

# MILITANT

## FOR LABOUR AND YOUTH

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SIXPENCE

"ENGLISH ELECTRIC" NETHERTON

# Bosses & Advisers Exposed!

DOCUMENT REVEALS ATTEMPT TO BREAK UNION

By TED MOONEY (A.E.F. shop steward)

Nowdays 'Productivity Deals' have become a characteristic feature of the industrial scene. The boardroom hum with buzz of such topics as Work Study, Job Evaluation, Minit Data etc., etc. Every shop-stewards committee Trade Union branch or committee devotes large sections of its agenda to the much postulated 'Productivity Deal'.

It is my contention that 'Productivity Deals' are in fact little more than an attempt to hold down the wages and conditions of the working class. They only secure increases in productivity in-sofar as they increase the physical exploitation of the workers involved. That they secure any increase in investment or radical changes in method is purely secondary and inconsequential. This is of course the object of a further article and would require further argument, except to say that most shopstewards who have been or are in the process of a 'Productivity Deal' would invariably agree to my statement.

As a general rule 'Productivity Deals' follow in the wake of the introduction of a Management Consultant especially in the larger industrial complexes. Management Consultancy in this country is in fact a growing business, at the rate of about 12% per year with a turnover of £22 million per year. It is also a profitable business. P.A. Management Consultants, employing about 800 consultants, the second largest in the world, has a turnover of £6.5 million and last year profits were £650,000. A.I.C. has 400 consultants and a £3 million turnover, while 'P.E.' and 'Urwick Orr' are around the £2.5 million mark.

The justification for Management Consultancy, so far as the employers are concerned is; a scientific approach to almost any type of productive or administrative problem (least ways this is the verbiage they use). Banks, factories, supermarkets and stores are all apparently taken in the stride of the Management Consultant. The

G.L.C. has apparently emerged quite happily from the experiences of consultants.

Employers may indeed welcome the advantages of consultancy but so far as the workers are concerned no such enthusiasm is shown, in fact quite the contrary is the rule. At the Liverpool factory of the Plessey group the majority of workers rue the day they agreed to co-operate in any way with Management Consultants. At the Netherton Works of the English Electric Company the workers rejected unanimously a deal recommended by P.A.

The term 'Scientific Management' is in my opinion a misnomer. For one thing Management Consultancies are run by private companies whose main function is to secure profits. A.I.C., the consulting subsidiary of Inbucon, the second largest in the business after P.A., is part of a public company. When the motive force is profit, objectivity which is the necessary prerequisite for real scientific development, tends to become subjugated. Furthermore there is an increasing tendency for consultancy groups to extend their activity to take in shop floor consultancy. Cooper Brothers, for example now employ over 200 consultants. Such people in particular, have virtually no knowledge whatever of production or working methods and operate rigidly within the terms of obscure financial formulae which are completely unrelated to the needs of production. The argument can of course be taken to much greater depths and in later articles, pamphlets etc. this will be done. However, for the moment it will suffice to refer to a document that has come into the hands of the A.E.F. shopstewards at the English Electric Company at Netherton. The document which follows below is in fact the recommendation made to the company by P.A. management Consultants. It is only possible here to reprint some of the most incriminating sections. It reads as follows:—

REMEMBER 1931! BREAK WITH TORY POLICIES! FOR CLAUSE 4!

# No Coalition!

By PETER TAAFFE

With thinly disguised venom the TIMES, main organ of British capitalism, came out on December 9th in a long editorial statement for the formation of a "National Government". Press baron and owner of the TIMES Roy Thomson, with his editor Rhees Mogg, unsuccessful Tory Parliamentary candidate, have joined up with Cecil King, the DAILY MIRROR, and a motley crew of Tories, such as Duncan Sandys, and ex-Labour renegades of the ilk of Desmond Donnelly in a campaign of slander and villification against the Labour Movement. This has the clear aim of preparing the ground for the splitting of the Labour Movement and the establishment of a coalition Government at a certain stage.

