

THE

WEEK

A NEWS ANALYSIS FOR SOCIALISTS

**VOL. 2, No. 14
22 OCT. 1964**

9d.

VOLUME TWO NUMBER FOURTEEN

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Letter to readers

"Thank Christ it's over!" seems to be a very prevalent expression. But unfortunately it seems that far from political activity slowing down, life is going to be even more hectic. More to the point, the function of our journal as an organiser, coordinator and inspirer of left wing, non-sectarian activity will be all the more important. A reader from West London is to send us a post card just prior to his ward and T.U. branch meetings so we can send him a dozen copies S.O.R. Sounds like a good idea any more takers?

Published by The Week, 54, Park Rd., Lenton, Nottingham.

LABOUR MUST STICK TO ITS PROGRAMME

It was not 1945 all over again. The landslide became a trickle of sand the five years that Labour expected to implement its programme have telescoped down so that two years is the very most we can give ourselves. The problem posed to the left is how to win victory at the next election; a victory so conclusive that our mandate to start on the road to socialism cannot be in doubt.

One answer to the problem can be rejected out of hand. Voices will be raised within the party calling for a dilution of the programme. They will argue that Labour can use this period only to show the electorate that it is 'responsible' and that to go further will cause such antagonism that at the next General Election Labour will be swept from power. The left must fight these ideas. Unless we consciously campaign to awaken those who cannot see the difference between the parties, and to unleash a tide of radicalism, then these next months will merely serve as a brief interregnum before a refreshed and Sir Alec-less Conservative Party comes back from its holiday.

The first task of the left is to ensure that the party sticks to its programme. Any tendency for Labour to fall into nerveless paralysis must be vigorously fought. We must press for the speedy nationalisation of steel and urban land, and for an offensive against public schools and other relics of privilege in education. Failure to advance will mean suicide.

In some ways the position of the left is a good deal better than at any time since Scarborough. The demands we will be making are in fact party policy. It will be the extreme right who are "rocking the boat" when they oppose this. Further, those demands we will be making are precisely those which could be used to generate a flood of enthusiasm for the Labour Party. By the nationalisation of land we can appeal to every young couple who are struggling to find accommodation at a price they can afford. A vigorous approach to education with an explosion of comprehensive schools and a whittling away of streaming can get us the vote of every parent in Britain who sees their child at present struggling in an unjust and inadequate educational set-up.

The voices of revisionism, and their friends in the Tory press, will be particularly shrill when they warn us that renationalisation of steel will lose Labour votes. The left must not allow this opportunity to waste itself. With infinite patience we have to agree that Morrisonian nationalisation has proved itself to be both a failure and unpopular, and that we have to get rid of this bureaucratised image. Instead we must pose nationalisation under workers' control. The initiative of the Voice of the Unions in this context is particularly timely.

These next few months can be used by the Labour Party to break through to those voters who were not won even after this last term of Conservative rule that must surely be termed the most inept we have seen of late. Radical measures can win them and assure a great Labour victory at the next election. It is the job of the left to see that these measures are taken.

N.B. The above was written before Woodrow Wyatt made his Lib/Lab proposals - in some ways Wyatt's initiative must be welcomed; it makes possible a proper discussion and gives the extreme right a focal point.

LET KHRUSHCHOV SPEAK!: The most disturbing thing about the recent changes in the Soviet Union is that the workers' movement is not permitted to know what the political issues are. Anyone who has any illusions that after the 20th Congress workers' democracy was re-established will surely now think again. The only way the new rulers of Russia could go along this path^{is} by permitting open debate as was the practice in the time of Lenin.

"WEEK" SPONSORS DID WELL

If we examine the election results of the five Labour candidates who are associated with The Week we find that they did extremely well. We have four MPs on our sponsor list: Frank Allaun (Salford East), Neil Carmichael (Glasgow Woodside), Stephen Swingler (Newcastle-under-Lyme), and Konni Zilliacus (Manchester Gorton). With the exception of Neil Carmichael they defended seats which they won in the 1959 election. The three in this category nearly doubled their aggregate majority - from 10,327 to 19,960; the individual figures being: Frank Allaun, up from 3,468 to 7,143; Stephen Swingler, up from 6,002 to 8,397; and Konni Zilliacus, up from 857 to 4,430. Stephen Swingler and Konni Zilliacus increased their vote on a lower poll. Frank Allaun's vote was a little down in an area with a declining electorate, but his share of the vote rose from 54½% in 1959 to 61% this year.

Neil Carmichael defended a seat he won in a 1962 by-election. He increased his majority from 1,368 to 1,567. This compares with a majority for the Tories in the 1959 election of 2,084.

