

International Bulletin

Vol 1. No. 20

Apr. 29th 1962

AFTER EASTER - WHITHER THE BRITISH LABOUR MOVEMENT?

Elsewhere in the Bulletin we cover two of the most important events so far this year in the labour movement - The Young Socialist Conference and Aldermaston. And now we are in the midst of the union conferences' season which give a guide to the state of the left in the unions. But one factor dwarfs all others when we consider the general situation in industry, namely, the certain defeat of the strike ballot in the engineering industry. Not merely has the two thirds majority been lost, but if the E.T.U. result is anything to go by there may very well be a 2 to 1 majority against strike action. Deprived of their 'ultimate weapon' trade union bureaucrats will face the engineering employers with their bargaining position very much impaired. The relationship of forces between the unions and the employers has changed. This on the eve of the greatest incentive to British capitalists to get tough since the end of the war.

Entry into the Common Market, and the preparations for that entry, will mean an attempt to rationalise the structure of British capitalism by subjecting all the moribund sections to full scale competition. This by definition means an attack on workers at present employed in those sections of industry. Parallel with this will be an attempt to deal with 'restrictive practices' in such sectors as the Docks, the motor car industry, etc. where organisation of the workers is such that the British capitalists will be at an 'unfair advantage' in relation to those of the continent. Moreover in dealing with any 'awkward workers' the bosses will have behind them not merely their own resources but those of their continental counterparts. After Britain is in the European Iron and Coal Community the striking miner will face not merely the N.C.B. but similar bodies in Germany, France, Belgium, et al all with their stocks of coal.

How will the trade union bureaucrat behave in this situation? No doubt the result of the engineering strike ballot will be used time and time again to defeat proposals for militant action. On the other hand the whole process threatens the social role of these people. Many, perhaps most, will be ready to accept a somewhat lower status as the 'workers representatives' on such bodies as N.E.D.C. - and there will be plenty of well paid posts on the various bureaucratic bodies which the E.E.C. brings in its wake. But for others the processes set into motion will be a matter of life or death. We already see an indication of this in the behaviour of the Printing trade union bureaucrats in their all out opposition to Britain's entry into the Common Market. When N.A.T.S.O.P.A. uses all its resources to bolster up the Forward Britain Movement it is not out of concern for 'Britain's greatness or Commonwealth pride, nor because of any love for Beaverbrook, but because the highly organised position of this and other printing unions will be seriously undermined when it meets unfettered competition from the continent. The Economist, which incidentally was printed in France all through the printers' big strike, has noted this well. These processes will lead to an intensification of the already existing differentiation in ranks of the T.U. bureaucrats. A fact not without significance for marxists.

We have already outlined the tactics we believe marxists should follow in this situation in previous issues of the Bulletin - nothing has happened to cause us to change this programme although we must recognise that the tempo will probably be slower. Right now we should be very opportunist, in the good sense of the word, by latching on to movement around the nurses' wages struggle. The wave of solidarity strikes, etc. is one of the brightest spots (along with the docks strike threat) on the labour front. We should be at the forefront in every possible field in suggesting solidarity action. In war, a cynic once remarked, it's not one's own brilliance which wins battles but the enemy's mistakes. Perhaps we can help to turn the Government's 'mistake' over the nurses' pay to a much-needed victory for Britain's labour movement.

AFRO-ASIAN SOCIALIST DOES WELL

Issue number two of this journal is selling well - despite competition from numerous other, mostly cheaper, journals not many less than 200 were sold on the Aldermaston demonstration. A good number were sold at a Central Nottingham Young Socialist meeting which had a speaking on the struggle in the Portuguese colonies, all in all getting on for forty have been sold in Nottingham. The journal will be on sale at a number of meetings in London.

THE SECOND ANNUAL CONFERENCE OF THE YOUNG SOCIALISTS - AN APPRAISAL

This has been written for the Bulletin by an active Young Socialist who was a delegate to the Conference. Ed. note.

