

# The Newsletter

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## As the Port Talbot battle hots up — Solidarity grows for the strikers

● At Colville's, Lanarkshire, steel workers threatened a 24-hour strike in support of the Port Talbot men.

● On Monday, in London's West India Docks, the tally clerks, who are members of the TGWU, decided to black any large quantities of steel that might help undermine the strikers' position at the Steel Company of Wales.

● The Sheffield District and Divisional Committees of the AEU have both passed resolutions pledging full support for the Port Talbot strikers. They are to send financial support.

● The Port Talbot Trades Council last week lifted the infamous 'black circular', which banned and proscribed the Communist Party.

● Moves are afoot in Port Talbot to organise joint demonstrations of all the six craft unions who are locked out and are being refused dole money.

It is by actions like these that the struggle in Port Talbot will be won. The steps reported above should be only pointers to further and more extensive actions by the labour movement.

This dispute is not merely over craftsmen's wages in one particular steel works. The right to organise in unions is in jeopardy.

And underlying the strike is the decisive question of whether or not the working class will benefit from the increased wealth produced by automation, instead of paying for it with redundancy and the dole queue.

### Committed

Trade union solidarity inside Port Talbot and wide support from the labour movement outside it are vitally necessary.

It is no good calling upon 'the Ministry of Labour and all responsible public bodies' as the Communist Party has done. These bodies are not unbiassed. They are firmly committed to serve the interests of the employers.

Lifting the ban on the Communist Party and joint demonstrations by all the craft unions inside Port Talbot are the first steps towards the necessary unity. But the strike cannot be won unless the production workers of BISA KTA and the TGWU in the works are actively

by  
**Peter Arnold**

brought in to support the strikers.

They stand to lose as much as anyone if the strike fails and the management is allowed to impose its terms for automation and speed-up.

The ruthlessness of the management in the lock-out is a foretaste of its ruthlessness should the strike fail. The production workers, as the overwhelming majority of the workers employed in the plant, hold the key to victory over the management.

### Determined

At least one BISA KTA branch in the works has come out in favour of the strikers. The craftsmen must actively work to win the support of more of them.

The rejection of the TUC proposals by the AEU aggregate meeting on Monday shows that the rank and file members of the union are determined to

**The locked-out ETU members at Port Talbot who are not receiving unemployment pay have launched an appeal for funds, with the agreement of their executive council. Donations should be sent to T. Lyons, 98 Woodfield Street, Morriston, Swansea, Glamorganshire.**

fight on despite the attempts of their so-called 'representatives' to get them back to work.

These leaders know that a sell-out (or in their terms 'an agreement acceptable to the management') is difficult to impose on workers out on strike.

If they can be got back to work, the men are less likely to strike again over the same issue and it is therefore easier to impose agreements on them.

This was the lesson of the Ford's strike in 1962. The men returned to work on the union leaders' promise that there would be no victimisation.

Once they were safely working again, the 17 shop stewards were sacrificed in the interest of 'agreement'.

The TUC must not be allowed to impose any such 'agreement' on the workers of Port Talbot.

Pressure on the strikers continues to mount, with the CP's 'responsible public bodies' in the lead. The government, not satisfied with refusing the ETU men from SCOW their dole money, is also refusing it to ETU contracting workers who have been thrown out of work as a result of the lock-out.

The argument used to justify this move is that their union subs would go towards the ETU lock-out fund and thus public money would be being used to subsidise men involved in a dispute.

### Ridiculous

The logic of this argument would be to stop the dole of all unemployed ETU and AEU men all over the country. This ridiculous argument is made even more ridiculous when one considers that unemployed union members do not pay dues anyway!

Clearly this refusal to pay dole money is merely one more way of trying to cause bad feeling between the unions, in the hope that the ETU men will blame the AEU for the government's actions.

The government's plan to set up a court of inquiry if the men return to work is tantamount to handing the trade union leaders a sell-out formula on a plate. If the men go back and a bad agreement is foisted on them, the union leaders can nevertheless protest their innocence.

### Difficulty

The local council's actions are hardly praiseworthy. The council normally runs a rent relief scheme, granting a reduction of 5s. a week to tenants who are in any financial difficulty.

Naturally, during the lock-out, a great many of the tenants are in precisely such difficulty.

Many of the workers have applied for rent reductions. But the council has stopped issuing forms and is referring the matter to a committee.

