

Down with wage freezing!

ILL-PREPARED APPRENTICE STRIKE FAILS

From REG PERRY

THE attempt to involve apprentices in a premature national strike collapsed this week as youths in the Manchester area began to return to work.

A last-minute attempt by the strike leaders to involve engineering apprentices in Glasgow in the dispute in order to boost the falling support elsewhere, failed miserably.

On Monday apprentices from AEF's Openshaw (Manchester) factory, who began the strike, voted to go back and they were followed by other factories in the area.

Only 28 apprentices turned up on Sunday to attend a 'national' conference called by the strike leaders. Reports presented by delegates revealed that support for the strike was declining and in some cases a complete return to work had already occurred.

Most of those who spoke, criticised the lack of preparation for the strike. Many said that they had been misled into believing more areas throughout the country would be involved.

VOTE

Despite these reports and criticisms, the strike leaders recommended that the struggle should continue in the hope that Glasgow and West Scotland apprentices would join the next day.

The final vote at the meeting of 16 in favour of continuing and 12 against was achieved only after 15 apprentices had been either ejected or refused admission. These had spoken in favour of ending the strike and supporting the strike called by the National Conference of Apprentices for March 29 next year.

It should now be clear to all trade unionists that this strike was an ill-prepared adventure which could only assist the employers by weakening the apprentices' movement.

It is to be hoped that these militant apprentices, who joined the strike in Manchester, will return to their factories determined to strengthen their organisation in preparation for the major struggles which will occur next year.

Retraction by University newspaper

'DARTS', the Sheffield University Students' Union newspaper, have published the following retraction in their November 12 edition:

In our edition of Darts of the 15th October, we published a report under the heading, "Who runs Labour Soc? Conspiracy by Trotskyites—allegation", in which we alleged that the Socialist Labour League engineered and carried out a conspiracy to gain control of the Labour Society and to use it for its own ends.

The National Committee of the Socialist Labour League, whose Headquarters are in London, and its Secretary, Mr. Thomas Gerard Healy, have denied that they have engineered and carried out such a conspiracy, and insofar as such allegations may be said to refer to them they are false and they have asked that we should make public their assurances that such allegations are untrue.

We accept the assurance given to us by the National Committee and Secretary of the Socialist Labour League that if there was such a conspiracy it had neither their consent nor approval. We regret that our report gave a contrary impression and apologise to the National Committee of the Socialist Labour League and its Secretary for the unwarranted imputations made against them.

An appeal to all trade unionists

BY THE NATIONAL COMMITTEE OF THE SOCIALIST LABOUR LEAGUE

THE trade union movement faces grave dangers. Leading officials such as Mr. Cannon, the General President of the Electrical Trades Union, and Mr. Woodcock, General Secretary of the Trades Union Congress, are in favour of wage freezing. If the movement should accept their proposals then every trade unionist will suffer not only a reduction in real wages, but a loss of his bargaining power over the vital period of the next two or three years.

Briefly, the record of the Labour government during its first month of office can be summed up in a few sentences. The indirect effects of the 15 per cent surcharge on imports, the increase in petrol tax and national insurance payments, are leading to a vast number of price increases, covering in the main, items of daily use in every household.

The employers are not worried because they have at their disposal a mechanism for raising prices which enables them to recover whatever tax increase is demanded by the government. The employer who has to pay 6d. a gallon more for his petrol or diesel fuel and 3s. 3d. extra on an insurance stamp for his employee simply raises the price of his goods and services in order to recover his immediate loss.

The worker, however, is in a different category. If the cost of his national insurance goes up 1-2s, he immediately suffers a cut in his real wages. All that the Labour government has done so far is increase the cost of living and place the burdens of the Tory economic crisis on the shoulders of the people who voted it into office.

There is no use in saying that old age pensioners and others are going to benefit. By the time March 29 is reached, the value of their increase will have been reduced by perhaps as much as one-third, by increased prices.

To talk of wage-freezing in a situation where the workers have already suffered a reduction in real wages is surely the height of right-wing treachery.

The National Incomes Commission will make its decision on the basis of wage rates as they are, not as they were. Therefore, the working class start out with a distinct disadvantage. The Incomes Commission will base its policies on wages that have already suffered serious reductions.

Meanwhile, profits remain untouched and big business has several months to plan what it is going to do about any measures which might be taken by the government in the Spring. Meanwhile, they go on enjoying their increasing profits whilst the worker has to manage on a reduced wage packet.

The Labour government is little use unless it fights for an improvement in the immediate conditions of the working class as a whole. The so-called better-paid workers are those who, through the strength of their trade union organisation, have been able to improve their conditions.

The trade union movement must be made to wage a national struggle in order to improve the conditions of the lower-paid workers. What Cannon and Woodcock are doing is creating a split in the working class between the two sections, that is the higher and lower-paid groups of workers.

It is time, therefore, for the rank-and-file of the trade unions to commence an immediate offensive for improvements in wages and working conditions. They must say no to all forms of incomes commissions and wage freezing.

If the union leaders such as Cannon and company won't fight for such demands, then they must be thrown out of office as speedily as possible.

The real meaning of the witch-hunt against the left can now be seen in its true colours. It is nothing more than a preparation for tying the trade unions, lock, stock and barrel to the capitalist state. Witch-hunting stands for wage freezing and the elimination of democratic rights inside the trade unions.

The National Committee of the Socialist Labour League calls upon all trade unionists to be on guard and get ready to fight back.

PROTEST MEETING against the savage sentences passed on

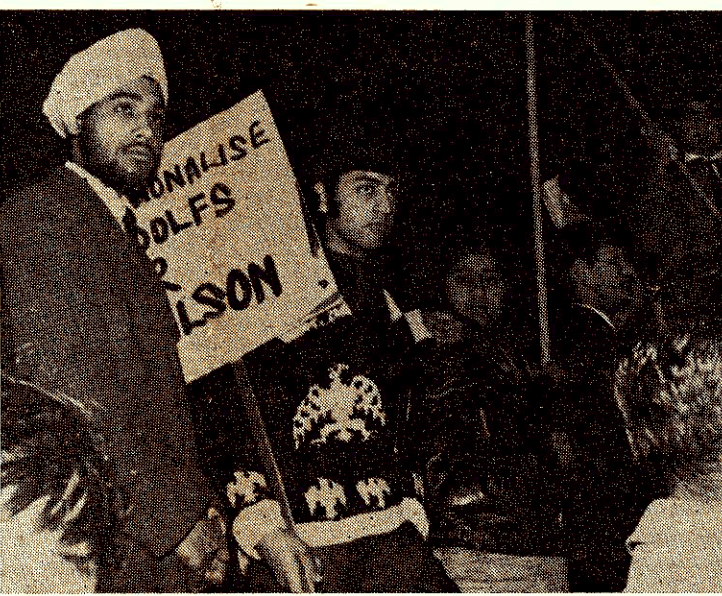
DR. LEONARD VICTOR ALLEN
JONAS KIOMASEKENAGH
OLESHENGUN ADEBAYO
SIDI KAYAM

at the
ST. BRIDE'S FOUNDATION INSTITUTE,
BRIDE LANE, FLEET STREET, E.C.4
SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 21, 7 p.m.

Speaker:
GERRY HEALY, National Secretary, Socialist Labour League

Rubber workers' victory

(see page 4)



S. African CP members on trial

THE trial began last Monday in Johannesburg of 14 white South Africans, charged with being active members of the banned South African Communist Party. All pleaded not guilty.

The leading defendant is Abraham Fischer, QC. Fischer was the chief lawyer for the defence in the 'Rivonia' trial of Mandela and Sisulu. He also played an important part in the successful defence in the earlier 'treason' trial.

CP witness

When the prosecution opened its case on Monday it was revealed that one of the chief prosecution witnesses would be Pieter Beyleveld, who is also in custody on a charge of membership of the Communist Party.

