

# International Bulletin

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## ITALY - DISCUSSION ON TROTSKY CONTINUES

Despite the fact that the Communist Party leadership has tried to stop the discussion on the 22nd Congress and its consequences, the objective situation in the Italian working class movement is still favourable for the spreading of the conceptions of our movement, and people continue to discuss Trotsky and the trotskyist movement.

On March 9th, a Communist Party controlled cultural organisation, organised a public debate on Trotsky in Milan. Lucio Magri, member of the regional Secretariat of the Communist Party debated with Livio Maitan, member of the International Secretariat and secretary of the Italian section of the Fourth International. The Socialist Youth was represented by comrade Migliardi of Turin.

The attendance was very large since the meeting had been announced by two communist daily papers, including the official organ of the Communist Party. The discussion developed at a very high level, and the conceptions of Trotsky and the Fourth International were discussed as such without any distortion. The communist speaker admitted that Trotskyism represented an important theoretical tendency in the working class movement, while claiming that it could not give any valid contribution to the struggle of the working class in the advanced capitalist countries.

A similar debate will take place in Rome at the end of March between Livio Maitan, a Communist Party intellectual and a leading member of the Left wing of the Socialist Party, The debate will be developed around a book by Trotsky which has just been published by a leading Italian publishing house (comrade Maitan translated it and wrote an introduction.)

In another instance, comrade Maitan was enabled to speak at the last meeting of the National Council of Italian Trade Unions as a representative of a small trade union.

The Rome group of the Italian section of the Fourth International organised a debate on workers' control on March 17th at its headquarters. The attendance was large and several members of the Communist Party and the Socialist Party spoke in the discussion. A translation of a document written by the Italian section on the question of workers' control will be published in the next issue of "Quatrieme Internationale."

## THE ECONOMIST ON THE NEW COST OF LIVING INDEX

In an article discussing the new cost of living index which is to be introduced at the end of the year, the Economist of 24/3/62 says:

"Will the new index "cheat" wage bargainers by showing prices rising more slowly in future, or "help" them by showing prices rising more quickly? The answer is that the new measure will show a smaller movement than the old one would have done in a period when the goods of which consumption is rising most are those of which prices are rising least but will show a larger movement if consumption and prices rise together. Generally speaking people buy more things in which prices rise least, so the most usual effect may be to make prices rise rather more slowly. But there is no hard and fast rule." (our emphasis)

Of course a full analysis needs to be made of this new index, and probably will be by the Labour Research Department, but in view of what the by no means workers journal Economist has to say, we would suggest that those whose wages and salaries are tied to the cost of living index would do well to look very hard at the new index.

## JAPAN - TROTSKYISTS SUPPORT R.C.L. IN ELECTION

The Internationalist Communist Party of Japan has declared its critical support for the candidate of the Revolutionary Communist League (Kuroda group) in an election for a seat in the Upper House. It has called upon the workers to vote for this candidate as an expression of will for revolutionary struggle and the fight for proletarian dictatorship. The R.C.L. has arisen from left splits from the Communist Party and has a decisive influence in the Japanese students' organisation, the Zengakuren, which has organised many big demonstrations.

Those comrades who have been following the discussion in the columns of Tribune arising out of Palme Dutt's reply to a review of Ten Days that Shook the World will be interested in the following contribution which has been sent in but not published so far:

"Jack Cohen is a difficult chap to argue with, since he reasons much in the manner of the Red Queen in "Alice Through the Looking Glass." One remembers, in particular, her retort to Alice's complaint that she has been talking nonsense:

"You may call it nonsense if you like, but I've seen nonsense compared with which that would be a sensible as a dictionary!"

"The trouble is that in Jack Cohen's case, one feels he isn't fibbing: perhaps he has access to a larger nonsense than that known to all the rest of us. But in some of the remarks he makes in his letter on the Dutt case he shows that he would half like the argument to proceed according to the rules prevailing on this side of the looking glass. Perhaps I could be allowed to discuss those bits of his argument, which do involve reference to the world outside his rather bizarre imagination.