This Labour-controlled council seems very reluctant to help the workers whose interests it is supposed to serve, at a time when help is badly needed.

If the government is unwilling to give public money to 'subsidise workers engaged in a dispute', it was far from unwilling to use great amounts of

(Cont. on page 2, col. 1)

## THERE MUST BE NO COMPROMISE AT SCOW

by The Editor

THE Steel Company of Wales has slammed the door in the face of the seven craft unions who went to negotiate for their members to return to work.

This is virtually a declaration of war on the trade union movement. It can be described as the follow-up to the defiance of the Ford management in their victimisation of the 17 shop stewards just over a year ago.

Unless the trade union movement is prepared to meet this challenge and mobilise its full resources against the Steel Company of Wales then there should be no doubt in anyone's mind that the employers as a whole will press their demands to reduce wages and working conditions in the coming months.

### WASTED TIME

Sir William Carron, and his lieutenant, Mr. John Boyd, have talked about a fight to a finish. A meeting with shop stewards representing their craftsmen in the steel industry is shortly to be held in Carlisle.

It is not disclosed that Sir William has any plans for this meeting apart from providing and receiving information. This is just not enough.

George Woodcock, secretary of the Trades Union Congress, wasted his, and everybody else's time, trying to find a compromise solution with the steel owners. In the end neither the men nor the steel owners took any notice of him.

This is how it will be on all real class issues from now on. There is little room for compromise in the Port Talbot dispute.

### GLIB TALK

Speaking in Birmingham on January 19, at what has been described as the opening shots in the general election campaign, Mr. Harold Wilson cracked jokes about 'the grouse moor conceptions of Tory leaders', but he remained silent about the dispute at Port Talbot although Labour is pledged to the re-nationalization of steel.

He talked glibly about the scientific revolution but carefully refrained from explaining that it was this 'scientific revolution' under capitalism which is behind the dispute at Port Talbot. New machinery is about to be installed and, once under production, the craftsmen on strike know they will lose their jobs unless they fight now.

Wilson talks about the advancement of science as if the working class own and control the means of production.

This is a sleight-of-hand form of argument. Labour cannot advance science in a socialist direction one inch unless the basic means of production are in the hands of the working class.

It is all very well to describe the Tories in the same terms as the grouse on the English moors,



Wilson: silent on Port Talbot

but the Tory grouse is a class-conscious grouse. The prime minister, Sir Alec Douglas-Home, did not waste any time in his speech at Swansea on Monday, January 20, in coming to the defence of the Steel Company of Wales.

An important section of his speech was devoted to laying the blame on the striking workers by playing up the hardships of their families in an effort to divide them from their menfolk on strike.

Wilson is silent at Birmingham, but the Tory prime minister is class conscious at Swansea.

The Labour leaders can joke as much as they like, but these are the facts. Harold Wilson refuses to lead a campaign in support of the party's policy for the re-nationalization of steel, and therefore cannot come to the defence of his supporters in the Port Talbot dispute.

### DOOMED

A Labour government which retreats in this way under his leadership will be doomed to disaster, just as the 1931 government of MacDonald was.

The monopoly capitalists and big financiers want their pound of flesh from the backs of the working class in the shape of increased profits and reduced costs. Without these things British capitalism faces disaster on the world markets with a balance of payments which staggers from month to month in a most precarious way.

A Labour government elected in 1964 will meet a vastly different situation than the Labour government of 1945. Port Talbot is a warning.

Unless Labour campaigns not only for the re-nationalization of steel but for the nationalization of all the basic industries and the institution of workers' control then the door will be open for the triumph of authoritarian reaction.

### Newsletter Meeting

The Battle at  
Port Talbot

Speaker: Mike Banda

Sunday 7 p.m.  
January 26, 1964

Port Talbot Hotel

*'The Labour Party accepts the need for control over the number of Commonwealth immigrants entering this country. The vital question is not control itself but how this control should be operated.'*

**T**HIS paragraph in a document sent out by the National Executive Committee of the Labour Party to local parties, MPs and candidates removes the question mark hanging over its attitude to immigration and replaces it with an irrevocable full stop.

The executive's attitude has been put down in writing 'in view of the many queries that have been received as to the Labour Party's policy on this question', the document begins. For 'many queries' read 'tremendous hostility to the Party's backsliding on this issue'.