He was told by the magistrate that he would not be prosecuted if his evidence was 'satisfactory'. The prosecuting counsel announced that the remaining 50 witnesses would include other Communist Party members.

The charges are:

1. Being members of an organisation banned under the Suppression of Communism Act.
2. Taking part in meetings to further the interests of that organisation and
3. Trying to establish a despotic system of government based on the dictatorship of the proletariat.

Critical document

A document headed 'Time for Reassessment' has been produced as evidence. This discusses critically the conduct of illegal work by the Communist Party and the African National Congress.

The holding of too many meetings and insufficient preparation of recruits are mentioned. The behaviour of those subjected to torture under arrest is analysed.

On questions of political development, the document has little to say. Great emphasis is placed on the external relations of the South African government, for example, with the United Nations and the World Food Organisation.

MPs lobbied over Allen trial sentences

Several to form committee

by Robert James

SEVERAL 'left wing' Labour MPs pledged their support for demands to free Dr. Leonard Victor Allen and three Nigerians during a lobby by students, Young Socialists and trade unionists on Wednesday at the Houses of Parliament.

Many of the 20 MPs lobbied did not know that Dr. Allen, a 41-year-old Leeds University lecturer, and Nigerian trade unionists Jonas Kiomasekenagh, Sidi Kayam and teacher Oleshengun Adebayo had been involved in a long trial, charged with three charges of sedition and now face a year's hard labour.

Members Eric Heffer (Walton, Liverpool), Stan Orme (Salford West) and Hugh Jenkins (Putney) said they would be willing to form a committee to take up the case. They and others agreed to send telegrams to the Nigerian High Commissioner protesting about the sentences, and some gave donations to an appeal fund set up by Leeds University students.

Dennis Hobden (Brighton,

Kempton), Anne Kerr (Rochester and Chatham), Stan Newens (Epping), Paul Rose (Manchester, Blackley), Norman Buchan (Renfrewshire West), Leo Abse, Laurie Pavitt, John Horner (Oldbury and Halesowen) and Dr. Maurice Miller all expressed interest in the case and most said they would attend any meeting of MPs that was called.

Eric Varley (Chesterfield) said he had met Dr. Allen—he has done a considerable amount of work to help miners; research and so forth'. The Derbyshire NUM had donated £50 to the legal aid fund for Nigerian trade unionists, he said.

Hugh Jenkins thought the sentences were 'abominable'.

Telegram

Mr. Orme also agreed to see Mr. Arthur Bottomley, the Commonwealth Secretary, and to collect names for a joint telegram to the High Commissioner.

Many students are rallying to the call of the organisers of the Leeds University Appeal to demand the release of the accused.

Over 1,000 of Newcastle University's 5,000 students have signed a petition and a defence committee has been set up.

Both Leeds and Newcastle students are holding demonstrations on Saturday.

The Students' Representative Council, representing 2,000 Durham University students, have

unanimously carried a resolution protesting at the sentences.

The Newsletter calls on all students and members of the labour movement to join in these protests and make generous donations to the various appeal funds.

Rebuff

These should not be seen just as a protest at the vicious sentences passed by the Nigerian court on the four accused, but as a rebuff to the attack on the higher wages won by militant Nigerian trade unionists following a general strike there, earlier this year.

This unprecedented stand by the Nigerian working class provides a lesson for workers in Europe and America who are now faced with big struggles against capitalism.

Cannon seeks quick solution on wages

Newsletter Reporter

MR. LESLIE CANNON, president of the Electrical Trades Union, is rapidly emerging as the most dangerous person in the trade union movement.

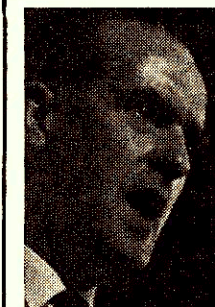
His consistent campaign for the quick conclusion of an incomes pact between the Trades Union Congress and the Labour government is based upon the most reactionary motives.

The proposals he has made to the TUC this week are openly in line with the requirements of the big monopolies.

The main substance of his proposals is that wages should be judged on efficiency and productivity of labour. His plea for increased wages for lower-paid workers is only a window-dressing and a dangerous one at that.

Trade unionists should harbour no illusions about the role of Mr. Cannon and those for whom he speaks.

He is reported as saying: 'The reason wages are so low in many enterprises in Britain is that efficiency is low and technique poor. Inefficient industries should be brought into the main



The most dangerous person in the trade union movement

stream of the new industrial revolution to re-equip their factories and introduce new methods. If an incomes policy is going to permit the continuation of low wages and protect the inefficient firms with obsolete machinery, it is unacceptable. Positive measures to improve the pay of lower-paid workers must be balanced against an element of restraint on the relatively higher-paid workers.'

This type of thinking has, in fact, already been put to practical use by firms who have led the drive to modernise and automate their factories. The best example in Britain are the American-owned and financed concerns like Ford at Halewood and Dagenham, Esso Petroleum at Fawley and Vauxhalls.

Bonus systems based on individual production are scrapped and replaced by a higher basic rate. This basic rate is carefully calculated to the optimum results which automated and semi-automated production systems can achieve. This is the basis of the introduction of new long-term wage contracts and schemes like the Fawley agreement and the Emerson and Scanlon plans.

A warning by John Crawford

Leaders will tie unions to state

Will facilitate incomes policy

THE Labour government is engaged in putting a gigantic fraud across rank-and-file trade union members.

Wilson, Callaghan and Brown hope to chain the unions to a wage freeze. A meagre rise in pensions, to be given next year, is used to bait the trap.

Brown's talks with Trades Union Congress chiefs and employers' organisations show how the trick is going to be attempted. On the basis of a statement by the employers that prices and profits ought not to go up, the union leaders will declare themselves in favour of holding wage increases down to match the rise in production—if any.

BROWN'S GAME

Brown wants this 'Declaration of Intent' to be signed by Christ-mas. He will then set up a 'Prices and Incomes Review Body' on which union leaders and employers' representatives will get together.

Brown's statement at the talks with the TUC gave the game away.

As First Secretary of State for Economic Affairs, he is reported to have said that if such a policy was not under way by the early Spring (i.e., before the next Budget) 'the alternative could be very unpleasant'.

This can only mean a threat to enforce a wage freeze by means of deflationary measures which would raise unemployment.

The next few months will inevitably be a period of rising prices. This is ensured by the government's own economic measures, described by Professor Alan Day as 'half a temporary devaluation'.

FUTILE CONTROL

This means that small pensions increases promised for next April will be largely cancelled out by the time they arrive.

All past experience, both here and abroad, shows that controlling prices and profits is quite meaningless.

A capitalist economy is run for profit and it's run by the profiteers. The Labour government is therefore trying to get the co-operation of the unions in cutting their members' living standards. Without a continual struggle

for higher wages, gains made in recent years will soon be wiped out.

The proposal to relate wages to productivity is another part of this sham.

Not only have the workers no say in the way production is organised, they are being asked to guarantee their own exploitation, by comparing the money they earn in creating the wealth of the country, with the profits the investors get for doing nothing at all.

WILSON'S GOAL

Wilson hopes to reach the goal which has eluded successive Tory Chancellors for 13 years. Cashing in on a mood of 'give him a chance' amongst a section of Labour voters, he thinks he can fool the workers into accepting collaboration with the monopolies.

But tying up a wages policy takes more than the signatures of a few union general secretaries. There are a number of outstanding wage claims, including those for dockers and railwaymen.

Despite all the delays of courts of inquiry and arbitration tribunals, these have to be settled eventually.

There are likely to be a number of wages struggles in the new year. The question is: How will they be led?

WOODCOCK'S CAUTION

Woodcock's extreme caution in talking about wage-freezing reflects the doubts in the minds of some union chiefs about the dangers of trying too soon to rush the rank and file into the incomes policy trap.

The union leaders must maintain some semblance of independence if they are to successfully act as the agents of the monopolies.