".....'If the Moscow Trials had been frameups, this would have been established and announced long ago' he tells us. Well, now this has been pretty well established for many socialists for quite a long time. But leaving aside the report of the Dewey Commission of 1937, which analysed and refuted the grisly charges as and when they were made, there is quite a lot of recent evidence which ought to be drawn to Jack Cohen's attention. In 1956, for instance, the Polish newspaper, Trybuna Luda, reported on February 19th:

".. 'In 1938 the Executive Committee of the Communist International decided to dissolve the Communist Party of Poland, following an accusation that enemy agents had penetrated its leadership. It has now been found out that this accusation was based on evidence fabricated by provocateurs who have since been unmasked.'

"But reference to the Report of the Bukharin-Rykov Trial of 1938 will show that not the least of the treasonable acts of the Rightists was their conspiracy with the Polish General Staff to permeate the Polish Communist Party with spies and saboteurs. Either Trybuna Luda was mistaken, or the same people who fabricated this evidence about the Poles also put it into the mouths of Bukharin and Rykov during their trial. Yet this is only a beginning. If Jack Cohen will turn to Mr. Khrushchov's secret speech and compare it with his 'Reply to Discussion' in the 22nd C.P.S.U. Congress debate on the party programme, he will see that the scarcely veiled hint of 1956 becomes in 1961 an open allegation that:

".. 'Tukhachevsky, Yakir, Uberovitch, Kork, Yegorov, Eideman and others' were 'amongst the victims of reprisals.' These reprisals not only cost the Red Army its most gifted leaders before the invasion of Hitler's troops: they also cost Jack Cohen the last claim to the support of the evidence of the Trials. For it was precisely with these soldiers that Bukharin 'confessed' to having planned a 'palace coup.' Even this isn't all. On pages 111-112 of Khrushchov's 1961 Report and Reply, it is suggested that the murder of Kirov took place with the connivance of the security organs in the most fishy possible manner. Undoubtedly Khrushchov is preparing the ground for the announcement that Stalin had Kirov killed. But even if he never manages to come quite so clean as this, Khrushchov has already said enough to make it plain that not only the Bukharin-Rykov, but also the Zinoviev-Kamenev and Piatakov-Radek Trials were precisely the butcher's holidays that the Dewey Commission said they were all those years ago. If Jack Cohen (or Dutt) doubts this, then they can scarcely have any reason for not supporting the appeal of Trotsky's widow, Natalia Sedova, just before she died, that the Soviet Government initiate an enquiry into the whole matter. I will gladly forward their names to Mr. Khrushchov for this purpose if they feel that their cause might be advanced by it.

"Why, indeed, since the innocence of the accused is so clearly established, has it not been announced? Perhaps Jack Cohen can dig up the Red Queen's answer for us. Mine, more prosaically advanced on the basis of marxist sociology, would suggest that if the Central Committee of the C.P.S.U. is afraid of ghosts, there is likely in this case, as in all others, to be a materialist explanation for so strange an hallucination."

APRIL 15th REMINDER

Some comrades have not indicated definitely whether or not they can attend the April 15th Conference. We would urge them, firstly to make every effort to do so and, secondly, to let us know as early as possible, particularly if they need accomodation.

## MARKET WARD PROTEST OVER ERNIE ROBERTS

The following resolution was passed at the last meeting of Market Ward to be sent to Nottingham Central Constituency Labour Party:

"That this Party protests most strongly against the treatment meted out to Mr. E. Roberts, Assistant General Secretary of the A.E.U. and Mr. D. Hobden, Chairman of the Brighton Labour Party. The N.E.C. have refused to accept the nominations of these two proved socialists for Horsham and Brighton Divisions respectively and in so doing have taken from Constituencies the right to choose their own candidates. This dictatorial attitude can only have one result - that of turning true Socialists away from the Labour Party."

## NOTTINGHAM TRADE UNION RECRUITMENT CAMPAIGN

As previously announced in the Bulletin, the Nottingham Trades Council in collaboration with individual unions has a very comprehensive trade union recruitment week March 26th/31st.

20,000 copies of a special edition of the Nottingham Citizen have been distributed with articles on the Engineers' wage claim, Equal pay, press distortion of union struggles, etc. Factory gate meetings are to be held each day and there is a programme of evening activities including films shows, a women's rally, youth rally, play on the Todpuddle martyrs, and other social activities.

