow traveller". In this long time borderline seat Haylen gained a respectably increased majority. (It is also pertinent to remember that the Sydney Morning Herald, now voicing its daily demand that the party cut off its left - and thereby cease to be a Labour party - is not read in Queensland, where the pro Labour swing was so spectacular.)

Labour at last is getting its opportunity to demonstrate its capacity to implement a viable alternate policy to that of Menzies, the reactionary defender of the capitalist barrier to Australia's advancement. A heavy responsibility rests on the left wing to work and organise to ensure that Labour's opportunity is seized with fruitful results, that Labour's platform is honoured in its observance, not in its breach.

FRANCE - STAYDOWN PROTEST BY MINERS

Miners all over France took action in support of the 2,000 miners of Decazeville on Thursday 27th December. These miners had been on a staydown strike for ten days in protest against plans to close their pit. The 307 mayors of towns and villages of Aveyron County in the South of France, in which Decazeville is situated, have written to the Government announcing their collective resignation in protest against the Government's failure to protect the miners.

Pit closures have been going on for some years in this mining area as a direct result of the European Common Market and the European Coal and Steel Community, and had already reduced the number of miners employed from 5,000 to 2,000. The action of the remaining 2,000 in staying down their pits in protest was a last-resort move, following years of representation to the Government.

Workers and farmers in the Aveyron area have rallied to help the miners by supplying food and clothing for the men down the pit and financial support for their families. In Decazeville itself six youths went on hunger strike in a room of the town hall in sympathy with their fathers, who are among the 2,000 miners on strike below ground.

The determination of the Decazeville miners can be judged from the fact that they continued their staydown strike right through the Christmas holidays, the first time this has happened anywhere in France. Only one of them has so far come to the surface, and he did it in order to get married, returning to join his comrades below only 24 hours later.

The miners' unions say that the French Government is going ahead with the closures only because of pressure of the West German coal combines. They say that the moves will bring disaster not only to the miners themselves but to the area generally. There are known reserves of over 30 million tons and production per manshift has risen from 1.4 tons in 1959 to 2.1 tons today, the highest in France.

MASS ANTI COLOUR BAR BILL DEMONSTRATION TO BE HELD IN LONDON.

On Sunday, 14th January, the MCF is organising a mass demonstration against the Colour bar Bill. The assembly point is Hyde Park (near Marble Arch) at 2.15- 2.45. All comrades are urged to give maximum support to this. A bus is to be organised from Nottingham to take part.

4

After the Xmas holidays workers at the Brush Electric factory at Loughborough found the already inadequate heating facilities completely broken down. None of the toilets were working and there was ice in the shops where the workers handle metal all day. Some of the workshops were flooded and there were no washing facilities - an important thing because of the dirty nature of much of the work done.

Many of the workers decided to return home immediately because of these conditions. However, they were persuaded by some of the Shop Stewards to discuss the matter at shop meetings. Among the arguments used by the Shop Stewards was one that if more than 65% of the workers went home the whole works would have to close, thus men not effected by the bad conditions would have to lose time. This argument was subsequently proved to be false.

At the meetings many of the 'bosses men' claimed that it wasn't cold. Noting that all these men had overcoats and scarves on, I asked one of them, why if it isn't cold, why didn't he take one of his overcoats off. These types used many similar unrealistic arguments but the majority of the workers remained adamant and decided to go home.

Eventually more than 65% of the workers went home. It is noteworthy that the women workers among the first to walk out and generally were more militant and better organised. The management at first closed the gates to stop the workers leaving but this caused such an uproar that they had to reopen them.

Most workers returned the next day, Thursday, and were astounded by the changes. The management must have had men working all through the night to do all the work necessary. The workers found that all the heaters had been repaired, new heaters fitted all plumbing repairs had been done. Indeed among the things done were some which had been the subject of complaint for months. At a meeting after meeting workers had brought up complaints about inadequate washing facilities, etc. and from the Shop Stewards they got the stock answer the management have it in hand and will deal with it at the earliest possible occasion.

No doubt many of the workers will have noted the behaviour of the management and drawn the necessary conclusions. Where months and months of talking brings no results, militant action has the management frightened into immediate action to meet the workers' demands.

Y.C.N.D. MARCH THROUGH NOTTINGHAM.