The atmosphere at this year's Young Socialist Conference was much more business-like than the first one, held a year ago, and while we by no means got through the agenda, the most important resolutions were dealt with. Keep Left supporters were restrained and, especially during the various attacks on them, well-disciplined. The heckling came mostly from the right-wing who were extremely vicious especially towards individuals they identified as 'Trotskyites'

The general tone of the speakers was predominantly left-wing, and where several resolutions were put forward on a subject, the more radical one was most popular.

In spite of much manoeuvring, the left have an absolute majority on the newly-elected National Committee, outnumbering the middle-to-right by 7 to 4. All seven of these being comrades who identify themselves with Trotskyist ideas.

The right-wing as usual were very well organised, though in a minority. An example of this was the way in which the resolution on Keep Left was railroaded through, and an extra 14 votes for the right appeared from nowhere at the recount. With the party bureaucrats to help them the right can out-manoeuvre us every time unless the left -wing is much better organised and better disciplined. A tactics meeting held by Young Guard supporters achieved very little. This time should have been used to decide which issues were most important, what points should be stressed in speaking, instead of the whispered consultations that took place during the conference.

As marxists working in the Labour Party we must employ tactics and strategy, so that we do not give the impression of submerging ourselves in the Party. By consistently putting forward a class point of view at each twist and turn of the right wing, the left in the party present an alternative leadership, and we must guide the left in this struggle.

It is important to consolidate the gains of the conference, first of all within the Young Socialist movement by making sure that the newly-elected committee act on the resolutions passed. With the left in a majority this should not be difficult.

Secondly, we must make sure that we are just as well organised as the right by calling a joint Keep Left, Young Guard tactics meeting before the conference.

We should press for the resolutions to be accepted within the adult party, not by the National Executive Committee but at Constituency level as well.

For example on the Common Market; while the Parliamentary Party dither about this, the Young Socialists passed a resolution which looks like a chunk of the Fourth International. It not only puts forward a Trotskyist conception of the United Socialist States of Europe, but calls on the Labour Party to convene a conference of European Socialist Parties and Trades Unions to draw up plans for protecting the workers in the Common Market. Such a practical step should appeal to the rank and file, and would expose and isolate the right wing.

N.B. We want to publish as much relevant material on the Young Socialists Conference as possible. Many of the readers of the Bulletin were delegates and we would appeal to them to send their impressions in time for the next issue of the Bulletin, that is, immediately. In particular as soon as the official report of the Conference is available we would like to print the actual text of some of the most important resolutions.

The decision to have an inquiry into 'Keep Left' and its connection with the S.L.L. by the National Executive of the Labour Party, even though carried by a small majority is a matter of serious concern for all left wingers in the Labour Party.

Conference voted overwhelmingly against 'Signposts for the Sixties', for democratic control of 'New Advance', two to one against Gaitskell's foreign policy and for unilateralism, substantially for Gaitskell's resignation and many other left wing policies. Despite the fact that all those influenced by 'Keep Left' and 'Young Guard' voted against any attack on 'Keep Left' the resolution was carried. Only one conclusion can be drawn from this, that is that a sector of the left wing vote was so hostile to 'Keep Left' that it voted along with the right wing.

That this is because of the tactics of the S.L.L. and the use of gangster methods by a section of 'Keep Lefters' goes without saying. Readers of this Bulletin will have read of some of these activities in Nottingham. This factor will complicate terribly the fight for democracy inside the Young Socialists in the coming months.

It is not necessary to argue against the proposition that we should leave 'Keep Left' to its fate. Neither from the point of view of principle or expediency would such a proposition be put forward. The right wing are attacking 'Keep Left' not because some of its misguided supporters have used physical violence or the threat of physical violence against their opponents - left and right - but because of the left policies which the paper puts forward. On the other hand all experience has shown that the witch hunt knows no barriers, once set into motion it will be used against all sections of the left.