### Certain

It criticises the Tories for suddenly reversing Britain's traditional policy of an open door to Commonwealth immigrants. Yet a few paragraphs on we read that the Party nevertheless accepts the need for control.

However much they may care to criticise the Tories, the fact cannot be escaped that, throughout all the lengthy discussions and conference resolutions and debates on this issue, the NEC and Labour MPs have been quite certain in their minds that control should be exercised.

In any case, their attacks on the Tories are concerned solely with the administration of the Act, not the Act itself.

### Sparks

Anger from rank and file members of the party came last November when the Commonwealth Immigrants Act came up for renewal in the House of Commons. Party members felt that lurking somewhere in the breasts of Wilson and company there must be a few tiny sparks of socialist principle which would force them to oppose the Act.

Alas, the sparks had gone, long since. Let the NEC document speak: 'Speaking on behalf of the parliamentary party, Mr. Wilson offered the government, as an interim measure, an unopposed passage to the Act, if, **but only if** (NEC emphasis), they agreed to replace it with **new and improved legislation** (my emphasis), drawn up in consultation with the Common-

## PORT TALBOT — from page 1

public money to subsidise the steel barons.

The main part of the SCOW was built when the industry was still nationalized in 1952. This ultra-modern plant was then sold at cut rates to the present owners by the Tory government.

The present strike and the management's modernisation plans now reveal what this denationalization meant. In the boom years, super profits for the bosses were compatible with high wages and a strong union organisation inside the plant.

# At last the truth is out — Labour does support Immigration control

by  
**Alan West**

wealth countries.

'The government declined to do this and the parliamentary party then voted against the renewal of the Act.'

Control, says the NEC, should not discriminate. All should suffer, regardless of 'race' or colour.

One point of their immigration policy says that there should be 'agreed quotas' with the Commonwealth governments on the numbers leaving each country. To talk of human beings in terms of 'quotas' is sickening and despicable and brings to mind many unfortunate comparisons, such as the treatment of Jews in Nazi Germany and Tsarist Russia.

The document throws out a

number of sops in the way of increased aid to Commonwealth countries and to local authorities at home to provide better facilities for immigrants. These in no way detract from the glaring fact that the Party does believe in control, that it is prepared, however unintentionally, to help spread the nasty little myth that immigrants are responsible, in some way at least, for many of the social problems facing workers.

'Overcrowding is an evil, whatever its cause' says this

nauseating little document at one point. But surely overcrowding, bad housing and slums are the result of landlords, property tycoons and the building monopolists?

That is what the eloquent Mr. Wilson tells us repeatedly in his speeches (or, rather, *speech*; he only has one which he brings up to date from time to time). Or is that just militant hot-air reserved for the political platform?

At last there can be no more hedging on this subject. The NEC's attitude is out and around the country for all to see.

There has been insufficient discussion on the matter at party conferences. This document

## Crisis faces Italian labour movement as 'socialist leader' Nenni joins coalition

**T**HE entry of the Nenni Socialist Party into a coalition government with the Christian Democrats and the split in the party which this has provoked displays the depth and nature of the crisis in the Italian working-class movement.

Once close allies of the Communist Party, the Nenni Socialists claim half a million members compared with some two million in Togliatti's party, which also controls the main trade union federation.

The two parties constitute a mighty force, representing the growing strength of the Italian working class as industrial development takes place. But, under its present bureaucratic leaders, it is also a mighty force for holding back the workers and chaining them to the needs of capitalism.

Nenni's decision to co-operate in governing capitalist Italy is but a logical conclusion to a whole chain of reformist thinking which began with, and still finds its most finished expression in, the Italian Communist Party.

The so-called 'Italian Road to



**Togliatti: his ideas paved the way for Nenni.**

'Socialism' is based on the idea that it is possible to permeate the institutions of the capitalist state and to develop working class power within capitalism. The logical outcome is to join a coalition with the capitalist parties, of which the Christian Democrats are the most important and have dominated Italian governments since the end of the last war.

### SPLIT

The 'left' of the Socialist Party, representing about 50,000 members, has now held its own congress and has split from the party. Whether it will carry many more members with it remains to be seen.

It appears to be a typical centrist grouping, with a political line resembling the French Unified Socialist Party's. The leadership, however, is in the hands of men who were once close to the CP.