## YOUNG SOCIALIST RECRUITMENT CAMPAIGN

The South Notts. Federation of Young Socialists is also holding a recruitment campaign covering the same period. Young Socialists will be in attendance at the Youth Rally and Dance (and other activities) organised by the Trades Council with a stall. On Saturday afternoon March 31st there is a meeting in the Square and on the Sunday morning a special canvass with the Questionnaire.

## PLEKHANOV PAMPHLET, DOES WELL

Trotsky's essay on Plekhanov produced as a duplicated pamphlet has done well in arousing interest in marxist literature. So far, and the orders still come in each day, people from Sheffield, Enfield, Cardiff, Somerset, Ilford, Hounslow, Portsmouth, various parts of London, Monmouthshire, Shetland Isles, Ebbw Vale, Leeds and Leicester have written. Many of them on receipt of the pamphlet have ordered further literature. This is a very encouraging start to our publications programme.

## NEW MARXIST CLASSICS PAMPHLETS AND BOOKLETS LIST OUT

A new list has been compiled and duplicated covering titles by Marx, Engels, Lenin, Trotsky and a few other pamphlets. Lenin has most titles - 36, with Trotsky coming second with 18, there being 69 titles altogether. Please send S.A.E. if you want a copy.

## LITERATURE RECEIVED

### News of N.A.L.S.O.

We have received a bulk supply of the second issue of this journal. It contains articles on Defence, N.A.L.S.O. and the Young Socialists, a review of left wing student journals, the American student peace movement and the New Left in Holland. It contains a lot of information about the activities of N.A.L.S.O. including the preliminary agenda of the 15th Annual Conference. It costs 3d.

### Young Socialist No.4

The fourth issue of this, in our humble opinion, misnamed journal - its really a theoretical journal, has a range of articles essential for understanding the situation in Ceylon and on Natalia Trotsky, India, Accumulation in Backward Countries and on the 22nd Congress. It costs 1/-

### La Verite des Travailleurs March 1962

For French reading comrades there is again a wide range of interesting articles on After the Cease Fire (Algeria), Soviet Society after the 22nd Congress, Reform of Revultion in Latin America, etc. N.B. all the above require 2½d stamp.

## N.A.L.S.O. CONTINUES LEFT TRADITION

The preliminary agenda of the 15th Annual General Conference of the National Association of Labour Student Organisations shows that the Labour students are retaining their left tradition.

On defence, Keele and Hull condemn the resumption of tests by the West. Keele furthermore deplores the attitude of the Parliamentary Labour Party on this question. Hull calls for the Labour Party to implement conference decision on the removal of Polaris bases from Britain. Nottingham calls for support for the Committee of 100 and Keele condemns the moves to put up separate C.N.D. candidates in elections.

Three resolutions condemn the Government's colour bar Bill from Aberystwyth, Leicester and Nottingham. Both Leicester and Nottingham support the stand that the Parliamentary Labour Party have taken on the Bill and call for the extension of the campaign. Leicester also calls for support for Fenner Brockway's Private Member's Bill which would outlaw racialist propaganda. Three resolutions on Algeria all call for support for the struggle of the Algerian people. Swansea deplores the vacillation of the Labour Party on the question, while Manchester urges a campaign on the question and calls for the Labour Party to ensure that N.A.T.O. facilities are refused to the French for their military operations in Algeria, and Nottingham calls for full support for the F.L.N. and the Algerian Provisional Government by supplying money and materials. In a further resolution, Nottingham also calls for the expulsion of the Mollet party from the Second International and in particular the Mollet Youth Organisation from I.U.Y.S. and instead the recognition of representatives of the United Socialist Party. Hull condemns the colonial wars being waged by Portugal and calls for the British Government to stop supplying arms to Portugal and expresses disgust at the support given by N.A.T.O. to Portugal. On the Common Market, Nottingham says it would like to see a referendum on the question, whilst Hull deplores the Government's deliberate failure to make known the political implications of joining. Nottingham calls for the readmission S.D.S. (German Socialist Students) to the I.U.Y.S as a full member.

On industrial affairs, Nottingham has two resolutions one demanding the withdrawal of the T.U.C. from the Government's planning board (N.E.D.C.) and the other condemns Frank Cousins for congratulating Lord Rootes on the so-called successful conclusion of the Actin strike. Manchester has a resolution calling industry democracy and Keele deplores the Government's wages pause and affirms support for industrial action to oppose this policy. Swansea calls for a biennial (instead of quinquennial) review of students grants and a sliding scale based on the cost of living index.