CHRONIC BANKRUPTCY OF THE SYSTEM.

In reaching its conclusions, the TIMES, with devastating realism, analyses the grim prospects for British capitalism. The whole editorial is in fact a counsel of despair by the strategists for big business. With gloomy forebod-

On other pages:

French struggle

Sweden

Nurses

Apprentices



Nurses demonstrate under Tory Government (Powell was Health Minister at the time)

## A.E.F.

In our view there is no chance that the A.E.F. will come to an agreement concerning work study. Their 13 point reply to the Management proposals in effect negates the entire principles of the Productivity Agreement. Further, their pay claim, including holiday pay and overtime improvements, would amount to 24-29% increase on the reference period.

We believe that we have reached saturation point in selling or persuading the A.E.F. and that the use of local officials, top management, or politicians would not produce a significant change of heart.

Therefore the following course of action is proposed:—

1. Make an offer to the A.E.F. similar to that to be made to the A.S.O.B. in the knowledge that it will fail, but being certain that it is a reasonable offer.

2. Freeze the A.E.U. rates of pay (by taking them through procedure, if necessary, in order to change the payment system). This is a vital step in arresting the drift, and introducing Work Study. This move will probably cause stoppages.

We see your current low order book as giving you a unique opportunity to break the A.E.F. control of wages and productivity. It would seem that you could withstand considerable stoppages without a real loss of contribution to overheads. Further the political climate was never better for such a move.

3. Mount a run down campaign directed at the A.E.F. This campaign should reduce the A.E.F. labour force to the minimum possible limit. Certain key operatives could be offer-

ed staff positions in order to conserve know how. This run down will of course need very careful preparation and must be tied to your financial plan and production programme.

4. Reopen negotiations with the A.E.F. at their initiative.

5. If the rundown reaches the lowest economic operations level for the machine shops, you should consider closing them altogether and re-recruiting using appropriate conditions of employment.

★

In the above passages only the emphasis is mine the rest is the unedited recommendation of a so-called Scientific Manager. Surely the P.A. document is self indicting and needs little explanation, it is merely old anecdotes in new formulation. In the final analysis their recommendations boil down to the lock-out and the lowering of wages or at best attempting to keep them static.

On the surface the management consultants present the respectable face of co-called Science while underneath this sham they present the ruthlessness of a decadent class whose only answer to the problems they face is to smash the organisation of the workers and further increase their impoverishment.

Scientific management can only develop in an atmosphere of communal interest and this atmosphere can only be created in the event of communal ownership of the means of production. To think otherwise is pure utopianism. Only when the workers own and control their own industries will the science develop and even then not in abstract manner but based on the experiences of the workers, technicians and scientists themselves.

ings for the future it complains of "anarchy which shows itself equally in the universities, on the football trains and on the factory floor". Thus in its rantings against "anarchy" it is forced to admit that the capitalists' grip over the minds of the students, (very often their own sons and daughters), has been loosened; youth is in revolt against the straightjacket of the system. What it characterises as "hooliganism" is in reality the refusal of the workers to allow the bosses to ride roughshod over their organisations. Against the power of the organised workers they grit their teeth and prepare to "deal with them" in the future. Not unnaturally the critical situation reminds them of pre-Hitler Germany. Their references to the danger of fascism and to the "Weimar Republic" recall the chaos, unemployment and civil war arising out of the world economic crisis at that time. Defeated in the 1st World War Germany was especially vulnerable and the Social Democratic government refused to attack those responsible: the huge landowners and monopolies. They left the country to its fate.

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# NO COALITION (Continued)

Now it is British capitalism which is particularly exposed to the harsh winds of economic disruption. Of course today, after 20 years boom, the workers are strong; nor has the real crisis broken. But even now, while world production goes ahead, the weakness of the world financial system expresses itself in the flight from money and the scramble for "everything from stamps to silver (which) have increased sharply in price; people are even inclined to prefer racehorses to money"(!)