British capital is at a critical transition point. Its traditional fields of investment are dying. New possibilities open up, but in a period of fierce world competition from younger rivals these are soon lost.

In the old days, British imperialism drew vast tribute from colonial investment and its power controlled the world market. It could buy off privileged sections of the working class, so that the

The Wool Industry (i)

Mergers present grim future for mill workers

A NEW wages and hours agreement which will undoubtedly have long-term and widespread effects throughout the whole of the wool-textile industry was announced on Thursday, November 5, in a joint statement issued by the Wool-combing Section (W.S.) of the National Union of General and Municipal Workers (NUGMW) and the firm of Woolcombers Ltd., Bradford.

Under the agreement, the minimum rate of pay is to be raised from £8 13s. 6d. to £10 per week. In addition, however, a double-day shift and a permanent night shift are to be introduced to enable the plant to be run 24 hours a day.

The joint statement says:

'Woolcombers Ltd. and the NUGMW (WS) have agreed on the introduction of shift-working arrangements at the Greenside Woolcombing Company.

'The arrangement agreed is for a double-day shift, changing over weekly, plus a permanent night shift. To meet the altered conditions, changes have been made in the wages structure giving rates for shift working and incentive payments.

'Although this is a departure from the accepted practice it has been agreed by both parties that in the interests of efficiency, economy, continuity of employment, and as a direct contribution towards the country's trading position, a review of the present working arrangement is essential.

'From the employees' standpoint, a high level of earnings will be achieved on an average working week of only 44 hours. Until the recent recession employees commonly worked up to 60 hours per week.

'Woolcombers Ltd. have been advised by Associated Industrial Consultants Ltd. in all investigations carried out since February 1964, and in all discussions with the NUGMW. It is felt that the arrangements made, which initially are for a trial period of three months will lead to the desirable results listed above for the company and the employees.'

Woolcombers Ltd. was formed in 1904 and emerged as the world's largest commission combing group. It had until recently thirteen branches in this country and four subsidiaries.

One of its latest acquisitions was the Bradford firm of Isaac

Holden and Sons Ltd., in 1962, which has two overseas associate companies, a wool and synthetic fibre combing firm in Ireland and a woolcombing concern in India.

In addition, the group has three associate companies in Belgium where it exerts considerable influence on the Belgian wool-textile industry.

In October this year, Woolcombers Ltd., acquired a further eight private companies, six of them in Bradford, in a merger involving £3,000,000.

The majority of companies involved were wool merchants and topmakers—previously customers of Woolcombers Ltd. This merger made Woolcombers the largest topmaking group in the world. It is understood that further acquisitions are imminent.

At the time of this latest merger, Mr. A. Guy Crowther, chairman of Woolcombers Ltd. made a press statement in which

Woolcombers Ltd., who added: 'I think it is the biggest advance in the woolcombing trade that I have ever known.'

Mr. Arthur Cross, the resident consultant of Associated Industrial Consultants, who devised the scheme, was more reticent and stressed that it could not be assumed that the set-up at Greenside could be transferred into another branch.

Despite the praise lavished on the agreement by union officials and members alike, one's suspicions must be immediately aroused by the way in which it has been handed to the union on a plate.

No fight whatsoever has been needed by the union. Indeed the agreement has been worked out in a spirit of friendly co-operation.

The union organiser, Mr. Nowill has said, for example, that work-study has been used in the investigation into con-

uncertainty in textiles, particularly in woolcombing.

Short time was being worked in wool-sorting and combing, and woollsorters were wholly unemployed.

In the opinion of the committee, shortage of work was 'partly due to increasing use of synthetic fibres, partly to grouping and rationalisation within the industry and partly to high wool prices'.

ICI offer?

There has been considerable speculation in the past few months that the mighty firm of Lister and Co. (at present part of the Aked group) is the subject of a further take-over bid from ICI (through Viyella) or Courtaulds.

Listers have mills throughout the area and in other parts of the world. Its largest mill in Manningham, Bradford, covers an area of 28 acres and its massive 225 foot high chimney, reputed to weigh some 80,000 tons, dominates the skyline of Bradford.

Almost all processes, carding, combing, spinning, roving, twisting, dyeing and finishing, and weaving are carried out under the one roof. At one time the mill was given over entirely to woolcombing—Listers being responsible for the development of the first effective woolcombing machines.

As well as manufacturing woollen and worsted cloth, Listers are now world famous for their velvets, silks, rugs and knitting wools.

Earlier this year, the Bradford



A handler with one of the dogs used on patrols at Denby's

Dyers' Association the world's largest dyeing and finishing company, was the subject of a take-over bid by Vyella International (ICI) and in June, Courtaulds acquired a 20 per cent stake in Charles Early and Marriot (Whitney), the blanket manufacturers.

On September 26, 'The Guardian's commercial editor reported: 'The merger movement in the textile industry goes on its way like a snowball. It is now spilling over the edges of cotton and man-made fibre into wool. . . . He went on to discuss a number of mergers taking place in the industry.'

From these developments a clear pattern emerges and certain conclusions can be drawn. Due to the intensive competition and the inability of small concerns to counteract this by the introduction of costly new machinery, large numbers of them will be closed down in the

coming period.

The most efficient of them will be taken over by the giant monopolies and this fate awaits even the largest concerns in the wool textile industry.

Old methods, not changed for generations must be swept away overnight if the industry is to survive.

As far as the workers in the industry are concerned the prospects are grim. Firstly, large-scale redundancy will be resultant. Secondly, in order to get the maximum returns from the machinery which will be introduced, the employers will require that the mills run non-stop, 24 hours a day, seven days a week, 52 weeks a year.

Those 'privileged' workers who are not declared redundant will be expected to work shifts, to keep up with the speed of the new machinery; machinery which all the time is being developed to work at faster speeds.

Denby dispute

Mobility of labour will be required. It will no longer be a case of one man, one job.

Workers will be expected to move from machine to machine, from job to job, from department to department.

On a small scale, this has been demonstrated in the year-old dispute at William Denby's dyeworks.

In this firm, where a closed shop was in operation, profits were falling. The management decided to introduce new machinery—but this required a reduced labour force.

A strike was provoked and on the grounds that the strike was a breach of agreement, 250 workers were dismissed. Blackleg labour was recruited and some of those originally dismissed were persuaded to return.

With a labour force only half the strength of that before the strike, but with an open shop, mobility of labour, and an end to 'restrictive practices', profits were increased by 70 per cent in less than a year.

Sugared pill

Seen in this light, the new wages agreement at Greenside mills is filled with a new content.

The increase in wages and the reduction in hours can be seen to be the sugar round the bitter pill to follow.

For a start, the workers at Greenside have agreed to the introduction of shift working. This can only be regarded as a prelude to the developments outlined above.

The refusal of Crowther, Woolcomber Ltd.'s managing director, to say whether or not it is intended to close down wool-combing plants, can be taken as an indication that such moves are envisaged. It is, of course, impossible to say precisely how and when these closures will take place—but that they will take place is certain.

It is absolutely imperative for big companies such as Woolcombers Ltd. that such closures

go through as smoothly as possible. The last thing they want is a united fight throughout the industry against redundancy.

They therefore have to prepare the ground beforehand. Their policy is to divide in order to continue to rule.

If they can get the unions' co-operation in dividing the workers, then the job is much easier, if not, then they will have to prepare for a direct confrontation with the unions.

This new agreement has the effect of giving privileges (small though they may be) to workers in one mill belonging to one company in the industry. If the firm decides to close one of its other plants, the prospect of a united fight against redundancy will therefore be considerably weakened.

Any such agreement should have been related to all the plants in the ownership of Woolcombers Ltd., as a minimum and should have included agreements in connection with redundancy.

At present the unions have no agreements whatsoever in this respect with the Wool Textile Employers' Council, and rely on trying, wherever an instance of redundancy occurs, to 'persuade' the firms concerned to make some severance payments.