One of our sponsors was an unsuccessful candidate: Henry Collins. However he managed to slash the Tory majority in North Lewisham from 4,613 in 1959 to a mere 343 this time.

Yes, readers of The Week can be proud of the performance of these five - had all Labour candidates done as well we would have a large Labour majority in Parliament.

NEW LEFT WINGERS IN THE HOUSE OF COMMONS

The ranks of the left wing of the Parliamentary Labour Party have been swelled by a number of seats won by left wingers. Among these are: Norman Atkinson (Tottenham), Eric Heffer (Walton, Liverpool), Dennis Hobden (Brighton, Kempton), Lena Jeger (St. Pancras and Holborn), Hugh Jenkins (Putney), Anne Kerr (Rochester and Chatham), Stan Newens (Epping), Maurice Orbach (Stockport South), Paul Rose (Manchester, Blackley), Trevor Park (Derbyshire South East), Harold Walker (Doncaster), Eric Varley (Chesterfield), Norman Buchan (Renfrewshire West) and Stan Orme (Salford West).

In addition there will be reinforcement arising from left wingers who have been returned in seats previously held by Labour. These include: John Horner (Oldbury and Halesowen), Ian Mikardo (Poplar) and Renee Short (Wolverhampton, North East).

SOME NOTABLE ELECTION RESULTS

It is good to ^{see} how well several left wingers did in the election. Among the most satisfying results is that in Brighton, Kempton. Dennis Hobden is the first Labour man ever elected in Sussex, he is a man, too, who had to wage a considerable struggle to get on the 'B' list. Judith Hart's majority in Lanark rocketted to 5,320 from 540 in 1959, previously the seat was held by the Tories. Mrs. Butler (Wood Green) is another left winger who has ^{vastly} increased her majority - from 1,134 to 5,192. But perhaps the most notable achievement of all was that of Michael Foot: he actually pushed up his share of the poll compared with that of Bevan - from over 81% to over 83%.

BIG BUSINESS PRESS COMMENT ON THE ELECTIONLeft wing must be sat on says "Economist"

A good part of the Economist's main editorial of October 17th was taken up with explaining and elaborating its previous support of Labour - it published several critical letters from readers. (G. Uloth of Woodbridge said he had cancelled his order; and D. Davis of Leamington Spa announced his intention of making an 'enormous bonfire' of his back numbers). But it had this to say about Labour's left:

"..The last Labour government had a better record in foreign policy than in domestic policy, but that was largely because Ernest Bevin bravely outfaced the noisy minority of extreme leftwingers...Today Labour has no obvious foreign secretary of Mr. Bevin's stature, and there is a danger that the party's rump of sentimental pacifists may have been made rather fatter by some of its victories in marginal seats...That rump will have to be sat upon..."

"The Times" doubts Wilson's ability to disappoint the left

The Times of October 17th, which more or less argued for Labour to be given a chance providing it detached "itself...from controversial irrelevancies such as the nationalisation of steel and the proposed land commission...and from long-term commitments such as 'renegotiation' of the Nassau agreement " further went on: "...Labour's left wing went to ground for the election, but out of sight is neither out of mind nor out of business. Left Wingers, whether of the socialist or unilateralist variety or both, formed the core of Mr. Wilson's support when he challenged Gaitskell for the leadership of the party in 1960 and when he triumphed over Mr. Brown three years later. There must be doubt whether Mr. Wilson has both the will and the power to disappoint these people in their expectations.."

The "Financial Times" would have preferred 'Lord Cousins!'

The Financial Times of October 19th considered the first of Wilson's appointments: "...the appointment of Mr. Cousins...will surprise many people, some of them unpleasantly. Mr. Cousins has been a militant trade union leaderbut the leader of a general union is not an obvious choice to spearhead a drive for modern industrialisation. He is generally regarded as a left-winger on economic and social questions and is an advocate of unilateral nuclear disarmament...His appointment may help to smooth the way towards a bargain on incomes policy but it may also arouse fears that Mr. Wilson..intends to push on towards full-blooded socialism. There is, however, a more encouraging explanation. If Labour is to get any large part of its programme through, it must maintain party unity...To win the confidence of its left wing, it must give it some representation in the Cabinet....But every gamble carries risks. Mr. Cousins and his two colleagues can be outvoted in Cabinet..but they will not be out-voted quietly. Moreover...there is little doubt that Mr. Cousins ...will be one of the chief targets for Conservative attacks. His very presence in the House...may make it more difficult for Labour to concentrate on things which need doing immediately...It might have been better, if the idea of Lord Cousins had been conceivable.." (!!!)