## COALITION THE ANSWER!

Faced with this decline the TIMES blatantly declares "in circumstances of this kind the first thing that has to be done is to restore confidence in the ability of the Government to govern. The best way to do that is to have a coalition or national government to overcome the emergency." But the question will be asked, since the Labour Government has in most things faithfully carried out the dictates of the monopolists, why cannot they "earn their confidence"? The experience of the minority Labour Government of 1929-31 shows why. Indeed it was no accident that the TIMES the week before it declared for a coalition closely examined the experience of that Government; the better to prepare and learn for the future.

## McDONALD GOVERNMENT 1929-31

Following the defeat of the workers on the industrial field in the 1926 General Strike and its aftermath, the working class transferred its hopes to the political plane. The minority Labour Government which was installed in 1929 was committed in particular to stem the rise in unemployment. Their reign of office saw instead a massive lengthening of Britain's dole queues. In 1929 just over 1 million were unemployed while in 1931 it had risen to 2,700,000—22% of the insured workers. This was a consequence of the world economic crisis of overproduction; in Britain production had declined to 8% below that of 1913. In consequence of the world financial crisis of 1931 and the subsequent run on the £, the capitalists through the May committee—set up to determine means of overcoming the crisis—recommended massive cuts of £67 million in unemployment benefits. The Daily Telegraph unloaded the whole responsibility for the situation on the backs of the unemployed... "Unemployed benefit is the whole remedial plan, as it has been the culminating cause of the present emergency." Needless to say the capitalists throughout the whole period were also taking advantage of the increasing pool of unemployed to drive down the wages of the employed workers. Faced with the demands of capitalists Macdonald unequivocally capitulated. As the TIMES 2/12/68 commented "all over the world, in fact, the handling of the crisis was left entirely to the bankers, with elected governments tamely following their instructions".

But the complications arose when the bill of goods was presented for acceptance to the Labour Movement. The Labour Government could not entirely ignore the party or the Trade Unions which provided its basis. Throughout its term of office a chorus of opposition developed in the ranks at the Government's refusal to take measures against the capitalists and stop the rise in unemployment. This found a distorted reflection in the attitude of the Trade Union tops such as Ernest Bevin and co. Even they demurred at the demand that the unemployed should bear the main brunt of the crisis with accompanying wage cuts for servicemen, teachers and other civil servants. They proposed instead the "cutting of the salaries of ministers and judges". This refusal to sanction even greater mass misery prompted Sydney Webb to rant that "the Trade Union leaders are pigs"; not exactly the language of a "reasonable" Fabian! Within the Cabinet itself 10 Ministers were forced to take account of the opposition of the Labour Movement and to vote against the cuts. Then Macdonald brazenly declared that his proposed measures were "a complete negation of everything the Labour Movement stood for, yet it was necessary for the national interest"; the national interest being of course the profits of the capitalists. Unable to secure the support of the Labour Movement, the most open right wing leaders, with Macdonald at their head, split away to form a National Government with the Tories. Although they were