Lelio Basso (editor of the new journal 'International Review of Socialism'), main spokesman of the 'new left' tendency, is now a sick man, unable to take an active part in politics. While in Brussels recently he gave an interview to a journalist from 'La Gauche' which gives an indication of the centrist nature of his politics.

Asked whether he was in

principle against participation in a coalition government he replied that he was not, as long as such a government carried out 'structural reforms'. The majority of the Socialist Party apparently thinks that the Christian Democrats will be obliged to introduce changes favourable to the working class.

### OPPOSITION

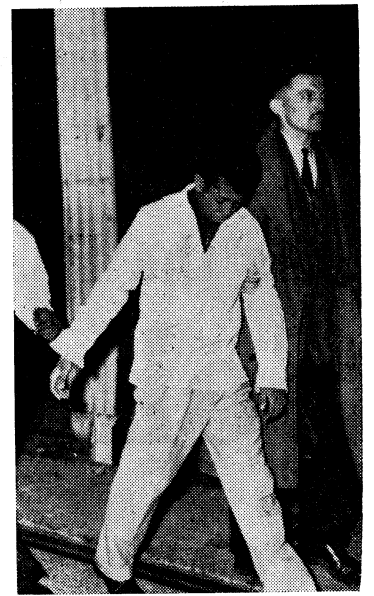
While accusing the Nenni tendency of becoming just another party of bourgeois democracy, he showed he was thinking, in parliamentary terms, of becoming just a 'loyal opposition'. He stated plainly that 'while opposed to the government and its programme, we should limit ourselves to not taking part in the voting [in parliament], and not vote against the comrades involved in the government and against the official decisions of the party to endeavour to prevent a definitive split'.

Fundamentally, then, there is little to choose between Basso and Nenni, and Nenni and Togliatti. The so-called 'opening to the left', now embarked on by Nenni, has been made possible by Togliatti and the revisionist line of the Communist Party.

### RESTS

Behind it stands a fully worked out theory of reformism which suits the needs of a labour bureaucracy which rests on the massive base of the Italian working class. Basso does not support Nenni only because, at present, he does not trust the dominant trend in the Christian Democratic Party.

Togliatti, who prepared the way for Nenni, cannot enter the coalition—for the time being—because he has not given sufficient guarantees for the



**The NEC accepts the need 'for powers to deport'. Like the West Indian in our picture, manacled and manhandled like an animal by policemen.**

gives the opportunity for a debate which will eschew breast-beating and appeals to brotherly love and lay bare the real intentions of the Tories in introducing control—and of Wilson and company in supporting them.

Christian Democrats to trust the Communist Party.

Nenni is leading the workers straight into the arms of Italian big capital. Togliatti blunts the militant edge of working-class feeling, thus assisting capitalism to enter the next phase of development in the Common Market on the basis of capital-labour collaboration.

As a reward he hopes, in time, to enter the coalition as well and, from within, do his bit to push Italian foreign policy along lines satisfactory to the Soviet bureaucracy.

### DANGERS

Basso and his friends keep out of direct complicity because they see some of the dangers. The entry of the CP into the government would, no doubt, convince them that 'structural reforms' would be carried out and so pave the way for a reconciliation with Nenni.

Italian parliamentary life has a lengthy tradition of unprincipled coalitions. It has now corrupted the working-class parties, whose leaders are deeply involved in 'parliamentary cretinism' and bureaucratic administration in the municipalities and trade unions.

### SUSPICION

On a number of occasions workers have moved into struggle regardless of 'left' leaders.

Suspicion of the leaders is now growing. The Nenni experiment may help to crystallise a real opposition within the working class, in the trade unions and in the Communist and Socialist parties to the reformist policies of the leaders and the theories on which they are based.

**Tom Kemp**

## K preparing deal with Franco

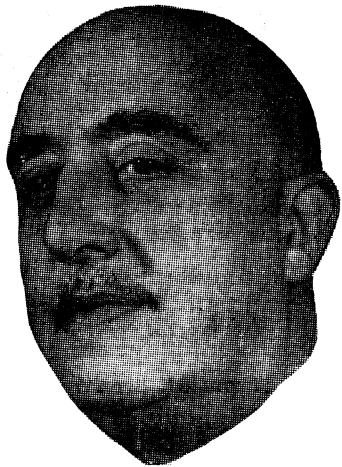
**T**HE Soviet bureaucracy is actively preparing behind the scenes to improve relations with Franco's fascist Spain.