Two resolutions oppose anti democratic practices in the Labour Party, Aberystwyth opposing the expulsion of Jack Sheppard from the Pembrokeshire Labour Party for his C.N.D. activities, and Nottingham condemns the rejection by the N.E.C. of the Labour Party of Ernie Roberts candidature for Horsham. Two resolutions reject Woodrow Wyatt's proposal for the Lib/Lab. alliance, from Liverpool and Hull.

An interesting resolution from Hull calls for a policy aimed at merging the Young Socialists and N.A.L.S.O. into one "Independent Socialist Youth Movement". It suggests working for the rapid movement of the Young Socialists towards independence, significantly calling for the working with Young Guard on all this. Leicester calls for the Executive to work out plans for increasing links with the Young Socialists.

N.B. We will be publishing a report of the Conference from one of the delegates.

## TRADE UNION AFFAIRS NUMBER FOUR IS OUT

It is surprising how little known this journal is in view of the good material which appears in it. Edited by Clive Jenkins, General Secretary of A.S.S.E.T. and having on its editorial board such people as Ernie Roberts, Hugh Jenkins and Jim Mortimer it is always intelligently written, even if one can find much to disagree with. Among the articles in the current issue are ones on the problems of cooperation between non-manual unions, an article analysing the present apprenticeship system, another examining the probable effects of the imposition of the Pay Roll Tax, a report of the new Canadian socialist party, two articles on the Common Market and articles about particular trade union problems and affairs. The journal is expensive (3/6) but a very worthwhile method of getting it around would be to get trade union branches, trades councils, etc. to subscribe.

The results of the elections in the Argentine are a serious blow for the bourgeoisie in that country represented by Frondizi. The Peronista candidates who won 45 seats in the Chamber and 35% of the votes are no friends of the social revolution but in a confused way reflect the profound popular resentment against Frondizi's policies.

To reduce the cost of Argentine's imports, particularly in fuels, Frondizi has relied upon American loans to develop Argentine's oil industry (the "servicing" of foreign loans further burdens the Argentine economy). Foreign money is also behind the new steel and car industries.

Steadily Frondizi has followed the straight path of a class offensive against the Argentine working class but it is certainly not their role to be sacrificed in the interests of "balanced" trade and inflation. By 1959 Frondizi had removed all price controls and has turned to such devices as the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank for loans. The latter stipulated a rationalisation of the railways (involving the dismissal of 70,000 railway workers) which last April led to a six weeks strike ending in a partial defeat for the workers.

Argentine capitalism is in a difficult position, economic growth involves heavy imports at high world prices and exports have not been able to keep pace. It is not as though the terms of trade are as favourable as in the immediate post war period. Thus it has been stated that the cost of living has already risen by 600% since 1955.

Frondizi has been increasingly tied to American imperialism - despite prevarications over Cuba at the recent meeting of American states. The conservatism of the regime can be seen particularly in the agricultural sector where no real agrarian reform has been undertaken involving the breaking up of the large estates.

It is unlikely that there will be any halt to this political and economic crisis which is rooted in the weakness of the Argentine bourgeoisie. The Peronista fog is still influential with large masses of the workers and will not be dispersed immediately, but Frondizi's "respectable" front develops its own Bonapartism, with the army hovering not only in the background but in the foreground also. Perpetual crisis whether under the Perons or the Frondizis is an excellent demystifier of the workers.

Only a programme based upon a nationalised economy, monopoly of foreign trade, diversification of the economy and expropriation of the large estates will help to solve Argentina's pressing economic problems, starkly reflected in every regime since the end of the second world war.

#### ECONOMY STILL LAGS

The latest Government figures on the economy paint a very gloomy picture indeed. The drop of another point in the index of industrial production between December, 1961 and January, 1962 gives the lowest level for nearly two years. The decline seems to be a general one, in manufacturing industries the decline was two points, whilst certain basic industries: engineering, Vehicles and steel were static.