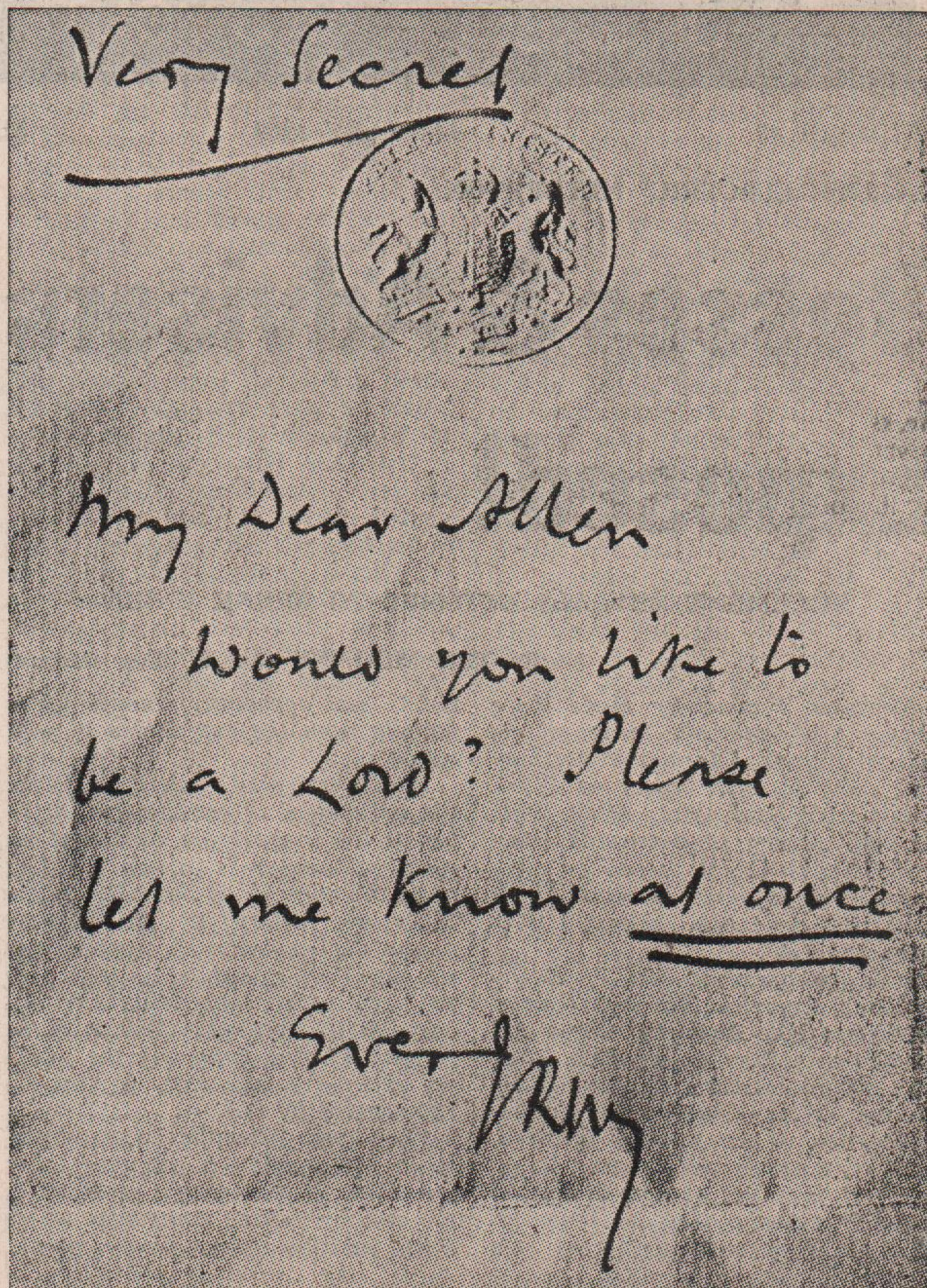
## U.S.S.R. — A CONFERENCE TO END CONFERENCES?

The crisis in Russian society is expressed in a thousand and one ways. Not the least is the mounting red tape, time wasting and bungling of the privileged officialdom. Now and again the top layers of the bureaucracy become so incensed at their own stupidities that they give a glimpse of this in the Russian Press.

Thus Pravda is at present conducting a campaign against conferences! Running down a list of events in Moscow this month the writer found that the central council of the All Union Society of Inventors and Rationalizers, together with the state committee on vocational education had convened an All Russian Conference on Development of Mass Technical Creativity Among school-children. He cynically remarked "It is not clear whether this conference had to be invented or whether it was really necessary. But 300 people? Almost 10 carloads—a whole trainful". But heroically responding to the campaign the "organisers" of Conferences promptly acted. Instead of holding Conferences they now hold "forums, meetings" etc. Thus the name is changed and problem is solved!