In September 1963 Soviet trade unions agreed to an exchange of delegations with Franco's fascist trade unions.

This followed an approach by the fascist 'trade unions' during the summer for an exchange of delegations.

The rapprochement was temporarily postponed until the end of the year by the strike of the Asturian miners which was drowned in blood and torture by Franco's police.

'Trud', the organ of the Soviet trade unions, described the postponement as an expression of solidarity with the Asturian miners 'who are engaged in a struggle against the regime which the Soviet Union rejects'.



The Soviet bureaucracy hoped that by the end of the year the strike would be over and the exchange could take place.

This new approach in Khrushchev's foreign policy comes at a time when the

Franco regime is resorting to the bloodiest persecution of trade union militants all over Spain. His corporate state trade unions are boycotted by all class-conscious workers.

Khrushchev invites representatives of these to visit Soviet factories whose workers did so much to help the Spanish fighters during the civil war, in spite of Stalin.

When the Spanish civil war broke out there were mass demonstrations throughout the Soviet Union, which were discouraged and in some cases forcibly prevented by Stalin's secret police.

Now Stalin's heir, Khrushchev, invites the very people who destroyed trade unionism in Spain to the Soviet Union.

This is but one more example of the completely counter-revolutionary role of the Soviet bureaucracy.

## New take-over bids by Indonesian militants

**W**HILE President Sukarno of Indonesia presented his reknowned balancing act between left and right for the first time before an international audience, militant trade unionists were attempting to put into practice part of the only programme which can bring about real social changes in the area and ward off the threat of war from Malaysia.

As the demagogic doctor, all smiles and dimples, waved farewell to the American Attorney-General, Robert Kennedy, trade unionists marched on the headquarters of Unilever in Jakarta, shouting anti-British slogans.

They occupied the buildings and also raided the Shell, Indonesia, offices. Red flags were raised at the entrances to both buildings and notices were posted saying 'Indonesian property'.

The moves were sparked off by Kennedy's next visit, to the prime minister of the British puppet federation of Malaysia, Tunku Abdul Rahman. There may also have been some latent opposition to his talks to Sukarno, who, in true fashion, also has emissaries in Moscow, seeking economic aid.

### Mediate

The chairman of Shell, Indonesia, denied the claim of the trade unionists to have taken over. He said his staff were still in control.

Anxious to please all and sundry, Sukarno appointed a committee to mediate between the unions and Unilever, which is an Anglo-Dutch company with a considerable stake in the tottering Indonesian economy.

When similar actions were taken by militants last year, Sukarno demanded that factories and plant be handed back to their owners. But, despite support from the leaders of the mass Peking-tuned Communist Party, Sukarno appears to be losing his hold on the rank and file of the labour movement.

His mediators quickly decided in favour of the capitalist organisations and ordered the trade unionists to hand them back. But in West Java more trouble was under way as workers there were reported to have



Sukarno: balancing act

seized at least 16 British-owned, or managed, tea and rubber estates.

Kennedy's trip seems designed to isolate Britain in Malaysia. His talks with Sukarno were friendly to the extreme, but reports indicate that his reception by Abdul Rahman was cool.

Australian papers, echoing Westminster, said on Tuesday that Kennedy's plan to get Indonesia and Malaysia round the conference table would only result in a victory for Sukarno. They point out that Sukarno won independence by isolating Holland before forcing Dutch New Guinea to capitulate.

America, by implication, is therefore keen to support Sukarno to a limited extent in order to further Britain's isolation in the area, which would allow the US to step in and increase her influence.

But Australian opposition to talks between both sides can only indicate one thing—that Britain, despite all the pooh-poohing in official circles, is prepared to go to war with the Tunku to smash Indonesia.

## Why de Gaulle recognises Peking

De Gaulle's decision to recognise the Chinese People's Republic is a further indication of the French president's attempt to widen the differences in the western camp. His action will step up American hostility to France and Europe and will correspondingly increase his hold over the European bloc.

De Gaulle is also anxious to regain some of the positions lost to French capital in the South-east Asian countries. With US policy there under the hammer from the nationalist movements, he hopes, by his hand-of-friendship to Peking, to appear as a more benevolent capitalist and win new economic strongholds.

Although only the most extreme sectarian would oppose the recognition, it does hold serious implications for the Chinese government. When they were part of the Moscow circus, they acquiesced in the tyranny of the Khrushchev clique in Hungary.