Naturally, this does not

always meet with success. For example, workers declared redundant when Greenwood Whitley and Company closed their Bradford mill did not receive one penny in compensation, although many of them had been employed with the firm for periods ranging from 20 to 50 years.

If the unions concerned think that they will achieve any worthwhile redundancy agreements without a fight then they are wrong.

Commenting on the situation with regard to redundancy payments, Mr. Eric Brook, secretary of the Wool (and Allied) Textile Employers Council said recently:

' . . . it is not yet possible for the Council to put any proposals to the unions.'

Thus the union's connivance in bringing about the present agreement, far from deserving praise, can only be regarded as a gross act of betrayal. It is in step with the process of preparation for large-scale rationalisation of the industry, which the employers plan to carry through completely at the expense of the working class.

(Next week: The role of the unions)

Part one of an investigation by GEOFF PENN

he referred to the 'future rationalisation of woolcombing and topmaking sections'.

Asked if this meant the closing down of combs, he would only reply: 'That is an internal problem for Woolcombers.'

On the same day, Mr. F. T. Sobey, chairman of the Wool Textile Delegates said: 'The industry is well advised to organise itself on a highly competitive basis to withstand increasingly severe overseas competition.'

Praise

On the face of it, the new agreement which applies to only one plant and has been instituted for a trial period of three months, seems to be a wonderful step. Increased wages, coupled with a reduction in hours, are not to be sneezed at, but unjustified praise has been lavished on the agreement from all quarters.

Referring to the agreement, Mr. W. E. Nowill, the district organiser of the NUGMW, speaking at a meeting called to explain the scheme to shop stewards, said: 'We hope it will be successful and once it has been proved to be a success, opportunity might arise for it to be extended to other branches and possibly to the trade as a whole.'

Mr. George Beanland, union branch chairman and shop steward, described the agreement as the first step forward that had ever happened.

He was echoed by Mr. Arthur Firth, manager of the Greenside mill and technical director of

ditions with the full co-operation of the union. 'We would not have given our blessing to this unless we had been consulted.'

He added that 'the question of three-shift working, which means the full utilisation of the plant, is something that has got to be seriously considered by the whole country.'

In order to understand this agreement and the reasons for its introduction at this stage, one has to look at the whole position of the wool textile industry.

When Crowther speaks of 'rationalisation of the industry' (and Sokey refers to the need for the industry to 'organise itself on a highly competitive basis') they are in deadly earnest.

Faced with intensive competition from overseas, particularly Japan, together with the rapid growth of the synthetic fibre industries in this country (especially the development of ICI and Courtaulds) the situation facing the wool textile industry is indeed serious.

Take-overs

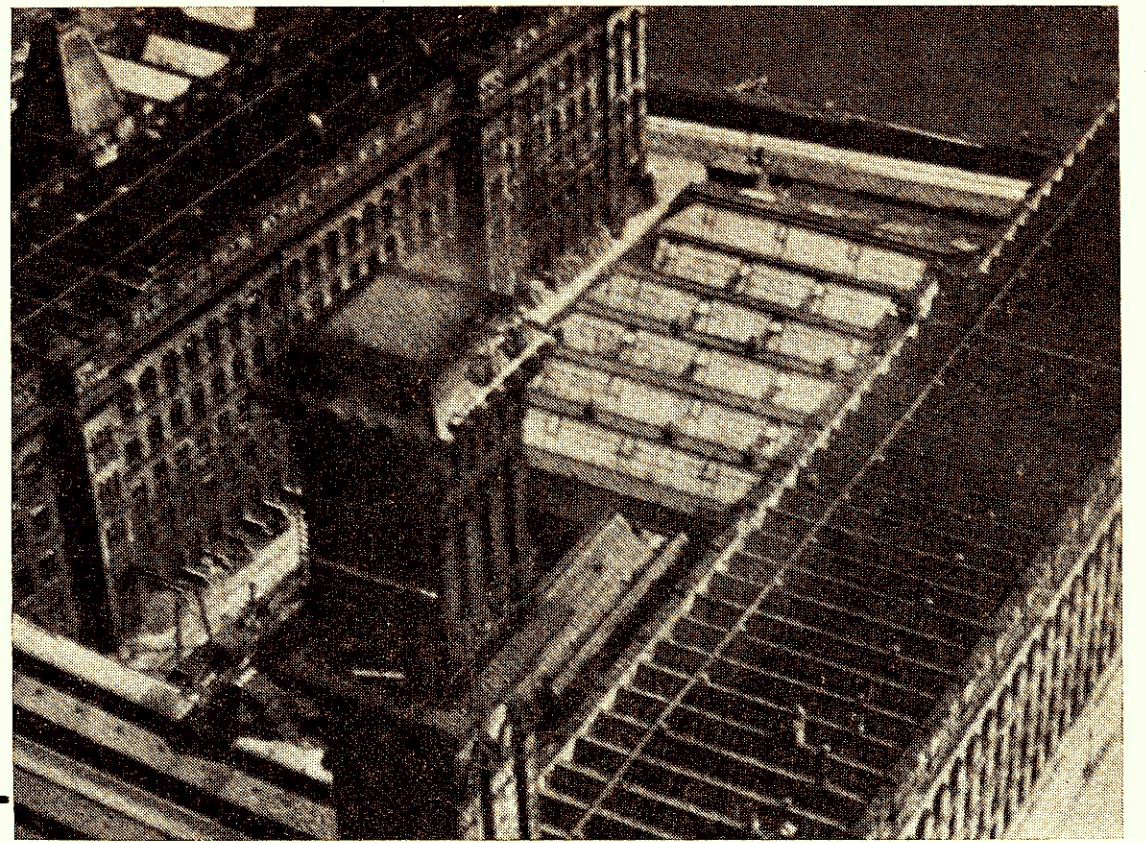
In order to become competitive, many more mergers must take place. Until recently, over 50 per cent of the wool-textile industry was concentrated in units employing less than 100 workers.

In the light of modern technical developments, with the vast expense required for the acquisition of the latest forms of machinery, this is an impossible situation.

Those concerns which are not taken over must inevitably go to the wall. Some, of course, will be taken over simply in order that they can be closed down.

In the past few months alone, announcements have been made regarding the proposed closure of at least five mills in the Bradford area. Others are expected in the near future. At least two of the mills to close—M. Firth and Co. Ltd. and Greenwood Whitley and Co.—are woolcombing concerns.

In late October, before the effect of any of the proposed closures had been felt, the Bradford and District Employment Committee reported some



Denby pickets at the entrance to the lane to the dyeworks on the lookout for blacklegs

Capitalist

DEEPENING rifts have appeared in recent months in the military and economic line-ups of the main capitalist states. De Gaulle is openly hostile to Washington's policy for Europe and threatens to quit the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation, set up in 1949 to prepare for war with the Soviet Union.

A deep division has appeared in the European Common Market at a time when, according to the Rome Treaty which brought it into being, it should be moving, within the next few years, towards greater political as well as economic integration.

Meanwhile Britain's 15 per cent import surcharge, which cuts across the efforts of the USA and other countries to reduce tariffs, has been badly received by her trading partners of the European Free Trade Area.

The apparent readiness of the Labour government to try to solve the problems of British capitalism by passing some of them on to other countries has not been appreciated.

The present flux in relations between the capitalist countries and the shifts and uncertainties in their policies must be seen against the background of a series of changes in international economic relations and politics.

1. The unifying pressures of the Cold War have been reduced. United States leadership and penetration of the European economies is no longer accepted unquestioningly. Some countries are now making understandings with the USSR which apparently conflict with the main aims of the so-called 'Western Alliance'.