"Sunday Times" fears Labour's educational "egalitarian doctrines"

Speaking of the action of the Labour Council in Bristol in pushing through comprehensive education, the Sunday Times said: "...the Labour Party's egalitarian doctrines could lead to serious damage to our schools..Mr. Wilson does not repudiate the Bristol council which is acting in precisely the way that critics of the Labour Party educational policy have always feared..."

NO PROGRESS ON PARLIAMENTARY ROAD FOR KING STREET by Pat Jordan

Despite an impressive and expensive campaign, and despite the enthusiasm and hard work of hundreds of C.P. members, the 1964 general election took King Street no further along the parliamentary road to socialism. The Communist Party put up 36 candidates who obtained 46,532 votes - an average of about 1,300 a piece. To see how they fared one has to compare the votes obtained this year with those obtained in 1959 in the 17 constituencies which the C.P. contested both years. The results read:

Constituency	'59 vote	'64 vote	change	Constituency	'59 vote	'64 vote	change
Dunbarton E.	2,200	1,171	-1,029	Dundee W.	1,086	1,228	+ 142
Fife W.	3,826	3,273	- 553	Gorbals	1,932	1,339	- 593
Govan	1,869	1,378	- 491	Hayes...	527	873	+ 346
Hornsey	1,107	1,258	+ 151	Neath	1,962	2,432	+ 470
Nottingham N.	1,337	1,579	+ 242	Rhonnda E.	4,580	3,385	-1,195
St. Pancras N.	1,230	1,140	- 90	Sheffield			
Southwark	1,395	1,599	+ 204	Brightside	1,373	1,356	- 17
Springburn	1,235	950	- 285	Stepney	2,548	2,454	- 94
Wigan	945	988	+ 43	Willesden W.	1,324	1,130	- 194
Total	30,470	27,533	-2,937	or a loss of nearly 10%			

The loss has been most marked in Scotland: the vote in the 6 constituencies contested dropping from 12,148 in 1959 to 9,339 in 1964 - a loss of about 23%. Another feature has been the decline in those constituencies where there was a relatively high vote - of around 5% or more and where, therefore, there was an outside chance of saving the £150 deposit. - In Rhonnda the loss was 26%; in West Fife, 14½%; in Gorbals, 30%; and in Govan, 26%. The position in West Fife is actually worse than the figures suggest; in 1959 an ex-C.P. member stood as a candidate of the Fife Socialist League and got 4,886 votes. Clearly, a good proportion of these votes should have gone to the C.P. this year. The C.P. did better in the greater London area. For instance, the figures for Stepney is better than it appears: the area is being depopulated and the C.P. increased its share of the vote.

These figures must be worrying for the King Street leaders. All the more when they know what the ordinary readers of the Daily Worker don't know, that a candidate of the Committee to Defeat Revisionism and for Communist Unity (yes, he actually stood with that label! - the Daily Worker described him as an independent) got nearly 900 votes in Hayton. Ordinary members of the C.P. must take a hard look at these figures. Their party is committed to parliamentary road to socialism and yet has no parliamentary prospects whatsoever. The fact that the C.P. vote has gone down so spectacularly in those areas where it has done well before indicates that the workers will just not take the risk of splitting the anti-Tory vote. This means that there is a point beyond which the C.P. vote is very unlikely to go. It should also be noted that these results were obtained in a period of a swing to the left and the C.P. did worst in precisely those areas where the swing to the left was greatest, e.g., Glasgow.

Five years is a long time, and the complete lack of progress in this period cannot be explained in terms of capitalist propaganda. The workers of West Fife and Rhonnda who voted Communist in the past and now vote Labour are advanced workers. Perhaps their suspicion of the C.P. is reinforced by the fact that it put up candidates against such well-known left wingers as Leo Abse of Pontypool, John Rankin of Govan, and Laurie Pavitt of Willesden West. The fact that the C.P. could have split the vote in Dundee West and Luton, and let in Tories, will not have escaped the attention of big sections of the left. In the discussions which are now taking place, it is too much to expect or hope that many C.P.ers will conclude that their real place is in the left wing of the Labour Party?