Whether or not Mao and Chou will now keep silent on the reactionary nature of the de Gaulle regime remains to be seen, but their attitude will be watched with interest in the labour movement.

Certainly Chou's anticipated visit to Paris will be awaited with keen interest. How will the large French Communist Party, vocal in its support for Moscow in the Sino-Soviet dispute, react? Will its members turn out to cheer, or remain silent?

# Tanganyika rocks Britain's strategy

**W**HATEVER its immediate outcome, the upheaval in the Tanganyikan army marks the failure of an entire strategy of British imperialism.

The policy of finding nationalist leaders with whom the imperialists could compromise has received an important setback.

The troops involved, the Tanganyika Rifles, were trained by the British as part of the King's African Rifles. In recent years battalions like these have been allocated to the various territories of East Africa as 'independence' was granted.

### SHAKEN

Last week men at Dar-es-Salaam threw out their remaining British officers and demanded higher pay and improved conditions. As in the neighbouring island of Zanzibar the week before, a regime carefully constructed after laborious negotiations between middle-class local politicians and the Tory government has been shaken to its foundations.

Socialists in Britain must oppose the move to use British troops to prop up the new 'independent' regimes of East Africa, which is bound up with the talk of reintroducing conscription.

Tanganyika was the model pointed to by all those who advocated the new 'wind-of-change' policy for Africa. Formerly German East Africa, the British seized it after the First World War.

There was no large settler population to interfere with Whitehall plans. And in Julius Nyerere the Tories had an eager co-operator.

The 'aid' doled out by the British government to stabilise regimes which will safeguard

by  
**John Crawford**

imperialist investments went to Tanganyika in slightly larger quantities than to other territories.

After all, it was but a tiny fraction of the wealth from minerals and other products which had been drained out to the City of London, facilitated by the near-slave conditions of the population.

Leaders like Nyerere represent a middle-class section which is prepared to supervise the continued exploitation of the workers and peasants in return for concessions for themselves. This is known as 'independence'.

### DEEPER

But for millions of Africans, especially those in the towns, much deeper changes are implied in that word. For them it meant more than the ceremonial raising of a flag on Kilimanjaro and the transfer of government posts, with Prince Philip, as

## 'Ban Spanish holidays' appeal by CNT

**T**HE exiled Spanish syndicalist movement, The National Confederation of Labour (CNT) has appealed this week to members of the British labour movement for a ban on holidays in Spain.

In a circular letter, the secretary of the CNT's British liaison committee, says: 'In the coming year one million English people will go to Spain for their holidays. They will enjoy the golden beaches, the hot sun and above all, the cheap prices.

'There is another face of

ever, in attendance.

Profound economic and social results are demanded by those who have felt the lash of colonial rule on their backs.

A new stage opens in African politics. Only two years after taking office, the old nationalist leaders are being challenged.

But who will take their place? Other nationalist groups, making more radical demands, will only be driving a harder bargain with imperialism, not fighting to smash it.

### STRENGTHEN

The influence of the Communist Party, whether of Moscow or Peking, will strengthen such tendencies in the interests of Soviet or Chinese foreign policy. But no solution to the problems of the African masses can be provided within the framework of imperialism.

A Marxist leadership, basing itself on the working class, is vital for Africa.

This must see the African revolution as part of a world movement linked with the labour movements of the imperialist countries like Britain.

Spain, a much darker one, that will receive scant attention from the majority of tourists. This is the face of beating and torture, of firing squads, the garrote and of interminable prison sentences.'

The letter points out that tourism provides a valuable source of income to the Franco regime and enables the dictator to meet his trade deficit. Only a relatively small number of Spanish workers, directly engaged in the tourist industry, benefit.

'The regime benefits, the hotel owners benefit, the speculators

benefit—but this new wealth does not filter down to the rest of the people because the Spanish economy is organised to ensure that the rich get richer and the poor stay poor.

'In fact,' the letter continues, 'the poor become poorer owing to the inflationary effect tourists have on prices—a tourist can outbid a Spanish worker for anything, any time.'

The letter ends by saying that the Spanish people would welcome tourists if they did not give financial aid to fascism and serve to worsen the conditions of poverty in the country.



# Lords decision spells danger for unions

## Mersey stops for a day

**B**IRKENHEAD and Liverpool docks were completely idle last Monday afternoon. Practically every Merseyside docker stopped work in protest against the disciplining of 60 Birkenhead men.