The March unemployment figures reversed the very slight improvement registered in the previous month. Usually the number of people wholly unemployed may be expected to fall by some 18, from February; this year, instead, it rose by a few hundred. The figures being, seasonally adjusted in brackets; February 407.9 thousand (353.9) and March 408.1 thousand (371.7) this compares with the average of 304.8 thousand for 1961. The percentage unemployed for March 12th was 2.0 per cent as compared with 1.6 per cent of one year ago. Perhaps more significantly, there has been another relative decline in the number of notified vacancies. For February there were, seasonally adjusted in brackets again, 213 thousand (253) and March 218 thousand (239).

## THE BATTLE OF RADCLIFFE

The discontent amongst Hospital workers with the treatment of their recent wage claim has led to discussion about strike action. Of course it is a fact that most people think that the idea <sup>of</sup> nurses and other hospital workers going on strike is unthinkable. It is to counter this widely held view that we produce this extract from "A History of the Mental hospital and Institutional Workers Union. 1910 to 1931." This shows that not <sup>only</sup> do hospital workers strike but also that they can be just as militant as any other section of the working class. The extract begins:

One of the worse cases of official tyranny in the history of the union led to a strike at Notts. county mental hospital, Radcliffe on Trent, in April, 1922. The visiting committee of this institution were affiliated to the Mental Hospitals Association and had in general applied the recommendations of the Joint Conciliation Committee for the mental hospital service. In particular they had applied the sixty hours per week (inclusive of mealtimes) to the members of the indoor <sup>staffs</sup>. But in February the visiting committee of the hospital intimated that, commencing from March 5th, the rate of leave would in future be three days a fortnight instead of two days a week (thus increasing the hours to 66 per week) and that the war bonuses of male employees would be reduced by four shillings per week and female employees by 3/4d per week. The union branch at a meeting accepted the reduction of wages but rejected the proposed increase in hours, insisting that the hours recommended by the joint conciliation committee be strictly adhered to. The members resolved not to work the new duty hours, and on March 5th, the night staff, male and female, refused to go on duty until a non-union nurse, who had been placed on duty contrary to the arrangements of the staff, was withdrawn. The day staff therefore remained on duty all through the night. A temporary truce was arranged following the visit of Mr. Gibson and Mr. Shaw, the general and assistant secretaries of the union, who after interviewing the visiting committee, agreed that the new scheme of hours should be worked by the staff until the next meeting of the visiting committee, which was to be specially convened within 14 days.

This body met on March 24th and granted an interview to Mr. Gibson, Mr. Shaw, Mr. Booth (union solicitor) and a deputation of six members of the staff, but again a decision was deferred. Three days later every member of the male and female staffs was given a months notice terminating his or her employment at the hospital and intimating that if it was desired to become members of the new staff a special form of application must be signed and handed in to the Matron or Head Male nurse by 4 p.m. on April 5th. At the same time all the married men residing in cottages on the asylum estate were served with a months notice to terminate their tenancy, and those who had been promised the tenancy of cottages being built on the estate were given notice cancelling a letter dated February 2nd with respect to the tenancy of the new cottages. Both notices were signed by Mr. J. Gell clerk to committee of visitors.

## FEMALE LOYALISTS

At a union branch meeting the members were instructed not to fill up the new form, and this instruction was loyally obeyed by the whole of the female staff and by the majority of the male staff. On April 4th the union solicitor, Mr. Booth, had an interview with Mr. Gell, but no compromise was affected. Even arbitration would not be accepted. In view of the "die hard" attitude of the visiting committee, the union officials and members of the strike committee decided that they had no option but to accept the challenge and a "stay in" strike of the female staff was ordered from 7 a.m. on April 11th. In view of the defection of many of the male staff, who had succumbed to official intimidation, it was decided that no action be taken on the male side of the institution in the mean time.

The instructions issued by the union to the nurses included the following points:-

- (1) The patients welfare and safety must always be the first consideration.
- (2) All orders received (other than medical orders) from the mental hospital officials must be disregarded. Purely medical orders must be obeyed. In other cases the instructions of the union officials are paramount.
- (3) Patients will be dressed, washed, fed and safeguarded as usual.
- (4) There must be no personal violence offered to nor any interference with officials of the hospital or non-unionists: nor must the patients be incited to commit acts of violence.

to be concluded in the next issue/