In despair Pravda declared that it was quite willing to convene a Con-

ference "to find a way of putting an end to all this nonsense". But it will take more than Conferences to prevent the corruption and graft illustrated by this one small incident. Frank Hardy lifelong Communist Party member recently revealed the depths of degeneration and swindling of the Russian bureaucracy... The bureaucrats have chauffeur-driven cars, private cars, city flats and at least one country home each... As their black official cars speed through the streets, the policeman's whistle blows them through the red lights" SUNDAY TIMES 8th December 1968. Quite correctly he shows how the bureaucracy flaunt the original aims of the 1917 Revolution... "One of the first decrees written by Lenin... cancelled the law of inheritance and... also decreed that no party official could earn more than the average skilled worker; this was known as the Party Norm". In trampling on this Norm, in annihilating the last remnants of workers democracy the Russian bureaucracy opened up a chasm of blood between themselves and the Russian workers. Not futile campaigns but a return to Lenin's programme can begin to solve the problems of Russian society. The solution is in the hands of the Russian workers.



This letter, signed by one-time Labour Prime Minister, MacDonal, shows the dangers facing the Labour Movement.

able to secure 70% of the votes in the subsequent election by rallying all the politically backward workers and middle class on a platform of "national salvation", this only pushed the Labour Movement further to the Left. The Independent Labour Party swung towards a half revolutionary position. At the Labour Party Conference in Leicester in 1932 the rank and file forced through against the platform a resolution demanding greater measures of nationalisation for a future Labour Government. Another result was the mutiny of the sailors at Invergordon in Scotland against reductions in wages. It is precisely this side of the calculation that the capitalists will now have to take into account in advancing the idea of a national Government.

## POWER OF WORKERS

1968 is not 1931. The industrial power of the working class has never been greater. Moreover, there has been a significant shift towards the Left by the active elements in the Unions and Labour Party in the term of this Labour Government.

This is shown by the almost 3 million votes for the demand for nationalisation of the 300 monopolies at the Labour Party Conference, and the support for the Socialist Charter which, although confused in its demands, is a shift to the Left. The election of Hugh Scanlon in the AEF, the record poll for the election of Jack Jones in the T&GWU and the election of Lawrence Daly to head the mineworkers: all these are indications of this process. It is undoubtedly true that this has not been matched as yet by a corresponding turn towards the Left by the mass of ordinary workers—in fact certain small sections have turned to the Right. But in the event of a National Government, what is now mainly a questioning of the present policy of piecemeal reforms of the system would turn into an active demand for a clear class policy. It would be matched by titanic explosions in the industrial field the like of which have not been seen in Britain since the 1930s. The British capitalists would have to be in desperate straits indeed before being prepared to provoke such a situation.

At the moment at the cost of misery to those on old age pensions and fixed incomes, with high unemployment and greater exploitation of the workers they may be able to temporarily recapture some of their lost ground in the international scramble for trade (See article in last MILITANT by J. Silverman). But if there should be another currency crisis such as a 2nd devaluation, then without hesitation, as Lord Shawcross a director of the TIMES has pointed out, every weapon will be used to bring down the Government and replace it by a National Government whose aim will be to make the workers pay the full cost of the crisis. The rank and file of the Labour Movement should be forewarned and forearmed. The present policies of the Government bore disaster for the Labour Movement and the working people generally. The capitalists are preparing a trap for the future. It is all very well for Wilson and the Government leaders to reject the idea out of hand, as of course they must do. But this is not enough. If big business gets away with this trick, it will be because of the increasing disillusion with party politics: the fact that no solution is being offered the working class by its parliamentary representatives. If the Labour leaders reject the idea of a coalition, let them end their present near-coalition policies! Let them act on the clear socialist policies outlined in Clause 4 of the party constitution.



## FRANCE: Crisis in Gaullism crisis in Communist Party

By CLIVE THOMPSON

Prices rising by 1% a month, the labour force reduced by 1.5%, and despite this a decline of 11% in profit margins: that was the situation at the beginning of November. Two weeks later £750 million left the country in the space of three days and the capitalist world was thrown on to the brink of another catastrophe.