NORTHERN IRELAND - THE PLAIN TRUTH

Northern Ireland now assumes some considerable importance in British politics. We have had much talk about the slim majority Labour has but hardly anyone has drawn attention to the fact that in Great Britain Labour has a working majority of 16 over all other parties. It is when we add Northern Ireland to make up the United Kingdom Parliament that Labour's lead slumps to 4. This is because the 12 Ulster seats are solidly and, apparently, irremovably Tory. Why should this be? According to a pamphlet we have just received:

"The position in Northern Ireland is that less than two thirds of the population is Conservative and Unionist and the other third Nationalist... The Conservatives and Unionists, by manipulation of the electoral boundaries in a very undemocratic way..... have for years returned all twelve members to Westminster. Obviously something is very wrong here. 'Gerrymandering' is also done at a local level when one Conservative and Unionist vote is often equivalent to two opposition votes....This is achieved in 3 ways: (1) by housing all the Nationalists in one large ward and keeping the other wards small and predominantly Conservative and Unionist; (2) by means of the 'Company vote.' For every £10 Poor Law Valuation of premises tenanted by a Limited Company, the Company is entitled to one extra vote up to a limit of six votes, e.g., a firm with 100 branches can control 600 extra votes at local elections....(3) in order to squeeze out the Nationalists and force them to emigrate the Unionist controlled councils build very few houses for Nationalists. The latter are kept on waiting lists for up to twelve years, whilst safe Conservative and Unionist voters receive houses in the same town even before they are married..."

These are very serious allegations - but they are very adequately substantiated by a mass of facts and figures. Space doesn't permit us to quote in great length but to give just one example:

The pamphlet gives a break down of the voting position in the three wards which make up Londonderry. These are South Ward - 13,718 Nationalists, 1,569 Conservatives and Unionists. North Ward - 4,564 Unionists, 2989 Nationalists. Waterside Ward - 4,405 Unionists, 2,713 Nationalists. Which leads to a position where out of total electorate of 30,000, 10,500 Unionists secure 12 seats, but 19,500 Nationalists only secure 8 seats.

Having got control of the municipalities, as well as the Northern Ireland Parliament, the Unionists pursue a policy to maintain their political domination. This includes bribes to the Protestant people, and a policy of keeping down the Catholic population. That these policies are quite conscious is shown by numerous quotations from Unionist leaders.

But this question is not one of moral indignation - the question of the Government in Britain itself could quite easily be determined by this situation. The Campaign for Social Justice in Northern Ireland* points out that legally the U.K. Parliament has ultimate responsibility for the set up in Northern Ireland. The matter must surely receive some attention from the new Labour Government - its future may depend upon sorting it out!

* The Campaign for Social Justice in Northern Ireland, Castlefields, Dungannon, Northern Ireland. This committee has produced several pamphlets on the question and is anxious to achieve their maximum distribution in Great Britain. The committee will welcome enquiries.

PRINT EMPLOYERS' HUMBUG OVER THIRD WEEK'S HOLIDAY CLAIM by Andrew Rigby

Writing in this month's Graphical Journal, organ of the National Graphical Association, J.M. Bonfield refers to the present attitude of the employers over the negotiations for a third week's holiday as "deception" and "humbug". He writes "...the employers' representatives had one object and one object only - to delay and obstruct the introduction of the third week by a calculated policy of deception and humbug." He continues, "... They have cynically defaulted on their obligation under the 1962 settlement to make an objective assessment of the third week's holiday claim - with the result that another dispute in the industry is now a distinct possibility and, perhaps of even greater long-term consequence, it will by many a long day before anyone on the union side will be ready to accept their word alone."

He says further, that there has never been so much double talk and gives an example of this by stating one of the employers' claims that "...whether an employer should or should not be allowed to do productive work without a union card is relevant to containing any increase in cost or dislocation of production as a result of the introduction of a third week's holiday, then you are surely entitled to want to spit." He goes on "...the 34 conditions the employers have sought to impose as the price of a third week's holiday - all of which, they were insisting as late as our last meeting with them, were the price of the whole additional week - and, above all, in the almost complete irrelevance of the conditions to the subject as issue."

These are totally unacceptable and as has been pointed out by the Printing and Kindred Trades Federation (PKTF) the employers' claims if acceptable would be worth three months let alone three weeks. A number of obstacles were further placed in front of the unions by the employers as the negotiations went on. These tended to increase the already difficult situation and therefore to slow down negotiation, and subsequently led to a breakdown.

J.M. Bonfield draws to a close by stating that "The Executive Council have considered the position and have recommended to the PKTF that one further meeting with the employers' organisation be sought to press the claim for the third week's holiday again without conditions and, failing rapid progress towards a settlement, members be balloted on the question of industrial action." It is clear that the employers are being as difficult as possible by putting every obstacle in front of the unions with the hope of forestalling the third week's holiday, and will go to any length, even that of risking industrial action, to this end.

CO-OP INSURANCE STAFF BAN OVERTIME based on Co-op News report

A ban on overtime and a work to rule was begun on Tuesday, October 13th, by 3,500 C.I.S. employees in protest against what they claim has been a delay by the management in dealing with a pay claim submitted on May 26. The ban affects all the clerical staffs of the C.I.S. head office and its 13 branches, said a spokesman of the Guild of Insurance Officials which has 100% membership in these offices. The ban on overtime will prevent the society's computer working at nights. During the past few months the head office and branches had lost 625 employees, claimed the Guild spokesman.