2. Side-by-side with this has gone a change in the relative weights of the countries within the imperialist camp. While the absolute strength of the U.S.A. still remains decisive, that of Britain has continued to decline. This offers to the ruling class of France and Germany

the opportunity to play a more important role politically, since the economies upon which they rest have grown in power. This can be done either by playing an 'independent', i.e., anti-American, hand as de Gaulle has done, or by trying to become America's best friend in Europe, the policy of West Germany.

3. Despite the continuance of an overall boom, serious economic problems have been apparent in a number of countries. These problems—inflation, balance of payments and symptoms of decline or over-production in some industries—all have international implications.

Every measure taken to meet such problems involves action which quickly has repercussions on the world market. To put it briefly, it means that each capitalist country tries to solve its internal problems at the expense of other countries. This is the key to Britain's export surcharge, to the bitter disputes within the Common Market and to the conflict between the Americans and other countries over tariffs, currencies, monetary policy and control of industry.

4. If the solidarity of the capitalist countries can come under such strain in a period of relative prosperity, it is clear that if a recession sets in a real internecine struggle will be on.

Insofar as many experts now fear that the present prosperity cannot last for ever, and may be due to end within the next year or two, nervousness about what the next fellow will do to

Trade unions in the epoch of imperialist decay

By Leon Trotsky

A short, masterly and topical analysis of trends in monopoly capitalism and the prospects for the trade unions in the backward and advanced capitalist countries. Price 3d.

Senseless killings in the Congo says ex-mercenary

VIOUC civil war is raging in the Congo as rebel forces keep up their fight against the imperialist-backed Tshombe government.

U.S. government circles, reported a few weeks ago as considering the Congo situation as serious as that in South Vietnam, are looking around for some way of intervening.

That is what accounts for the international press outcry over the rebels' death sentence on American 'missionary' Dr. Paul Carlson on a charge of spying.

The U.S. has appealed to Jomo Kenyatta of Kenya, the former leader of Mau Mau, now a leading imperialist stooge who is the chairman of the Organisation for African Unity's special commission in the Congo, to intervene on Carlson's behalf.

'SAVAGERY'

Meanwhile, the U.S. press has published lurid accounts of the alleged 'savagery' of the rebel forces—ranging from corruption to senseless slaughter and mass burnings.

But some light was cast on what is really going on in the Congo in an interview with a British mechanic, who had been fighting as one of Tshombe's mercenaries, in Monday's 'Daily Express'.

Geoffrey Munn of Crawley said that he deserted from

Tshombe's forces because 'as a mercenary I found myself taking part in the indiscriminate slaughter of innocent women and children'.

Munn spoke of the reprisals they took after one of the government mercenaries was killed in a rebel ambush.

'As a reprisal we simply went to the nearest village where we were ordered to kill every man, woman and child, and then to set fire to everything.'

DESERTED

'A lot of the time we were fighting against groups of these young kids wearing death masks. They were quite without fear.'

Several other British mercenaries, attracted to the Congo army by the prospect of making big money, have already deserted on finding out just what they were expected to do.

So which side is really responsible for the present bloodshed in the Congo?

The blame must be laid with the imperialist nations which, through their constant intervention in the country and the murder of Patrice Lumumba, made this blood-thirsty civil war inevitable.

Ceylon Unions defend stateless Indians

THE Executive Committees of the Ceylon Workers' Congress and the Democratic Workers' Congress, whose members include many Tamil plantation workers, have now issued statements on their attitude towards the agreement reached between Mrs. Bandaranaike and Prime Minister Shastri of India.

DWC statement

The Democratic Workers' Congress in its statement says:

1. Initially the people should be allowed to exercise their choice to choose their nationality.
2. If in the exercise of the choice the numbers do not conform to the agreed figures, the two governments in consultation with the representative of the stateless should devise workable procedure to make up difference either way.
3. Those repatriable persons should have the right to proceed to India if they so desire even in excess of the number arrived at on the evenly phased basis.
4. The children of those who continue to remain here during the period of 15 years or till the age of 55 as envisaged in the agreement should have every facility to obtain employment until their time of repatriation.
5. The Government of Ceylon should grant citizenship to the 300,000 people immediately on completion of the prescribed register. The Government of India should issue either Indian nationality certificates or other travel documents to the 525,000 persons to be repatriated to India.
6. The repatriables who desire to send their families or their children for the purpose of education in India in advance should have the facility to make remittance out of their earnings for maintenance of their families and children until their final departure.
7. The repatriables should be granted facilities to travel between India and Ceylon freely pending their final repatriation.

CWC statement

The Ceylon Workers' Congress statement includes the following points:

1. There shall be no compulsion or coercion exercised on any person with regard to his being repatriated to India. Only those who opt or can be induced to go shall be repatriated. The figure of 525,000 should be considered as the numerical limit of the persons whom India will accept.
2. Those who are conferred Ceylon Citizenship shall be fully-fledged Ceylon citizens and shall be considered as part and parcel of the Ceylonese nation. They shall be absolutely indistinguishable in status and rights from the rest of the permanent population of this country and shall not be denied equal political, economic, social and other rights.
3. They shall be placed in the general electoral register of this country.
4. Immediately on the exercise of the option a person to be repatriated shall be conferred Indian citizenship.
5. Similarly Ceylon citizenship shall be conferred on a person immediately on his name being entered in the Register of those who the Ceylon Government considers as Ceylon nationals.
6. Those on whom Indian citizenship is to be conferred

should not during their stay in Ceylon be discriminated or any disabilities placed in respect of educational, employment and travel facilities.

7. Those who are to be repatriated shall not be denied the right to take with them the entirety of their savings, provident fund benefits, etc.

8. The preparation of registers shall be completed within a period of six months.

9. No impediment shall be placed on any one of the repatriable persons if they think it convenient to leave for India at any time during the prescribed period of 15 years even in excess of the number fixed for that particular year.

10. No legislation or administrative action shall be introduced during the 15 years which would be discriminatory or detrimental to the people of Indian origin covered under the agreement.

La Gauche holds back YS struggle

By PETER ARNOLD

THE November 14 edition of 'La Gauche' carries an article praising the 'Left turn in the Jong Socialisten' (the Flemish socialist youth movement).

Commenting on the decisions that this organisation passed at its recent conference, 'La Gauche' states: 'The closeness of these positions with those defended in our paper is striking, and needs no comment.'

The resolutions, calling for the withdrawal of Belgium from NATO and censuring the General Secretary of the Belgian Socialist Party for calling out the police against student demonstrators, do testify to the growing militancy of the youth.

However, 'La Gauche' betrays its Pabloite affiliations when it states that no comments are necessary on the resolutions. If this conference is not to remain a mere show of militancy, but is to lead to socialist action by this section of Belgian youth, much comment and help is needed.

GLOSS OVER

Many of the resolutions and actions of the conference are confused and can only lead to disillusionment and defeat.

In commenting on the fraternal delegations, 'La Gauche' finds it 'astonishing' that the Walloon Young Socialists, the JGS, were not represented. It does not, of course, attempt to explain why they were not there, or why they should have been.

'La Gauche' prefers to gloss over these points. Similarly, the paper states that the conference criticised the JGS, but does not say what the criticism was, nor whether it was correct. It contents itself with saying that the criticism that the 'Jong Socialisten' make of the Party leadership 'is nonetheless a gesture of solidarity towards the J.G.S.' and that they demand an end to proscriptions against the JGS.

This is the Pabloite method all over. The real issues are glossed over, while everything is done to pretend that disagreements are really 'unity' in disguise.

CONFUSED

This method leads 'La Gauche' to its position of no comment on the more confused aspects of the 'Jong Socialisten' programme.

The conference resolutions support those 'who have taken up arms to impose their right to self-determination'. Belgian policy in the Congo is condemned because 'under the cover of technical assistance, it consists of giving effective support to the enemies of a popular uprising'.

These positions, and many others put forward at the conference reveal laudable intentions, but show no Marxist understanding of imperialism, or

what lies behind the struggles for which they express their solidarity.