But there is a danger that we will be 'tarred with the same brush' if our defence of 'Keep Left' is not on a high political level. We should avoid at all costs being involved in the argument as to whether or not there has been physical violence. In fact, it can be said that this is not the point at all. Any youth movement runs the risk of political argumentation becoming so vigorous that tempers are lost. We advance this not because we think this is the explanation of the behaviour of certain sections of 'Keep Left' supporters but because it would give the latter the best get out. If these elements would abandon these methods it would provide the best possibility of defeating the right.

Politically we should argue along the following lines: firstly, if there is any investigating to be done in the Young Socialists, as part of our general policy of autonomy for the Young Socialists, we should argue that this be done by the Young Socialists themselves. Secondly, we must make it clear to all that the reason for the attack is not the question of violence but that of the right wing using this question as an excuse to silence its critics. Thirdly, we must argue that if the Labour Party leadership would hand over democratic control of New Advance to the Young Socialists themselves they would cut away the arguments for independent Y.S. journals. Fourthly, we must argue for the carrying out of all Young Socialist conference decisions - not just the one carried by a tiny majority which suits the right.

While arguing along the above lines and opposing in all organisations and at all levels any witch hunt, we must explain to our comrades around 'Keep Left' that many of their difficulties flow purely from the existence of the S.L.L. as an 'open' organisation. The latter being a result of the adventurist policies of leadership of the S.L.L.. In addition their isolation from the rest of the left is caused largely by their 'social fascist' attitude towards other tendencies. Needless to say such discussion should not take in the Y.S. branch. Moreover we must be clear that the enemy is the right wing and therefore avoid, no matter what the provocation, being involved in faction in-fighting. There is a big danger that the worst elements of the S.L.L. will use this whole discussion to provoke such a fight, with the aim of putting other left tendencies 'on the spot' - similar tactics were used when the S.L.L. was launched. News of the attitude and tactics of S.L.L.ers will help in assessing our tactics.

STUART HALL TO SPEAK FOR I.N.D.E.C.

In the last issue of the Bulletin we announced the forthcoming meeting in Nottingham at which speakers from the Independent Nuclear Disarmament Election Committee would argue their point of view. We have since learned that Stuart Hall, former editor of New Left Review, will be the main speaker for I.N.D.E.C. at the combined New Left and C.N.D. meeting Sunday 13th, May, 3.00 at Co-op Centre.

I.N.D.E.C.'s 'statement of arguments and aims' rests upon the following assumptions:

(1) The '...policy adopted by now Campaign up until Scarborough was one of working in alliance with the traditional left of the Labour Party' but now 'The Nuclear Disarmament movement can no longer afford to rely exclusively on this alliance with the Labour Left.'

(2) Because efforts to ensure the selection of Labour candidates who are unilateralist is weakened by the fixing of selection conferences and the fact that many former unilateralists have deserted on reaching Westminster and therefore 'we shall not get far by this strategy alone.'

(3) Dismissing the 'voters' veto' it argues that 'There seems to be a good chance that our electoral influence could, in some cases, be decisive.'

(4) To establish itself electorally it must achieve some by-election success and then go on to consider 'general election strategy.'

It outlines the supposed advantages of participation in by-elections and goes on to state the policy of its candidates, these are in addition to unilateral renunciation of H.Bombs, bases, nuclear alliances, etc. disengagement, strengthening the United Nations, positive neutralism and 'those aspects of economic and social reform arising from the above points.'

Considering the implications and consequences of selected by-election intervention, it argues that:

(1) Intervention in by-elections will provide a strong rallying point for all unilateralists and brush aside the objection that candidates would only get very small votes.

(2) That while the struggle for unilateralism in the Labour Party is by no means over the effect of intervention might be to stimulate sections of the party not sympathetic to unilateralism to press for the implementation of conference decisions on such matters as disengagement in Europe.

All this appears to me to be extraordinarily naive and rests upon some very mistaken notions. I think it is obvious that despite the talk of this being a step forward, etc. that primarily I.N.D.E.C. is the product of frustration. Frustration with years of marching, demonstrations, mass meetings, etc. without any apparent result. Frustration with the reversal of the Scarborough decisions in the Labour Party.