NIGERIAN EDITOR GETS SIX MONTHS FOR CRITICISING GOVERNMENT

Router, October 16th, reported: Ayo Ojewunmi, acting editor of the Nigerian Tribune, the Action Group opposition party newspaper, was sentenced on October 16 to six months' hard labour by the High Court, Ibadan, for seditious publication. The African Press, publishers of the newspaper, were fined £500. The article complained of, headed "Where do we go from here?" was published early this year during political realignment in the region. Judge Fatayi Williams said the publication was irresponsible and calculated to bring the Western Nigerian Government into ridicule, contempt and hatred.

AMALGAMATED TIN DOES WELL OUT OF NIGERIAN MINES from a special correspondent

Amalgamated Tin Mines of Nigeria Limited almost doubled its profits during the year ended March 31st, 1964. Giving this information, the Chairman of the company, Sir Douglas Waring, said: "There was a marked increase in total production..during the year..which was partly due to an adjustment of our mining policy to meet rising costs. The average price of tin covering sales of concentrate was £966 per ton which represents an increase of £100 per ton compared with 1962-3. Our gross revenue for the year was up by approximately £525,000 but Government Royalty paid was higher by £120,000. In the event, after providing for taxation our net profit was £438,715 as against £247,333. It is intended to allocate £50,000 to General Reserve and to declare a final dividend of 20%, making 30% for the year, leaving £30,403 to add to our carry forward."

Referring to the general strike and the wage increases arising from it, Sir Douglas continued: "Our management found itself virtually committed to the result of the consequent negotiations between Government and the Unions, and in the event, a general increase of wages was implemented with effect from March 1st..." After complaining of the cost of this and other measures, he went on "...if for any reason there should be a setback, Nigeria, already a high cost producer, will be unable to compete with some of its fellow producers in South-East Asia..." - a clear threat to pull out if costs get any higher. If there was a non-stooge government in Nigeria, Amalgamated Tin might very well be taken at its word. In country which has such poverty as Nigeria £438,715 could be better used to develop capital resources. But a country which frames Vic Allen in an attempt to divert attention away from the real reasons for labour unrest can hardly be expected to put the interests of its people above those of foreign monopolies.

PROTEST AGAINST REPRESSION OF TRADE UNIONS IN SOUTHERN RHODESIA

The ICFTU Bulletin of 15 October reported: "On behalf of 3 million civil servants and public service employees grouped in the Public Services International, P. Tofahrn, the PSI General Secretary, has protested against the present oppression in Southern Rhodesia, notably the imprisonment of a number of the country's trade union leaders. In a letter to Mr. Ian Smith, Prime Minister of Southern Rhodesia, Tofahrn declared that the misuse of legislative, judicial and police powers was part of the master race ideology which permeated and inflamed politics in Southern Rhodesia. Perseverance in this erroneous course of action could lead to disasters, Tofahrn added, one of which would be that the Southern Rhodesian Government would disqualify itself for the exercise of power in the eyes of civilised man..."

THE BLOODY CANAL

by a Colombian correspondent

Using bacteriological warfare and mass attacks without warning, President Valencia's Government of Columbia, backed by the Pentagon, aims to "clear out" the country so that a new water-way through the Cholo region can be built. And the inhuman methods used to maintain the country in its backward state have been advised by imported South Vietnam "counsellors".

Columbia, with an area of almost half a million square miles and a population of 14 million, is a classical under-developed country having great extremes of wealth and poverty. 3% of the population owns 55% of agricultural land. One can imagine the rate of unemployment in a country in which 60% are peasants. At the same time, the narrowly based internal market is dominated by monopolies.

The situation has hardly changed since 1946. At that time, the emergence of a popular liberal leader, (Jorge Gaitan) induced both the local landlord/monopoly-oligarchy and Yankee imperialism, to think seriously how to "correct" affairs. They succeeded in so dividing the Liberal Party that Mariano Perez was elected president, and shortly afterwards, (in 1948), Gaitan was assassinated. This crime generated a desperate explosion of anarchic violence, which was precisely the pretext which the Government had hoped to provoke. The ensuing period (known in Colombian history as "The Violence") saw a state of siege which continued until 1960, during which armed bands of outlaws, financed and conducted by the conservative and Liberals' leading committees, terrorised the whole countryside, burning, raping, and in fact killing the incredible number of half a million Colombians. The landlords benefited directly through buying up, at low prices, land abandoned by fleeing peasants, whilst the army and imperialism gained control through the tragic internal divisions of the country.