Unless this leadership is provided, the 'Jong Socialisten' will go the way of so many militant youth organisations in the past—that is, by devious ways, and through many disappointments, it will break up and disintegrate.

Belgian Young Socialists should follow carefully the struggle of the British Young Socialists in their magnificent fight against the right wing.

'La Gauche' knows this. Why does it not give the leadership that it knows is needed?

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Stalinists wreck 21-demands struggle

CEYLON Stalinists have wrecked the struggle for the Twenty-one Demands. Mr. Peter Keuneman, and the three trade unions which he represents, walked out of a meeting of the Joint Committee of trade union organisations which met to finalise the presentation of the Twenty-one Demands to the government and private sector.

Apparently he disagreed with a decision of the majority who were of the opinion that the demands should be presented without any political preamble, because the trade unions concerned represented various political views.

A meeting of the five remaining trade union organisations, CIUF, CMU, CCTU, CWC and DWC will be held on November 24 to redraft the Twenty-one Demands for presentation to the private sector.

The split took place when Mr. Keuneman insisted that the political preamble should not attack the government, but rather the 'reactionary vested interests'. This was done in order to leave the way open for the Communist Party to join the coalition. A delegate representing one of the unions which opposed the Stalinists said:

'Mr. Keuneman has wrecked the unity of the trade unions as surely as the LSSP trade unions had earlier wrecked the unity of the Joint Committee of Trade Union Organisations. By insisting on a political preamble which suited his politics he has prevented any unity among the trade unions for the presentation of the Twenty-one Demands.'

WORLD NEWS ROUND-UP



alliances in the melting pot

reduce the effects in his country tends to increase.

This involves much coming and going between capitals, many hypocritical speeches and insincere handshaking. But nobody can doubt that when the chips are down it will be every man for himself.

In Europe there are really only three states which can aspire to anything resembling an 'independent' international policy: Britain, France and West Germany. The best the others can do is to attach themselves to some other power, or group of powers, or to form some kind of grouping with other countries in a like case to manoeuvre to protect their interests.

Even Britain, France and West Germany are unable to support the economic burdens of pursuing an entirely independent policy in the age of the hydrogen bomb.

In the last resort all three are bound to depend on the United States, still the dominant factor in the military constellation of imperialism.

Britain which, under the Tories, aimed at such independence, had to accept the Nassau agreement imposed by Kennedy. Continued decline as a world power re-enforces the argument of the 'realists' for acceptance of a military pattern determined by Washington.

West Germany, still militarily weak, has always held close to the American line and seeks to make use of the current trend towards a greater integration of the forces of NATO to acquire a political standing more in keeping with her economic power.

France, under de Gaulle, has come out most truculently against American leadership and for the building up of a so-called independent nuclear striking force.

The policies of those states are the result of internal pressures representing the interests of the ruling class, or of some dominant interest, as it faces up to the conflicting social forces within its own frontiers.

Thus, at any one time, there will not only be differences over policy, which may at times be sharp, concerning the methods to achieve certain objectives but there will be clamour from particular groups seeking satisfaction on special questions.

For reasons of electoral tactics, especially, it may be necessary to make concessions to such groups. An example of this is provided currently by the dispute over agricultural prices and tariffs inside the Common Market. The French peasants and agrarian interests want to be able to dispose of their surpluses more easily within the ECM by a reduction in tariffs as soon as possible.

The German peasants, on the other hand, produce at costs which will make them uncompetitive if French agricultural products can enter the German market more easily. Both de Gaulle and Erhard have elections next year and count upon receiving the rural vote.

In fact, the European Common Market, once heralded as a great step towards the lowering of state frontiers and the reduction of national differences, has

become an arena of bitter struggle between conflicting economic and political interests.

The Germans, while opposing freer interchange of agricultural products, have proposed a more rapid reduction of industrial tariffs—from which their powerful industry stands to gain.

De Gaulle, meanwhile, is unlikely to accept the loss of French sovereignty involved in the increasing powers which should be invested in the Council of Ministers of the ECM within the next two or three years. In fact, unless ways are found of bridging present Franco-German differences the ECM may no longer exist by then.

German policy towards ECM is obviously related not only to the needs of German industry for an expanding market—which the countries of the Six cannot alone supply—but to the aim of playing a more prominent political role in Europe—which means at French expense.

At the same time, in France and Germany, there is concern in some business circles at the growing influence of American capital in both countries. To meet this threat the working out of a common policy would be necessary which, to have any prospect of success, would require the support of Britain as well.

As things are going, the political and economic rivalries seem to be uppermost, while U.S. capital continues to spread its tentacles into Europe, and the whole European economy becomes more subject to monopoly control. As the journal 'Common Market', published in

Hostility between Europe's three leading countries, France, Germany and Britain over economic questions and military line-ups threaten to fragment NATO and the Common Market. TOM KEMP looks at the political implications of the present flux in relations.

Holland puts it: 'The "real" economic integration will go on, proceeding silently and swiftly through mergers, cartelisation agreements and other forms of effective economic penetration.'

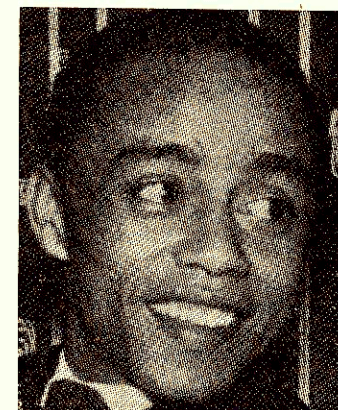
Many spokesmen of European business clearly believe that de Gaulle's method of meeting the American threat cannot succeed because it is conceived in too narrowly nationalistic terms. It is interesting to see 'The Economist' writing 'a majority of Europeans [the writer means capitalists] would agree with the general view that Western Europe ought to become a centre of economic power that in some sense balances the existing North American centre of economic power. But the best way of making sure that Europe expands its economic power is to develop European industry on the basis of the widest possible market'.

The wording is vague and general, but it does express uneasiness about American economic power and the aim is some European economic grouping wider than the European Common Market and including Britain.

The formation of such a wider association seems the most unlikely outcome of the present period of flux. The contradictions between the main capitalist countries in Europe are deep and pervasive. It is inconceivable that Britain could go into such an association except on favourable terms for British capital—but the continued relative decline in Britain's economic power decreases the chances that her rivals will grant them.

Letter from Hon. Secretary Alexander Defence Committee

ALEXANDER APPEAL



HELD UP BY SOUTH AFRICANS

A FURTHER repressive and inhuman act by the South African authorities is preventing a date being fixed for the appeal of Dr. Neville Alexander and his 10 associates.

They are appealing against prison sentences of up to 10 years.

The prison authorities have debarred the defendants' lawyers from contacting Dr. Alexander and his six male comrades detained on Robbenns Island to discuss legal steps and to get their signatures which are required before the appeal can take place.

Lawyers have been able to see the four women (including Alexander's 26-year-old sister) held in Worcester Prison and get the necessary signatures.

The eleven were arrested in July 1963 under the 90-day Nottrial Clause and tried for 'sabotage' in November. They were found guilty, even though the Judge himself admitted that they had neither committed nor even prepared a single act of sabotage!

An appeal has been lodged because of certain irregularities, e.g., the instructions of Alexander to his counsel were opened and read by the secret police, though this was refused on the general merits of the case.

Acts of solidarity and appeals for financial support for Dr. Alexander and his comrades first manifested themselves in Germany and then spread to England, America, Japan and Ireland, where at various universities and institu-

tions, defence committees have been set up.

In Britain, the work of the committee is bringing in good results. During the last three weeks Defence and Aid of Christian Action—the body responsible for getting money to South Africa, have received over £200. A social held last Saturday at Africa Unity House in London made £50. Money is being collected from Labour Party, trade union and Young Socialists branches as well as from shop floors, universities and groups of interested individuals.