It is necessary, all the more, to be comradely and non-dogmatic when discussing with these comrades. We must face the fact that they have now committed themselves to this line of action and, therefore, there is little chance, no matter how brilliantly we may argue with them, of stopping them going through this experience. That is not to say that we should 'leave them to it'. A discussion on this question will greatly assist in clarifying our ideas on the fight against nuclear weapons. But first to consider some of their arguments:

(1) It is not just not true to say that the policy of the anti nuclear weapons movement has been that of an alliance with the Labour Party left. On the contrary the opposite mistake has been made, if anything, in the official leadership's attempt to be 'non-political'.

(2) Except under very special circumstances, e.g., the Acland by-election, the vote of a 'unilateralist' candidate would almost certainly be decisive. This is not because people don't care about nuclear weapons, but because the great mass of the voters, and especially those who want to do away with nuclear weapons, want to use their votes in the way they think most constructive. This explains why many, many C.N.D. supporters would vote even for a non-unilateralist Labour candidate in preference to a 'unilateralist' independent because they feel that this is the best way, from a long term point of view, of helping to do away with nuclear weapons.

(3) Far from helping the left inside the Labour Party to fight for unilateral policies, as the statement implies might happen, the whole business will considerably weaken such a fight. The net effect will be to pull people out of the Labour Party and give the right wing the opportunity to purge unilateralists on a far wider scale than those who help I.N.D.E.C.

Lastly it needs to be said that the activities of I.N.D.E.C. will provoke faction fighting on the left. This will happen quite independently of their intentions. To do anything at all they must have a big vote in elections. The people who stand in their way and represent the biggest danger to them will be precisely their former comrades still inside the Labour Party who argue that the fight should be conducted there. This is a dilemma that cannot be escaped. N.B. This is not a full exposition on the anti-nuclear weapons struggle - we hope to publish more material on this subject in subsequent bulletins.

How the strike went

The strike duly took place as arranged on the morning of April 11th, and the first day passed without disturbance, everything running smoothly. The matron and other officials were not permitted to enter the wards, but the Medical officers were. The kitchen staff undertook their ordinary duties of cooking for the patients and staff but not for the Asylum officials or for members of the visiting committee. When later they were suspended for disobedience of orders they retired to the wards and assisted the nurses.

Police patrols were drafted to the Institution by the authorities and placed round the grounds, but there was no disturbance of any kind.

A meeting of the male members of the staff in the evening demanded to be allowed to strike in support of the female staff, and the strike committee of the union decided that at seven o'clock the following morning, April 12th, three male wards should be commandeered by male strikers and the non-unionists in these wards should be ejected. The remaining three male wards were left to the blacklegs to deal with as best as they could.

The visiting committee met on the morning of April 12th and decided that 'all staff at Radcliffe Asylum who have shown insubordination should be discharged forthwith'. About 50 females and 17 males were involved in this decision. During the afternoon a bus load of female blacklegs arrived at the Institution.

The end - a four hour fight

The end of the strike came on Thursday, April 14th. The April issue of the National Asylum Workers Union magazine, which deals with the struggle up to the point of the arrival of the bus load of female blacklegs, states:

"Subsequent events we prefer to allow the press to deal with.

In general the accounts are fairly accurate and we need only add that it took from one o'clock to five o'clock to get the strikers from the wards. Great damage was done by the patients, windows, pictures, plantpots, furniture, etc., being smashed to bits, while the authorities had to break open every ward door and demolish the barricades of tables, beds, chairs, piano's, etc. erected by the strikers and patients against every ward door. There were numerous casualties among the attackers but none to speak of amongst the strikers. The attacking force consisted of 63 policemen, 25 bailiffs and blacklegs and officials."