As reported in No. 4 of the Bulletin, the Y.C.N.D. has organised a series of demonstrations through Midland towns. After starting at Leicester on the 27th of December, the marchers arrived in Nottingham the following day, the Thursday of the week after Xmas.

Unfortunately the local Y.C.N.D. branch had fallen down on arrangements and apart from help given by the Regional Secretary of the C.N.D. in the form of fixing their accommodation they were left to their own devices until the evening. The Young Socialists had organised a most welcome social evening at a pub for the demonstrators. The latter was successful some eighty to one hundred people attending with a good sale of Young Guards.

During the day the demonstrators, numbering some 50 odd, gave out leaflets and sold their papers in the main Nottingham streets. Unfortunately the weather was extremely inclement. An application to hold a march through the city centre was turned down by the Chief Constable on the grounds of insufficient notice.

After spending the night at the new Friends meeting house, forty of the demonstrators braved the cold and held a demonstration outside Raleigh Cycles factory from 7.15 onwards. The response was quite good.

Arising out of the experience of the above steps are to be taken to reorganise the Y.C.N.D. in Nottingham, which has so far been the reserve of the Y.C.L. and some young Christians, none of whom put in any appearance on this occasion.

CORRECTION

In the report of the passing of a resolution against the colour bar Immigration Bill by the Nottingham City Labour Party in issue No. 4, it was said that the resolution originated from the chair. We have since been informed that it arose from a similar resolution from North Nottingham Young Socialists.

ALBANIAN-CHINESE SHIPPING COMPANY FORMED.

On Boxing day an agreement was signed in Peking forming a joint shipping company based upon the participation of the Albanian and Chinese Governments. The move is part of a plan to increase economic co-operation between the two countries and is Mao's answer to Khrushchov's campaign against Albania. The latest move of which was the breaking off of diplomatic relations between the U.S.S.R. and Albania, which was followed by all the other 'Peoples Democracies' in Europe. The drastic nature of this move is seen from the fact that not even at the height of the campaign against Jugo-Slavia, when the Tito was denounced as a fascist and an agent of imperialism, did diplomatic links between the Soviet bloc and Jugo-Slav become severed.

Keeping up the ideological offensive against modern revisionism (read Khrushchovism), the new year issue of 'Red Flag', China's chief ideological magazine, said:

"To regard the issue of war and peace as the most important issue, and anti-imperialism and anticolonialism as secondary, is, in essence, to blot out the great significance of the national liberation movement to the safeguarding of world peace"

DANISH MARXISTS' NEW JOURNAL

We have received No.2 of 'Internationalt Perspektiv', a journal published in Denmark by marxists. This issue, which is excellently produced, has articles on Algeria, the Central African Federation, Cuba, Apartheid, and other topical questions. Our Danish comrades are to be congratulated upon their achievement and the excellent quality of the journal certainly makes the editor wish he could read Danish.

TROTSKY PAMPHLETS SHORTLY AVAILABLE

As previously announced, 'The Class Nature of The Soviet State', is to be duplicated shortly. The stencilling is now complete and the main hold-up is obtaining the necessary paper to make a worthwhile run. 'The Communist Manifesto Today' has been stencilled and awaits duplicating. The balance of the 'Permanent Revolution's draft thesis' has been done and is included as a supplement to this issue of the bulletin. The latter two pamphlets will not be held up for paper as they are comparatively short. They were stencilled by a comrade who has only just learnt to type and who must be heartily congratulated upon his industry and perseverance at a job which not many people are willing to undertake.

POPE JOHN AND THE COLD WAR

We have received copies of the above book by F.A. Ridley, costing 5/6d post paid. The book is a study of the part played by the catholic church in the cold war. Another book is also under preparation and will be published by Frank Maitland soon - 'Spartacus - the leader of the Roman slaves' also by F.A. Ridley

COVENTRY PROTESTS AGAINST BAN ON ERNIE ROBERTS

The refusal of the Labour Party Executive to endorse the candidacy of Ernie Roberts, assistant general secretary of the A.E.U., for Horsham has caused anger in Coventry, Ernie's home town and a big engineering centre. His own branch of the A.E.U., the Coventry Central, is to forward a protest to the A.E.U. executive on the matter. Statements of protest have been made by Sid Singer, shop steward in a leading aircraft firm, Dick Johnson, A.E.U. convener at Massey-Ferguson and councillor R. Loosley, who is a member of the A.E.U.. The latter is to raise the question in his constituency labour party and from there to the City Labour Party.