Socialists can play a big role in helping to bring about the downfall of the white-supremacist Verwoerd government. The fight of Dr. Alexander and his co-thinkers is our fight. The struggle of every opponent of apartheid is an inherent part of our struggle to bring about a socialist Britain free from race hate and bigotry.

Will Newsletter readers please help by rushing their personal donations to Defence and Aid (Alexander Appeal), Christian Action, 2 Amen Court, London, E.C.4, and by taking a collection among their workmates and friends. Collection sheets and further information can be got from me.

Connie Kirkby, Hon. Secretary, Alexander Defence Committee, 27 Thurlsey House, Holmewood Gardens, London, S.W.2.

Victory for Rubber Workers

Linwood workers threatened by redundancy

Newsletter Correspondent

AT the Linwood, Scotland, factory of Rootes Motors the management are opposing the workers' demands that the drop in production of the Imp car be dealt with by the continuation of a four-day week.

Rootes management want to sack 400 workers and place the remaining 2,200 on a five-day week. This would, say the management, give them a 'realistic production rate'.

Rootes have been on a four-day week since August. Before then the workers on the car track conducted a determined struggle to raise their pay and against the steady build-up in the production rate.

The track workers were defeated when other men in the factory were transferred on to the track with the connivance of the factory shop stewards and local trade union officials. Loss of jobs at Rootes also threatens the workers at Pressed Steel. The two factories are likely to lose a total of 800 jobs by January if there is no reduction in the working week.

SETBACK

Statements of the management indicate that they hope to tide over the present drop in demand for the Imp car, 'a temporary setback after the Motor Show', said a management spokesman.

It will take more than friendly chats and hopeful statements by trade union officials to make Rootes change their minds about the sackings.

In fact the continuation of discussions to find a suitable formula is a simple ruse to find terms on which the trade union leaders and the management can best get the 400 workers sacked.

The way to tackle the problem was shown by the Rootes track workers during the summer. To begin to build a united force to fight the management, not to try and talk them round.

Both factories should fight for a shorter working week with no loss of pay, and force Rootes and Pressed Steel to agree.

BROADLY BASED

The newly-elected MP for West Wiltshire announced last week that he would seek to raise the matter of the Linwood plant on an adjournment of the House of Commons. He said that he had repeatedly raised the question of the absence of a 'broadly based industry at Linwood' during his election campaign.

This is the same as the direction of industry argument. The ownership of industry by private capitalist concerns is all right, what is required is to force these firms to accept 'control'.

What the MP should be raising with the Labour government is the demand that the motor industry be nationalized. A demand which is being raised from the workers on the shop floor at Linwood.

Youth and workers march through Southall

By our Industrial Correspondent

RUBBER workers at the Woolf factory in Southall, Middlesex, returned to work on Monday after winning a victory over the management on the question of one of their workmates, who was suspended three weeks ago.

Nearly 500 men—the majority are Indians—all members of the Transport and General Workers' Union, walked out of the factory after a worker was suspended for alleged violence against a foreman.

In bitterly cold weather pickets manned the gates, determined that they should win a fight which was in effect an attack on their trade union organisation.

Reported

The sacked worker could not speak English and when asked by his foreman for his clock number he answered by using signs. He was reported by the foreman.

After the millshop walked out, the night shift were locked out when they arrived to start work.

Many of the Indian workers who are employed at the factory have proved those slanderers who say that it is the immigrants who do not want to join the trade unions, to be totally wrong.

For nearly a year the men have successfully fought to establish a strong trade union in the factory and since the strike membership has risen to nearly 100 per cent.

The role of the trade union officials, many of them supporters of the Communist Party, has been one of cringing before the employers. Soon after the strike started they tried to get the men back to work, but they were greeted with a very firm 'No'.

Support

It is only because of the militant strength of the men out on strike that the dispute was won at all. In this fight they received the support of hundreds of members of the Young Socialists movement throughout London.



Woolf workers on the march. Mr. Singh, chairman of the strike committee (with raised arm) leads the slogan shouting. The reinstated worker is at his side (wearing a trilby hat)

On Saturday, November 14, 350 Young Socialists marched through Southall to show their solidarity with the Woolf strikers. Many of the young people carried banners saying 'Nationalize Woolf's', and 'Repeal the Tory Immigration Act'.

This youth was the only section of the Labour movement to give support of any kind to the strikers. True to the policies of the Young Socialists they showed that in action the only way to defeat the employers was by uniting sections of workers together to fight for trade union conditions.

But whilst the Young Socialists gave their complete support to the Woolf strikers, the Stalinists in the local union were busy urging the men to ignore an invitation to march on a political demonstration.

Refused

When members of Southall Young Socialists went along to a union meeting the morning before the demonstration, they were refused admittance by the Stalinists.

However, the chairman of the strike committee, B. A. Singh and a number of other workers said that the Young Socialists should be invited in to speak to the meeting, where they were thanked for the part they had played in supporting the strike.

The Stalinists did their best to dissuade the strikers from attending the demonstration but the large contingent of Woolf's workers who appeared on the march in the late afternoon showed that very little notice was taken of this cowardly warning.

This demonstration through Southall is, in fact, the first of its kind held by members of the Labour movement for some time and it was clear that such a presentation of unity between industrial action and socialist policies was badly needed.

Shame

To their shame the Labour leaders and the Communist Party have refused to take up the problems of low wages and bad housing in areas like Southall, where there is a high coloured population.

Instead they leave the working class prone to all kind of prejudices and backwardness such as the kind of racism put around by the fascists.

It has been left to the Young Socialists to give a lead and this they did in Southall, showing that every confidence can be placed in them to lead such struggles in the future.

Leicester rubber workers' strike threat

THREE hundred rubber workers at the Leicester factory of John Bull-Metalastik Ltd., virtually an entire production line, are threatening strike action if the management still refuse to consider their wage claim in its present form.

The men, who are members of the National Association of Clerical and Supervisory Staffs, which is linked with the Transport and General Workers' Union, are claiming £1 a week wage increase for chargehands.

At a mass meeting on Sunday, members of the Association decided unanimously to seek power to strike from the National Executive of the Transport and General Workers' Union.

A spokesman of the TGWU said on Monday that the union members were incensed about the delaying tactics of the management. He stated that John Bull-Metalastik played a key role in motor car production, manufacturing shock suspension, hoses and other products for the British Motor Corporation and that a strike could cause chaos in the industry.

A large proportion of the workers at the factory are Indians and many of them showed great interest in the recent Newsletter report on the struggle of Indian TGWU members at the Southall rubber firm of Woolf's. In Leicester, Indian rubber workers are also proving themselves loyal members of their union.

Stewards defy officials

From Our Coventry Correspondent

OVER 400 shop stewards representing the engineering workers in Coventry, decided on Monday night to defy their national officials and to advise workers in the motor factories and engineering factories in the district to take their 1965 holidays from July 9 to July 26.

Earlier this year national

Aberdeen welders' victory Tory MP intervenes

Our Scottish Correspondent

LADY TWEEDSMUIR, the Tory MP for South Aberdeen has asked the Minister of Labour, Mr. Ray Gunter what action he intends to take to resolve the situation at the Aberdeen shipyard of Hall, Russell & Co.

The situation referred to by Lady Tweedsmuir relates to a successful strike by 100 welders, members of the Boilermakers' Society, who imposed a local levy which, it is understood, was for the purpose of supporting a dispute involving apprentices. Two welders refused to pay the levy.

Regarding this as an anti-trade union action, the rest of the welders refused to work with the two and came out on strike. Union officials refused to recognise the strike and made every effort to get the men to return to work, but the welders stubbornly refused.

Notice

The strike continued for three weeks, when the management finally gave the two welders a month's notice. The rest of the men then returned to work on November 2.