This is the record of a government which won its snap election six months ago on the slogan, „a return to order”. It sought to terrify the thousands of small farmers, shopkeepers and small businessmen with the prospect of chaos and disorder if they meddled with socialism, but now there could be no worse “chie-en-lit” than the mess which the regime is perpetrating itself.

### USUAL “SOLUTION”

The “solution” offered is the usual one for capitalists, in France, Britain and throughout the world: prices are expected to rise 6% in the year since last June (the Government's own estimate), while £400 million is being taken off the budget deficit, which means a cut-back in the building of schools, roads, hospitals etc., wages are to be frozen, the millionaire exporters will receive extra incentives, and they are going to try to “put an end to agitation, exhibitions, tumults and processions...” The temporary lift to the economy provided by the increased market arising out of the wage increases in June, has come to an end. No longer can Gaullism — Capitalism — afford it. Instead of the 7.1% growth-rate they were originally predicting, the government now reckon they will be lucky if they achieve 5%. And will the “solution” work? The Financial Times (28/11/68) point out that “...while the balance of payments may benefit from the reduction in home demand, the unions will be encouraged to press for substantial wage increases when they meet the government in March to examine the cost of living”.

“The government is taking a calculated risk”, they say. It is banking on the temporary initiative given to the bosses through the election results. Citroen, for example, “still has a non-union shop and fired the ring-leaders of the May-June disturbances” Huge numbers of militants were thrown out and the bosses were enabled to lay off thousands without serious trouble from the workers, who were afraid that, in this situation, any further industrial crisis would only enable the employers to lay off yet more.

This is the result of the failure of the leaders of the working-class, in the unions and in the “socialist” and “communist” parties to put forward a genuine and practical alternative to capitalism. This was the reason why the massive Renault strike nevertheless failed to spark off a new wave of solidarity in the country. Seguy, leader of the Communist-dominated CGT even announced that the strike was called for reasons peculiar to the company, and warned students against sympathetic action.

Nevertheless, the workers are fighting back against the increasing attacks on their recent gains, in the political arena. The Communist Party gained more members in 1968 than in any other single year since the war—55,000 (more than the total membership of its British counterpart). In a by-election in Paris, the C.P. gained a 13% increase at the expense of all the other parties.

In addition, the increasing dissension within the Gaullist ranks is being

matched by increasing discussion within the C.P. For example, there has been a split in the Central Committee itself, on the issue of Czechoslovakia (an issue which has opened up “Communist” parties everywhere to argument and conflict). Neither side is putting forward anything like a Marxist point of view—it is apparently a question of declaring intervention a “tragic mistake” without any convincing explanation or of declaring it “justified for the defence of socialism”! But, nevertheless the 1/3rd of the party who support intervention are in their way, protesting against the opportunism of the leadership.

The new manifesto drawn up by the French Communist Party Central Committee continues to declare that “the working class and the majority of the people can only be won over to the idea of a socialist transformation of society by showing that it is first possible to get rid of the present anti-democratic regime.” But can they deny that the anti-democratic nature of the regime is a necessary result of the attempt of the capitalists to retain power at a time when this conflicts with the interests and desires of the majority of the people? If Gaullism were abolished but capitalism retained, how would the capitalists manage to “increase the purchasing power of wages, guarantee full employment, a reduction of the working week and retirement age effective worker participation in social, civic and cultural activities, democratic reforms of the education system and a quarter of the budget to be devoted to education”—all of which the manifesto calls for? If this were possible under capitalism, why has it not been granted? If, on the other hand, they agree that it would be necessary to take the monopolies over under the control of the workers, for this to be possible, why do they not say so, and explain just how they mean to carry out this programme?