MANY MORE TRADE UNIONISTS

Trade union membership in Britain went up by 203,000 during 1960 to 9,803,000 which is only 3,000 short of the record 1957 figures. Figures published in the Ministry of Labour Gazette say that there were 7,860,000 men members at the end of 1960, an increase of 121,000 (1.6 per cent) and 1,943,000 women an increase of 82,000 (4.4 per cent). The 17 biggest unions, each with over 100,000, organised two-thirds of the total membership. At the other end of the scale, there were 308 unions with less than 500 members each. Altogether they account for less than one per cent of the total membership.

ANTI-NUCLEAR WEAPONS MOVEMENT GROWS IN STATES

The following reported is extracted from the John Williamson column in the Daily Worker. There is no doubt that the C.N.D. movement in Britain, with all its faults, has helped in a number of countries to stimulate anti-war movements. Whilst we cannot accept the underlying C.P. attitude of Williamson's article, which sees the peace movement as a thing in itself and not as a special form of the class struggle (that of disarming our own ruling class), we must see the positive side to such developments. They will under the pressure of the events go through an evolution, which will result, assuming marxists adopt a correct policy, in big layers being brought towards revolutionary politics.

"A grass-roots movement for peace larger than anything in the last 13 years, is showing itself from coast to coast. This happens as the Government announces its intention to renew H.bomb tests. The issue on which the renewed movement began is the Government's sponsorship of the nuclear fallout shelter programme.

"On November 10th an advertisement signed by 183 university leaders, 89 of them professors, in the Boston area appeared. It charged that the shelter programme "prepares the people for the acceptance of thermo-nuclear war as an instrument of national policy" The nation's efforts should be directed towards a positive programme for peace with freedom, it declared, urging Kennedy to change course and "lead the nation forward on a race towards peace".

"In five weeks the 183 grew to 1,929 as groups of university professors and lecturers throughout the country used the Boston text as the basis for adverts in New York, Cleveland, Chicago, Los Angeles and San Francisco. Some groups added a few paragraphs. The Midwest group said: "The principal danger of the present programme is the false sense of security engendered. It is much like a quack cure for cancer."

"Significant also were the coast-to-coast demonstrations of women. It began with 1,000 women who gathered in Washington and sent identical halt-the-arms-race letters to Mrs. Kennedy and Mrs. Krushchov. Then 2,000 women in Los Angeles and soon a total of 14,000 women had participated in a variety of protest actions in San Francisco, Chicago, Cleveland, Baltimore, St. Louis, Newark, Denver and Cincinnati.

"In Los Angeles the banners said: "End the Arms Race, not the Human Race" and "Choose peace while there is a choice." Even schoolchildren are getting active. In the small town of Hyde Park (New York) they obtained 5,000 signatures to a petition calling on the leaders of all nations to 'settle your differences with words, not bombs.'

"From national A.F.L.-C.I.O. leaders expressions of the peace wish have also come. Emil Mazey of the United Auto Workers said: "Total disarmament is the only way to peace." and called for a demilitarised Germany. The U.S. should fear a rearmed Germany, he said.

"National President Lloyd and secretary-treasurer Gorman of the Amalgamated Ditcher Workmen declared their opposition to the bomb-shelter campaign and said that "work for peace....is our major problem today." Rabbi Hillel Silver has said that peaceful coexistence must be adopted "as an axiom for this generation"

"These actions are taking place in small towns and suburbs as well as large cities. The slogans tend to emphasise a positive peace policy and a rejection of the Administration's preparedness and 'negotiate from strength' policy.

" These developments are significant because of a new war-scare campaign is being promoted. The U.S. News and World Report had a headline "35 Billion Tons of TNT - The U.S Arsenal That Khrushchov Fears." while on the next page it shrieked , "The Ring Around Russia." Congressman J. Van Zandt, a rear-admiral in the navy reserve, echoed the same idea when he declared the U.S has the Soviet Union ringed with 176 "ready-to-go" nuclear missiles.

"The New York Times Washington political commentator Arthur Crock praises Dr. Edward Teller, Admiral Lewis Strauss and John McCone for having fought against a nuclear-test moratorium.

" He predicts that "this time few, if any protests will be heard from important Americans." However, the really important Americans - the people - are just beginning to make their voice heard."