These 60 dockers had refused to work after the normal overtime period of 7 o'clock. They declared that the work could have been done by night gangs which had been dismissed at 7 a.m. that morning.

The Dock Labour Board, on which sits Mr. P. J. O'Hare, Liverpool district secretary of the docks section of the Transport and General Workers' Union, had handed out two days' suspension to the dockers. They were not given an opportunity to appear before the Dock Labour Board.

### REDUCED

At an appeal against this suspension they were represented by Bill Johnson, area secretary of the National Amalgamated Stevedores and Dockers. Their sentence was reduced to one day's suspension, to take place last Monday.

Immediately this decision was known a meeting of Birkenhead dockers decided that every docker on that side of the Mersey would take the day off with his penalised brothers.

A leaflet issued by the Merseyside Area Committee of the NASD—the 'blue union'—on Monday morning called on all Liverpool dockers to take supporting action in the afternoon.

### 'ALWAYS WRONG'

At dock gate meetings in Liverpool, Bill Johnson declared: 'These Birkenhead dockers who refused to work overtime were right even by the inadequate working agreements. What you can see in the decision of the Appeal Board is that no matter how right the docker may be, the docker is always wrong to these people.'

On Monday morning, at one mass meeting after another, Liverpool dockers took unanimous decision to stop work.

The port employers would dearly love to smash the fighting spirit of the dockers. They aim at this in their 'decasualisation' proposals which were agreed in secret meetings with TGWU officials.

They were given an indication this week of the solidarity and response of all Mersey dockers to any attempts to weaken and discipline them.

By ALAN WEST

**T**HE decision of the House of Lords—the highest body of appeal in the country—in finding in favour of a non-unionist who was dismissed by his employers when strike action was threatened may have serious repercussions throughout the whole trade union movement.

It is a serious blow to the principle of 100 per cent union membership in each industry, factory and office—the closed shop.

In the case in question, Douglas Rookes, a draughtsman, was employed by BOAC. He was a member of the Association of Engineering and Shipbuilding Draughtsmen (now known as the Draughtsmen's and Allied Technicians' Association) but decided to leave the union.

### Agreement

Union representatives told the management they would call a strike unless Rookes were dismissed. BOAC agreed to his dismissal.

There was in operation at the time an agreement between the union and BOAC which included a 'no strike' clause. The law Lords latched on to this clause and used it to great effect in their judgment, which runs to 50 pages, and which lays down that a re-trial should be held to determine the amount of damages Rookes is entitled to receive from the union officials.

Their decision is best summed up as follows:

An employee who is not a member of a trade union is entitled to claim damages against any union member or officials responsible for any wrongful form of pressure or intimidation which causes his employers to dispense with his services.

A threat to strike constitutes a wrongful form of pressure if the strike is in breach of the strikers' contracts of employment.

As a DATA official said when the case was first intimated: 'This could drive a coach and horses through the trade union movement.' Indeed it could, but some of the blame clearly rests on the union for agreeing to a 'no-strike' clause in their agreement with BOAC, which left them wide open to action of this nature.

### Force

It could, in fact, lead to situations where opponents of trade unionism could be persuaded to deliberately force unions to call strike action in defence of their rights only to find themselves threatened by the courts.

The other serious implication of the decision is that it could also put paid to the blacking of work from a firm where a dispute is in operation by workers outside that firm who

have occasion to handle goods from it.

Legal opinion this week is that persons like Rookes could obtain redress not only from the union but from the employer as well against whom strike action is threatened, and also from any bodies in any way connected with the dispute, such as customers or suppliers of raw materials.

Certainly this would lead to stringent action against any workers who decided to black work.

### Importance

There is already a case pending in which a barge-owning firm is seeking an injunction to restrain the Watermen, Lightermen, Tugmen and Bargemen's Union from blacking their barges. The result here could also be of extreme importance.

The Rookes decision might well overturn the rights of the trade unions which are safeguarded, to a degree, by the Trades Dispute Act of 1906. The employers may grasp this as the golden opportunity to lead a campaign to smash the closed shop.

This would be of immeasurable importance to them in a time when they are seeking all manner of ways in which to increase profit while wages stagnate and conditions worsen.

### Undermine

If, as a result of this case, the closed shop principle is declared illegal, employers would be able to employ scabs who could undermine all trade union negotiations on wages and conditions by working for lower rates, longer hours and without adequate breaks.