Nevertheless, peasant resistance continued, whilst a general strike, (10th May, 1957), overthrew the existing dictatorship of Rojas Pimilla. The succeeding government failed to unseat the previous occupiers of power positions either in the parties or the army, but had to concede legal status to the Communist and other left-wing movements. Even prior to this however, the Communist Party from 1948-57, had been in the forefront of the organisation of the persecuted peasants in the areas liberated from the Government and army. These areas came to be known as "independent republics" or "the red zones". We should point out that two separate peasant movements exist: One uses the services of the outlawed murderers bred in the painful process of "The Violence". Bands of such people operate in coalition with politicians of reactionary parties, helping also the army to argue the continued need for inflated military budgets to "fight" the violence. The other movement is leftist and communist, and aims to defend, (in the red zones), the peasants from army and bandit brutality, and to guarantee them the means for peaceful and productive work. The fact that these peasants, as well as the bandits, use the same guerilla tactics often leads to misunderstandings, which are fully exploited by the reactionary press both in and out of the country.

continued over/

Colombia article continued/

Now, new factors have appeared on the Colombian scene: the United States is interested in building a new canal to replace the obsolete Panama Canal - which becomes both economically and politically more difficult to operate. But the imperialists have sworn (and these are their very words) "that we will not commit the same errors as in Canal number 1 (Panama). Canal number 2 (Colombia) will not be in the hands of the communists"*, Thus they have imposed a treaty on the Colombian oligarchy by means of which the United States will have the right to invade Colombia if the private investments of the USA are in danger. As a second step, they ordered the Colombian Minister of War, (Ruiz Novoa), to attack the free zones of the country. It must be emphasised that these zones have never been and are not a menace to the country, but at the same time, their population is determined to defend them, even at the cost of their lives.

In the last few months, American military missions have been very active: new "advisors" come from South Vietnam and a large sum (30 million dollars, as a first instalment) has been granted to the armed forces of Colombia. New anti-guerilla techniques are being developed, and new types of weapon are in use. Marquetala, a 2,000 square mile region, located in the Tolima department was chosen as the first target. Later they will attack the other zones, such as Sumapaz, Pato, Riochiquito, and others. But Marquetala has already been attacked four times and remains unconquered: new armed groups spring up every day, and in a recent engagement, 75 soldiers were killed, and 150 injured. American "counsellors" have used in Marquetala even bacteriological war, (reported in Vistazo, a Chilean weekly magazine, September, 1964).

In the face of the developing situation, the guerilla commando of Marquetala has published a strong appeal to the democratic and revolutionary forces of Colombia:

"We have fought in the past to get changes in the structures, using less painful ways for our people: the peaceful way, the democratic mass struggle, the legal way that the Colombian Constitution foresees. But this way has been closed to us by violence, and because we are revolutionaries, conscious of our historical role, we have been forced to choose another way, the revolutionary and armed fight to arrive in power. **

* Reported in the New York Times.

** Report in Al Nasr (Algeria) 13 September, 1964.

NICARAGUA REPUDIATES CANAL TREATY WITH U.S.

The United States is having trouble with another country over the question of building an alternative to the Panama Canal. On October 6th the Nicaraguan Congress voted to repudiate the 1916 Bryan-Chamorro treaty. This treaty, which was passed whilst U.S. Marines were occupying the country, gives the U.S. perpetual rights to build a canal through Nicaraguan territory. This step cannot be considered a 'Communist' or 'Castroite' plot because the Congress is controlled by the U.S.-backed dictatorship of Somoza. The step is probably an episode in Somoza's attempt to get more loot from the U.S., but even so reflects the very high level of feeling among the masses of Latin America against U.S. domination.

FRENCH COMMUNIST PARTY OPPOSITION GROUPS ACTIVE by Ian MacDonald

The group of French Communists associated with the opposition paper, Le Debat Communiste are stepping their year-old fight for the rehabilitation of Andre Marty and the other "victims of French Stalinism." In a recent issue of the paper there were published the names of the 100 members of a "Comite d'Honneur National" which is to lead the campaign. Included on the Committee are many veterans of the resistance (including several who were deported to Buchenwald or to other Nazi concentration camps), former C.P. parliamentary deputies and a former Communist Senator, ex-members of the Central Committee and other long-serving members of the party. For some, membership of the Committee has led to their expulsion from the PCF.

Marty, a near-legendary figure in the French working class movement, was in 1952, during the period of the onslaught against the "Titoists" in Eastern Europe, accused of opposing Party policy in a "Leftist" and "sectarian" spirit and of belittling the role of Maurice Thorez. Reviled and persecuted, it was alleged that since 1919 he had been a police spy, his wife was forced to break with him and Marty himself retired to a small village in the Pyrenees where four years later he died.