### SOCIALIST PROGRAMME

The workers, in May, showed the way forward. What they lacked was a mass organisation offering a lead: a positive programme of action to carry on production in the occupied factories, to link up factory to factory, council of action to council of action, industry to industry. This would have laid the basis for a genuine socialist democratic administration of the economy. Now, the Communist Party are using their growing popularity to side-track the question with the slogan a “popular front” government. But this would face the same economic problems. So long as capitalism remains the same crises will recur again. The “Popular Front” would only prepare the way for demoralisation and chaos. The Communist Party could not hold together. The path would be open for the formation of a mass organisation capable of transforming society. Sooner or later it will have to be realised that it is a question of **who owns the wealth produced by the workers**—society as a whole—or the ever smaller handful of monopolists? (mergers and take-overs increased unabated last year). These were the questions posed in May. They will be posed again, as the workers regain their confidence. All attempts to by-pass this problem are doomed to failure. This is true also for those anarchists (if it is indeed they who are responsible) who believe in isolated bomb-attacks and the like. They too must

## SWEDEN:

### Fight for real Socialism

BY ANDERS JUNGNELL, member of District Committee, Swedish Social-Democratic Youth, Stockholm

The 1968 election was one of the biggest victories ever for the Swedish Social-Democratic Workers' Party (SAP). The party was able to mobilise its 850,000 members and the 70,000 young people in the Swedish Social-Democratic Youth (SSU) to achieve this victory. Why did the wage-earners vote overwhelmingly for the SAP? Is it, as the British Fabians would claim, because the SAP has in the main solved the problems of the workers, or is it because of a new threat to the workers on the part of the capitalists?

Both in response to the developments in world capitalism and the organic tendencies in Swedish capitalism itself we have seen an enormous concentration of capital in Sweden in the last years.

This monopolisation goes under the hygienic name of “structural rationalisation” in the ruling circles of the SAP, but for the worker, especially the older man, this either means being “put at one's liberty”, i.e. sacked, or heightened exploitation on the shop-floor for those workers kept on. An Adalen timber worker who had just been “given his freedom” said angrily in a television interview that “the big black cars of the union officials driving up to the factory gates look more like a funeral procession than anything else”.

The symbol of this vicious system is embodied in the Wallenberg family, which is linked by marriage to the fourteen other families that control the Swedish economy. Wallenberg's family motto is “Esse non videri”, to be, but not to be seen! An apt description of his hidden control of the country! One example of his complete independence: despite the fact that the SAP government signed the UN trade boycott of Rhodesia, Herr Wallenberg is at this moment engaged in constructing a dam in Mozambique to supply the Smith racialists with electric power.

The SAP leadership, sensing the growing anxiety among the workers, made “Security” the main issue in the election campaign.

But what have the SAP leaders in actual fact done for the Swedish workers in thirty years of continuous rule? Is the capitalist class any weaker since the workers' party came to power?

In the programme of the SAP there is a clear call for the nationalisation of natural resources, banking and enterprises, even though this has recently been hedged round with conditions like “when it is necessary to protect the interests of the people” and the old talk of class struggle present in the fifties has been quietly dropped. But in thirty years only the mines have been taken into state hands, at the beginning of the fifties. This nationalisation already had got the approval of the conservative Högerpartiet at the turn of the century!

It is true that a number of valuable reforms have been fought for and won. The most important of these was the radical pension reform of the late fifties. This reform was in response to immense pressure on the factory floor and amongst the SAP rank and file, and was put through in a plebiscite in the face of bitter opposition from the capitalists and their political agents in the capitalist parties.

But the capitalists have managed to turn even this reform partly to their own advantage! Despite the fact that the demand was made to use these accumulating pension funds,

realise that the masses will not be aroused this way, but only by confidence that they have a programme and a party capable of providing a real alternative to the continual crises of capitalism.

which run to 19.2 billion Swedish crowns, to help “transform the economy in a Socialist direction”, the opposite has been true. The pension funds go instead in the form of loans to the big banks and the monopolies!