Press Extracts

The following are extracts from the Daily Sketch, April 15th 1922:

"Nottingham, Friday:- After a fierce hand to hand struggle the nurses on strike at Radcliffe Asylum were overpowered and ejected by the police, assisted by a newly appointed staff. By cutting off the water at the main the strikers were deprived of the effective use of the fire hoses. The main attack by the police and their supporters was directed against the entrance of Ward No. 2. Crowbars were used to force the outer doors and the police then removed the piled up barricades of heavy furniture, bedsteads and in one case a piano. Beyond the barricades they were met by the strikers and a hand-to-hand conflict took place. A number of inmates reinforced the strikers' efforts, but fortunately most of the inmates contented themselves with smashing furniture rather than attacking the police. Driven in succession through three wards, the strikers took refuge in the common room where they sang "Britains never shall be slaves." That marked the end of a two hours struggle. Recognising that they were out-manoeuvred and overpowered the strikers packed up their belongings and drove in motor charabancs to the village of Radcliffe.

Extracts from The Glasgow Citizen, April 15, 1922.

"Proceedings began by the strikers, 14 men and 17 men being summoned to leave. A number of them refused and locked themselves in their wards. To carry out the eviction the authorities had enlisted the aid of a party of bailiffs and a large posse of police,

"Operations began at one o'clock in the afternoon. A cordon of police was drawn around the buildings, and bailiffs armed with heavy crowbars proceeded
continued over/

The following has been reproduced from 'International', journal of the Australian section of the Fourth International. Ed. Note.

News has been received of the death of C. Wright Mills as the result of a heart attack. His death at the age of 46, in the midst of wide creative activity, is a heavy blow to the progressive world.

Mills' work lay mostly in sociology. His comprehensive studies of the leadership of American trade unions (The New Men of Power) but even more his analyses of the American middle class and ruling groups (White Collar, The Power Elite), characterised by trenchant, fearless analysis, based upon impeccable scholarship, have become fundamental sources for the student of contemporary society. Mills did not regard himself as a Marxist in the strict sense of the word, and his work is not without weaknesses from the Marxist point of view. But as Ernest Germain wrote in the concluding part of a long and appreciative (though critical) review of the The Power Elite (Fourth International, No. 2. p.66), the faults of Mills' work

"....should be an additional reason for Marxists to study in a detailed and critical fashion this....excellent work. And they will have no reason to exult until the day when one of them, without committing Wright Mills' errors, but imitating and surpassing all his qualities, will succeed in making an equally complete and detailed analysis, say of the British, French, German, or Italian ruling class."

Mills was in revolt against the "safe", the perspectiveless or even positively apologetic "fact"-grubbing, the creeping empiricism of a huge bulk of contemporary sociology, and subjected the whole approach to brilliant and incisive criticism in The Sociological Imagination.

It is no accident that, as one of the few sociologists writing today willing and able to face fundamental issues in contemporary society, Mills should have deeply sympathised with one of the great liberating movements of our time, namely the Cuban revolution. His passionate defence of it - Listen, Yankee - sold over 600,000 copies in the U.S.A. alone, and there have been three printings of the Spanish translation in Mexico.

His Last Work: The Marxists

While not a Marxist, he maintained that people could not consider themselves properly educated in politics or social science unless they were informed about the essentials of Marxism. His last book was in fact The Marxists on which William F. Warde makes the interesting comment in the New York Militant:

"One of the principal contentions in his survey of Marxism is that Lenin and Trotsky together formed the pivot of Bolshevism, the most heroic and consistent effort to translate Marxist ideas into revolutionary practice. Whatever his criticisms of Trotsky, he esteemed him as one of the finest minds of our century. "No Marxist, including Marx himself and Lenin" he wrote, "filled so many revolutionary roles brilliantly as did Leon Trotsky."

"In The Marxists he brings forward Trotsky's contributions to revolutionary thought and action against the Stalinist detractors and slanderers. He not only restores Trotsky to his rightful place in history of Marxist thought and the Russian Revolution, but directly challenges the Soviet Government to publish and circulate all of Trotsky's works. Until and unless the countries in the Soviet bloc do this, he maintained, they cannot be considered to have freedom of thought even in the domain of Marxism. When Soviet intellectuals chided him for not being a Marxist, Mills sometimes replied that he was better acquainted than they with the best Marxist theory of the 20th century, because he had read the writings of Trotsky which up to now they have been forbidden to do."