A leader of the famous mutiny of the French Navy in the Black Sea in 1919, for his part in which he spent several years in gaol, chief political commissar of the International Brigades during the Spanish Civil War, (he appears in Hemingway's For Whom the Bell Tolls), Marty served at various times as a Parliamentary deputy and as a member both of the Central Committee of the PCF and of the Executive Committee of the Comintern. Le Debat Communiste remarks that "Marty..like all those who occupied responsible posts under Stalin, participated in measures of coercion and in the repression of ideas.." and compares his case with that of Rajk, Slansky and Kostov who were executed "not for their Stalinism..but for imaginary crimes. So they have been rehabilitated and that is justice. History will judge the rest." Marty, says the paper, "was expelled..for crimes that he had not committed, on the basis of fabricated charges and of forged evidence" but the leadership of the PCF, unlike those of the majority of Communist Parties, "refuses to admit its participation in Stalinist practices" and Marty remains disgraced.

Le Debat Communiste is pressing the Marty case as part of a wider struggle which - together with Unir (circulated only to Party members) and La Voie Communiste - the paper is waging for greater democracy within the PCF and for a strengthening and regrouping of the French left. La Voie Communiste calls for a democratisation of the Party and a more militant approach. A statement of the views of the Italian CP on the question of inner-party democracy has been published in Le Debat Communiste as a retort to the leadership of the PCF which earlier this year refused to print an edition of Clarte, the journal of the Union of Communist Students, which carried an article on the subject by Togliatti. Over one issue of significance the two papers disagree. Le Debat Communiste is sympathetic to the present Algerian Government whereas La Voie Communiste generally supports Boudiaf, a fierce critic of Ben Bella. Le Debat has been very active in seeking contacts with groups of the non-Communist left and has published several exchanges of views between different tendencies. An interesting example of its wide outlook is given by a recent review of Traite d'Economie Marxiste, by Ernest Mandel, editor of La Gauche, which sets the work "amongst the best and most serious...on economic problems that have been published for several decades" and calls it "the first ...that answers the need for a new Marxist analysis of the economy."

WAS KHRUSHCHEV GOING TO DO A DEAL OVER EAST GERMANY? by a special correspondent

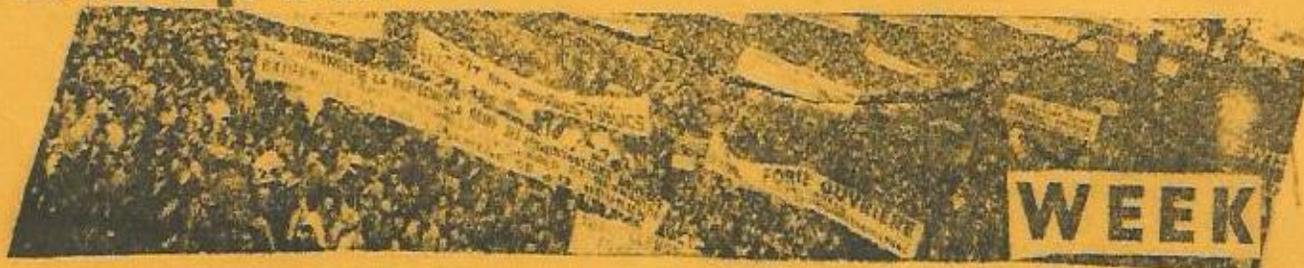
At time of writing no real explanation has been given as to why Mr. K. was removed from office. One possible explanation is that he was defeated in a bid to secure better relations with the West by doing some kind of a deal over the so-called German Democratic Republic (East Germany). The press of the Eastern bloc had been rife with denials that such a deal was in the offing: a sure sign that the matter was being discussed! It has also been clear that the leaders of the GDR have been conducting a fight against such an eventuality. On June 24th Ulbricht said: "Mr. Erhard is ready to improve relations with the Soviet Union..provided that the Soviet Union is prepared to yield to the (its) imperialist-revanchist demands." On July 12th, A. Norden, a leading member of the East German CP, said over television: "It is now obvious that it is impossible to annex the GDR, or buy it from any other socialist country." In an interview with the Polish C.P. paper, Trybuna Ludu, Ulbricht returned to the same theme on July 29th, declaring that "The German question cannot be solved in the absence of the GDR.." Again on August 8th, the Neues Deutschland (the East German C.P. paper) said that "The way of settling the German question by bypassing or defying the GDR...simply doesn't exist."