As a first step to defend themselves against such action, all trade unionists should scrutinise existing agreements with their employers to make sure they contain no damaging 'no-strike' clauses.

## Truline girls fight on

**O**FFICIALS of the Tailor and Garment Workers Union are annoyed at criticism of their handling of the dispute at Truline Bras, Sheffield, in which 13 girls were dismissed.

The Yorkshire Federation of Trade Unions has passed a resolution urging the union to officially recognise the dispute and to call on the Co-ops, the firm's main customer, to black its goods.

The federation felt that unless the officials took decisive action the girls would not get their jobs back.

The girls themselves do not think much of the results of the union's work so far. Four girls have been taken back but the management are adamant that they will not reinstate the others.

Two months after the dispute started, conditions in the firm



## Scots miners face new pit closures

From M. SHAW

**N**INE pits were closed in Scotland during 1963. The labour force was decreased by 5,300—approximately 10 per cent.

Productivity was increased by 9 per cent over 1962, averaging 27.5 cwt. per manshift and in some cases reaching 34 cwt. Operating losses were reduced by approximately £4 million—but the NCB is not satisfied.

Scottish miners must sweat and toil, work harder and faster. Every pit must, as a minimum, break even, or close.

Such was the threat issued by Mr. Ronald Parker, chairman of the Scottish division of the NCB last week.

Although operating losses have been reduced to £1 million, the miners, by their labour, must raise a further £6 million to cover interest charges to the ex-coal owners.

### WON'T BENEFIT

There is not the remotest suggestion that the reorganisation of the coal industry in Scotland will benefit the mine workers, or that workers generally will benefit by price reductions. Coal prices in Scotland remain higher than those in England.

There are now 540 mine workers 'available to be redeployed', as the official jargon puts it. Some of them may be found jobs in pits in Scotland, but redeployment can also mean an offer of employment in pits outside Scotland with all the attendant problems of moving or dividing the family and obtaining suitable accommodation.

The threat of 'break even or close' faces large numbers of Scottish miners with the bleak prospect of the dole queue or, at best, switching to some semi-skilled or unskilled job.

There is no doubt, too, that this threat is aimed at quelling militant opposition to any lowering of conditions in the pits. There have already been instances where a pit has been placed on the B list—for possible closure—because of the number of unofficial strikes.

### 'WATCH CAREFULLY'

The president of the Scottish mineworkers, Alex Moffat, has stated that the union 'will be watching the position carefully . . . that the board will have to raise the point of any closures with the union before they take any steps.' But to date the efforts of the Scottish area of the NUM to prevent pit closures are not inspiring.

No serious fight against closures has been made and the Coal Board has been able to carry through its policies of higher productivity with a diminished labour force with only token opposition from the NUM officials.

To the 5,300 men who are now out of the pits for good and those who face the prospect of losing their jobs if the pit they work in doesn't break even, it is small comfort to know that the union leadership is 'watching the situation', however closely. It is not watchfulness but action which is needed now to prevent further attacks on Scottish miners.

### FULL PAY

Pit committees as well as NCB officials should thoroughly investigate all pits threatened with closure. Where closure is proved to be absolutely necessary for safety or other reasons, miners must receive full pay for an unlimited period until they have secured alternative employment at least at comparable rates of pay to those formerly received.

Proper re-training for other jobs must be given and there must be a real fight for the immediate introduction of a reduced working week with no loss of pay.

Mineworkers are prepared and ready to resist the attacks of the NCB but the ground is cut from beneath their feet when union officials work to prevent 'unofficial' strikes and refuse to organise the industrial strength of the mineworkers against the agents of the employers and the Tory government in the NCB.

are as bad as ever. The wages council has not yet reported its findings into Truline and the girls are sure they are paid less than minimum rates.

The girls are determined to carry on their fight to reinstate those sacked and win a minimum rate of pay. They are also campaigning for 100 per cent union shop.

The nine girls sacked have again contacted all the unions in the area stating their case and asking for financial support. They have been told by their union officials to take other jobs while the negotiations continue.

They have refused to do so, knowing it would weaken their fight for reinstatement and for trade unionism in the firm.

Donations are urgently needed. They should be sent to: Mrs. D. Bland, 43 Hartley Brook Road, Sheffield 5, Yorks.