Many people throughout the world will not regret that Mills' pen has been stilled. That is a measure of his achievement. For Marxists and progressive intellectuals in general, Mills' work will continue to be a quarry and an inspiration for an unforeseeable period in the future.

ANOTHER TROTSKY PAMPHLET OUT

Many comrades will have already seen the adverts in Tribune for Trotsky's The Communist Manifesto Today. Written in 1937 in the form of an introduction to the first Afrikaans edition of the Communist Manifesto, it examines the fundamental ideas of the Manifesto and considers their relevancy and validity in light of subsequent developments. It costs 6d postage extra.

Some important decisions

The following account has been written especially for the Bulletin by one of the East Midlands' delegates to the Conference. Ed. Note.

After the Chairman's address and the report of the Standing Orders' Committee, which was permeated by attempts to place on the agenda an emergency resolution condemning the National Committee of the Labour Party for their refusal to endorse the candidature of Ernie Roberts for the Horsham constituency, the first group of resolutions was discussed, namely those concerning the "Commonwealth Immigrants' Bill and Racialism."

Composite No.6 was against all forms of control and racialism, this was carried unanimously. Composite No.7 did not entirely reject the Bill and called for more housing control, and this was carried by a small majority. For 156, Against 149.

Next came "Party Unity and Signposts for the Sixties." The Party Unity resolution called for delegates to sink their 'marginal differences' and this was carried by a two to one majority. The resolution supporting "Signposts for the Sixties" was criticised by nearly every speaker and was overwhelmingly defeated.

In the secret session which followed, an attempt to place on the agenda another emergency resolution this time calling for an inquiry into "Keep Left" and its connections with the S.L.L. was defeated by a small majority. A resolution calling for the democratic control of "New Advance" was carried against the advice of the Y.S. National Committee.

A call for more money on education was unanimously carried and support for Federal Union was overwhelmingly defeated.

The came "Foreign Policy and Defence." The 'multilateralist' resolution was defeated: For 94, Against 199. The 'unilateralist' resolution was carried by a two to one majority. An amendment calling for Gaitskell's resignation was also carried : For 180, Against 141.

The resolution supporting the United Nations was carried after much discussion, : For 179, Against 61.

Another attempt to place the anti-'Keep Left' resolution on the agenda was this time successful and on a vote it was defeated: For 154, Against 155. On a second count it was carried: For 168, Against 155. This was a great victory for the right wing and they revelled in it.

The Common Market resolutions came next and the pro-Market resolution was defeated overwhelmingly with approximately 10 delegates voting for it. The anti-Market resolution was carried also overwhelmingly.

The Ernie Roberts affair was now on the agenda and after a lively discussion a protest resolution was carried by a very large majority despite the efforts of the Y.S. National Organisers.

Last came the Pay Pause resolutions and after an amendment which supported the N.E.D.C. was defeated, one attacking the Pay Pause was overwhelmingly carried but with a few delegates voting for the Pause as their amendment had been defeated.

NOTTINGHAM PROTEST AGAINST AMERICAN TESTS

The Nottingham Branch of the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament has called a demonstration against the resumption of tests by the United States Government for Saturday the 5th of May, starting at 2.00 p.m. from the Co-op Education Centre commencing as a march through town and to finish as meeting in the Old Market Square.

The organisers decided to approach the Labour Party with a view to making it a joint effort in view of Labour Party conference decision and especially after the resolution passed at the last meeting of the Nottingham City Labour Party. At its meeting held to discuss this and other matters the Nottingham branch of the Y.C.L. decided to support a policy of ending the demonstration with a 'sit down' - it is not known whether the C.P. organisers will allow this. C.N.D. supporters toured Nottingham City Centre Saturday 28th April, advertising the demonstration with loudspeakers.

to break down the doors of the wards each in its turn, demolish the barricades that had been improvised and remove the recalcitrants. It was a lengthy process and it was not until five hours later that their task was accomplished.