On the other hand, Adzhubei, son-in-law of Mr. K. who was removed from his position as editor of Izvestia, spoke enthusiastically of what he called the "realistic attitude" of the Erhard Government, during and after a visit to West Germany. He described Erhard as a person "one can talk with," and in articles in Izvestia on August 8, 10, 13 and 15, he spoke of changes in the attitude of West German leaders. He said Strauss, who had been considered a "most aggressive extremist" had abandoned the idea of "wiping out the Soviet Union."

At this point the Chinese intervened in the pseudo-discussion. Their first major pronouncement was on September 8th (just 7 days after Ulbricht had once more reiterated that the "German question cannot be settled in the absence ...of the GDR) in an editorial in People's Daily entitled "No Criminal Deal Over GDR". They said: "Of late, there has been a noisy outcry in Bonn...for the 'peaceful' elimination of the GDR...what makes the Bonn revanchists so bold? ...can it be that they have received tacit approval or hints from those who recently talked..in praise of the West German militarists?.." The editorial pledged full support for the East German regime against such a proposal.

Meanwhile news trickled through of a meeting between Khrushchov and the foreign ministers of Poland, Hungary and Bulgaria, which was held in Czechoslovakia - western news agencies saying that although the German question was discussed the GDR was not represented. These reports were not denied. This meeting was supposed to have approved the line to be taken during K.'s visit to Western Germany. Discussing this visit the East German radio, Radio Deutschland, said on September 11th: "Anyone who thinks that the GDR can be bought...is, to say the least, a fool.."

The next moves were made by two men who are No. 1 and 3 respectively in the Soviet Union Brezhnev and Suslov. The former was head of the Soviet party and government delegation to East Germany to attend the celebrations of that regime's 15th anniversary. Speaking in Berlin on October 6th, he said: "Only short-sighted politicians divorced from real life..can hope for ^{solutions} behind the back of the GDR to ..(its) detriment." Suslov, speaking the previous day in Moscow at a meeting which was celebrating the GDR's anniversary, declared that there would be "no deal with Bonn at the expense of the GDR". However, the most direct reference to Khrushchov was in Free World, the organ of the GDR-USSR Friendship Assoc., In an article entitled "How much does GDR cost?", E. Degener wrote: "...we would not be insulting Khrushchov if we shield him from such suspicion.." (of making a deal). This appeared Oct. 9th, 6 days later K. fell.

EuropeanSOCIAL DEMOCRATS SCORE IN WEST GERMAN LOCAL ELECTIONS

It is not only the London Stock Exchange which is fluttering because of election results. The Stock Exchange in the Federal Republic of Germany has recently suffered the jitters; the reason: the victory of the Social Democrats in the municipal elections in the biggest "land", the densely populated North Rhine/Westphalia, and the headway it has made in Lower Saxony. In North Rhine Westphalia, the vote for the Social Democratic Party (SPD) rose from 40.7% in 1961 to 46.6%. The Christian Democratic Union (CDU) fell from 45% to 43.1%. The Free Democratic Party (FDP) dropped from 10.2% to 8%. The smaller parties got less than 1% each. Perhaps the most spectacular decline was experienced by the German Peace Union (DFU - Deutsche Friedensunion) which relies on the Communist vote. The Communist Party is banned and cannot, therefore, run its own candidates. In the Ruhr valley, the industrial heart of Germany, the DFU obtained only 21,582 votes, a bare 0.3%. In the thirties, the German Communist Party gained millions of votes. In 10 of the 16 big towns in the land, the SPD won an absolute majority. In rural districts, however, it made little progress.

The vote in Lower Saxony showed the SPD moving up from 38.8% to 43.2%. Gains were also registered by the CDU, from 28.2% to 37.5%, and the FDP, from 6.9% to 9.2%. The two latter parties made their gains at the expense of extreme right wing parties.

There is no doubt that the SPD moved ahead more because of the mistakes of the other parties than because of its own policies. The Government coalition of the CDU and FDP has alienated many voters. The ending of certain measures designed to protect tenants from landlords cost the two parties something in popularity. Chancellor Erhard's accusations that inflation is caused by consumers who are not "sober minded" angered working class voters. Clashes between the extreme right wing of the Government, headed by Strauss, and a "middle of the road" wing led by Foreign Affairs Minister Schröder also damaged the CDU. It is still too early, however, to predict a victory for the SPD in the federal elections scheduled for the autumn of 1965. The Government can counter with concessions during the coming year. Among these will be a special child allowance for children who continue at school after the age of 15, increases in old age pensions, improvements in health insurance, etc.

The SPD have a congress scheduled for November which will issue an election programme. Up to now, it does not appear that the leaders will come forward with anything to inspire the working class electorate which gave them victory in North Rhine/Westphalia and Lower Saxony.

from a German correspondent