During the strike, Hall, Russell & Co. wrote to Mr. Ray Gunter and Ministry of Labour officials took the matter up with the Boilermakers' Society. Further discussions have taken place since the men resumed work, and the Minister of Labour assured Lady Tweedsmuir that his officers would 'continue to keep in close touch'.

The two dismissed men are now working the third week of their notice, and it is clear that the matter is not considered closed so far as the union officials are concerned, since they have arranged to meet with the welders who came out on strike during this week.

What is involved in the Hall, Russell dispute is an attempt to stop what is now being termed 'restrictive practices' by trade unionists.

Late news

FOLLOWING a meeting between union officials and the welders at Hall, Russell's shipyard, Aberdeen, the management say the two dismissed men have been reinstated at the request of the rest of the men. It is understood the matter is to be discussed in Parliament on Tuesday, and that the Minister of Labour is expected to speak.

Union officials try to stop pit strike

By MICKIE SHAW

MINERS at the Polkemmet pit (Scotland), have been on strike for over a week—the dispute began when men working in wet conditions were not allowed to finish 25 minutes early.

The whole pit came out after it was alleged that junior officials had been working in the section where the original dispute began.

As on previous occasions, the officials of the Scottish National Union of Mineworkers entered the dispute to get the men to return to work. Three meetings have been called for this purpose but the men have remained solid and refused to go back.

Miners at Polkemmet have conducted a militant battle over a number of years with the management at this pit and with the National Coal Board and the officials of the SNUM, who have always intervened to get the men to accept procedure.

It is not long since the SNUM instructed the men at Polkemmet that no pithead meetings would be allowed and that all disputes over working conditions and pay must be taken to the branch meeting.

OPPOSITION

This meant, of course, that militant opposition to bad working conditions or unsatisfactory pay would not be taken up immediately and would not be supported by the union.

Behind the walk-out by the miners at Polkemmet is the growing resistance of Scottish miners to the speed-up in production, which is being forced ahead in a drive to make the area pay its way.

Production per man shift has now been pushed up to the national average. This has been achieved by closures on the one hand and the introduction of machinery on the other.

The effects of closures are not minimised by moving miners away from their homes. Evidence of this are the reports of miners returning to Scotland from coalfields in England because of inadequate pay and insecurity of employment.

WELL AHEAD

Modern methods of coal getting and conveying it to the surface are well ahead in the new large pits which are being developed. At the new power station at Longannet, Fifeshire, coal will be conveyed by a system from four large collieries and controlled by a computer. The employment of miners in this area will be increased from 900 to 2,000.

Miners at Polkemmet and other old pits, however, will be forced to work at the pace set by increased mechanisation.

In other words, increased productivity in the mines is to be achieved entirely at the expense of the miners.

Miners at Polkemmet and other militant pits have conducted a tenacious struggle against any deterioration in their conditions. But individual pits cannot defeat the aims of the National Coal Board.

What is now required in the Scottish coalfields is the forming of a militant rank and file committee, representing all the major pits and coal producing areas, to hammer out a policy and programme of demands to safeguard and improve the working conditions of the miners. Also to begin a determined fight against the leadership of the NUM which obstructs all militant policies and action.

Cannon

From page 1

It is not accidental that Mr. Cannon takes up the demand for higher wages for the lower paid workers at the same time as the port employers, for instance.

With the reorganisation of industry and automation, the lower-paid, unskilled workers are the ones who will be sacked in thousands. It is in the interests of the employers to hold down the wages of the higher paid, while hoodwinking the lower-paid to accept the reorganisation of industry.

What is most dangerous about the Cannon proposals is that the wages of the lower paid should be increased, not at the expense of the employers and idle shareholders, but at the expense of the higher-paid workers who, through strong trade union organisation, have succeeded in winning better

Motormen are guinea pigs

NEWSLETTER REPORTER

RANK and file delegates brushed aside the call of the Associated Society of Locomotive Engineers and Firemen officials for a return to normal working at their meeting last Sunday at the Amersham Arms, New Cross, London.

Some of the unofficial leaders, who have been in favour of renewed negotiations with the management after calling off the go-slow, were surprised by a resolution from the floor which called for a continuation of the struggle until the demands for more pay were met.

After a stormy meeting the resolution received a very large majority.

HAND IN HAND

A press spokesman reported after the meeting: 'We are the first region to be completely modernised and we find that a reduction in our standards of living go hand in hand with modernisation. We are the guinea pigs. They are trying us out first.'

'Since 1959 there are about 1,000 drivers less due to modernisation. We therefore think a bonus payment is completely justified by increased productivity—especially since more passengers are being carried.'

'Cover men' have been cut out so that if someone does not turn up, in case of sickness, the management think nothing of cancellations.

'We are opposed to cancellations because they cause inconvenience to the public. It is the management that attacks the public, not us.'

SET THE PACE

When asked about the Labour government's attitude to the railways, he commented: 'I am a socialist myself but the policy seems to be little different from the Tories. They are pegging our wages to set the pace in private industry.'

(Motormen will note that the MPs are in the process of granting themselves a handsome increase.)

Liberals and Tories along with the capitalist press are busy using the motormen's go-slow to create anti-union feeling amongst the middle classes and the fixed income groups. This sets the right atmosphere for anti-union legislation.

Motormen cannot win their struggle in isolation. The growing unrest amongst London busmen should soon offer chances of united action. This would bring transport workers up against the Labour government in no time, hence the need for a political struggle on socialist policies.

Leaders will tie unions to state (from page 1)

exploitation of the class as a whole, including the colonial workers, could continue peacefully.

The Labour leaders negotiated the payment of these bribes, not forgetting to give themselves a share.

But today, the world position of British capitalism means that it can no longer afford such luxury. What few concessions are granted turn out to be in counterfeit.

The era of automation demands new, streamlined unions with modern types of leaders. These men will have to keep their members under tight control, while maintaining even closer links with the boards of the monopolies and the capitalist state machine.

The state itself will intervene more in the running of the unions, as Gunter hinted last year, and as the ETU witch-hunt demonstrated.

The Wilson administration is

in charge of one stage of this transition. It is a delicate operation, endangered by the slightest resistance from the ranks.

'Left' leaders in the unions and in the Labour Party play a vital role at this stage. They act as a fake guarantee that the workers' interests are being looked after.

By making a noise like a militant from time to time, men like Ted Hill and Her Majesty's Minister of Technology, Frank Cousins, can give the impression to many workers that everything is going according to plan.

They omit to say whose plan. This is where Stalinism can come into the picture. Even in its present decrepit state, the Communist Party of Great Britain can help to siphon off opposition to the Labour leaders. In the 'Daily Worker's' comments on Wilson's decisions, criticism has all but vanished.

J. R. Campbell, in last Saturday's 'Worker', managed to dis-

cuss the plan for an incomes policy without a word of criticism for the union leaders who are going to accept it.

Gollan tells us we should support Wilson when he acts in the interests of the workers, and oppose him when he doesn't. This is to confuse the whole issue, for every action of the Labour leaders is today part of the plans of the monopolies, even the apparent concessions.

Just as the employers need new strategies in this period, so do the workers.

At the time of the post-war boom, the old type of union militant, 'non-political' or vaguely attached to the CP, could force some concessions from the employers.

But today, when every concession is a danger to the boss, this kind of trade unionism is inadequate.

The plans of the monopolies will entail the splitting of the working class in many ways. Not

only racialism will be employed for this purpose. Skilled workers will be set against unskilled, those in expanding industries against workers in declining areas, older workers against youngsters.

To unite the class against all these attempts by the bosses and their hangers-on requires an understanding of the fight of the working class as a whole, and the need to smash capitalism altogether.

As the state intervenes increasingly in industry, the industrial fight becomes more and more a political fight. When the Labour bureaucrats, backed by the state, tighten their grip on union democracy, the rank and file must organise politically to beat them.

The Socialist Labour League, building a movement based on Marxist theory, is a vital necessity if trade unionists are to avoid the trap laid for them by the employers.