"Opposition was greatest in the female wards, where the nurses put up a strenuous fight.

"A good deal of trouble was experienced in the refractory wards. Here some patients, armed with various implements, began to smash the windows. When the attacking party burst into the room Superintendent A. Smith in restraining one lunatic, had his hand so badly bitten that medical treatment was necessary.

"As each ward was cleared, the new staff waiting in readiness took charge. The old staff were taken to an ante-room, where they packed their belongings, and were seen off the premises in motor buses provided by the union."

Extracts from the Nottingham Guardian, April 15th, 1922.

"Mr. Gell, clerk to the Asylum committee, led the attacking forces. Barricades were forced, doors smashed with iron bars, and in some cases violent fights with patients who got out of hand took place. For four hours the "battle" raged and then the strikers had to give in. So ended perhaps the most sensational strike of modern times. Not the least amazing thing about it is the manner in which the Union officials kept in touch with the strikers themselves - by semaphore signalling from a lane close by. Radcliffe inhabitants took the keenest interest in the proceedings, and at a meeting of ratepayers on Thursday night called for a public inquiry into the whole affair.

"The officials of the Asylum Workers Union before leaving the district for their Manchester headquarters informed a Journal representative that they had decided to make a grant of £100 a piece to seven married men who had lost their positions, and were going to maintain the rest of their members thrown out of employment, and would endeavour to find them fresh positions."

Many of the dismissed members experienced great difficulty in securing new posts, so much so that it appeared as if a "black list" had been circulated to other Mental hospitals. One Radcliffe member seeking employment was turned down by 12 institutions, and one member resident in a village near Nottingham was actually asked by the Medical Superintendent of a Lancashire hospital if he had any connection with a man named ----- who was discharged recently from the Nottingham asylum.

ALDERMASTON - THE LAST LAP TURNS INTO ANTI-GOVERNMENT DEMONSTRATION

The full report of Aldermaston has been 'crowded out' but will appear in the next issue. Ed. note.

The most significant feature of this year's Aldermaston demonstration was the way the last lap - the march from Hyde Park to the Houses of Parliament turned into a general anti-Government demonstration. On Hyde Park the 60 to 70 thousand marchers were joined by perhaps an equal number of Londoners. Making what Frank Cousins said 'was perhaps not the biggest demonstration held in Britain but certainly the biggest demonstration of youth ever in Britain,' most of them then joined the march to the Parliament Square. Once the demonstration reached Whitehall it soon got out of hand. Marchers, 50 or more abreast, soon spread right across Whitehall despite all the efforts of the police. Eventually they took over the whole of Whitehall and the traffic had to do its best to get through the crowds. On reaching the dispersal point on the Embankment, the marchers patently ignoring Canon Collins speaking from a loudspeaker van refused to disperse and all the police could do was to guide them down the embankment, by the Houses of Parliament and up Whitehall again. By this time chaos ruled.

The character of the demonstration changed too - from a C.N.D. one to one which had as its dominant slogan 'Macmillan must go'. This arose partially from the different composition of the demonstrators once it had entered London but principally because of the participation of the ¹⁰¹¹ whose slogans gradually became the slogans of the demonstration, the most political of which was the chant 'Out with the Tories, out with Bomb - Labour to power, minus the bomb. The ranks of the left were swelled by the Young Socialists fresh from their battles at their conference. The atmosphere became explosive and it would have required just one incident to spark off a full scale riot. This was nearly provided when a hostile car drove into the crowd and one young socialist, a man who has written for this Bulletin, had to jump on the bonnet to avoid being run down. Angry demonstrators pulled open the doors of the car and set about the driver with their banners. However the police did not intervene - their orders must have been strict. Eventually the combined efforts of the police and the 'responsible' C.N.D. stewards persuaded the crowds to disperse. So ended Aldermaston 1962. And what of 1963???