And how secure are these reforms anyway? Swedish capitalism has been in an enviable position upto now, mainly because it was able to exploit its neutrality in the Second World War. Hence, the employers have been able to grudgingly accept the reforms demanded by the workers. Swedish capitalism has been lucky up to now. But in the near future it will be exposed to the cold winds of intensified competition from its rivals in the world market, and it can be expected that the attacks on the gains made by the working class will be stepped up. This is already clear from the present negotiations between the employers and the Trade Unions (LO). The bosses have up to now refused any increase at all to the workers, and hope to extend the 1966 agreements for yet another term. It is likely that the question of a General Strike will once again be in the air in this “model country of economic harmony”. In 1966 it was only by a threat of General Strike that the LO were able to win any concessions.

How strong is the Swedish working class to meet this imminent challenge? Compared with other countries, the level of organisation among the Swedish workers is phenomenal, and continually rising! 11% of the entire population belongs to the SAP.

It is already noticeable that strong opposition tendencies to the reformist policies of the official leadership are emerging amongst the rank and file. A survey in the TU paper Aftonbladet revealed that every third worker thought the TU officials were not tough enough in their negotiations with the bosses. This is also graphically corroborated by the total expenditure for strike pay in 1967, which amounted to the grand sum of £2,000! While sections of the workers were forced to strike without official backing, nearly £150,000 of their money went on conferences! The 1,200,000 lower paid workers and their families must view this complacency on the part of their leaders with growing resentment.

In our youth organisation, the SSU, there is a growing awareness of the need for radical measures to meet this situation. Even though our programme is still confused, it has moved rapidly to the left when compared with three years ago. There are demands incorporated in the present programme which call for the nationalisation of the banks, the oil companies, the land, the electricity industry, the pharmaceutical industry and others. On the question of foreign policy, the SSU calls for support for national liberation movements and at the beginning of December fought an active campaign to stop the export of Swedish arms to reactionary governments in South America. Nevertheless, the organisation still calls for the resolution of international questions through the United Nations, which is clearly an utopian hope on their part.

In order to meet the class struggles which are threatening on the horizon, the SSU and the Swedish workers' organisations must base themselves on a clear Marxist analysis of the situation in Sweden and the world as a whole. The policies of the SAP leadership have proved inadequate to defend the real interests of the working class. The only alternative which has not yet been tried in Sweden is the revolutionary internationalism of the Swedish workers in the period 1917-18. These are the real traditions of the Swedish socialist movement. Workers of all countries, unite!



# APPRENTICES DEMAND FULL RIGHTS

PHIL HOLT (Post Office Engineering Union)

The section of the working class which has suffered most from devaluation and the consequent massive price rises has been those on fixed incomes. In fact if not in theory this is the position of the majority of apprentices in Britain today. With restrictions on overtime working it has not been possible for the majority of young apprentices to keep up with the rise in the cost of living. With little or no attention being given by the Union leaders to the demands of the lads many apprentices have decided to begin to organise themselves to improve their lot.

There have been a number of incidents over the past few months. In Barrow, apprentices were out on strike for a long period of time against their poor conditions. Now in the past month there have been attempts to organise conferences in Manchester and one involving representatives of apprentices in the Plessey group. All the signs point to more and more activity by young workers in industry. And not before time.

The sparkling "age of technology" is in stark contrast to the almost slave-labour conditions of apprentices in many industries. In the engineering industry for instance, one of the main sections of the economy, a 15 year old lad will start on a mere 30% of the skilled man's rate! This not only implies hardship for the apprentice but in many cases for the parents as well. The national strike in 1964 showed that there were numerous cases of widows forced to go out to work in order to keep a son in the bare essentials of food and clothing; for "privilege" of the apprentice receiving a skill. In reality the bigger part of the time is spent as errand boy for the boss or in cheap labour. Added to this is the semi-feudal system of indentures, with literally mediaeval language, with a young

boy delivered into the tender mercy of the employer. Not the least of the intentions of the indenture system is to prevent the apprentice from resorting to strike action; many have clauses to this effect.

Nevertheless despite all the devices of the bosses as the experience in the 1960 and 1964 Apprentices Strikes demonstrated when aroused apprentices will take action. Both of those strikes had the effect of leading to increases in the wages of the lads. The beginnings of the present movement could have a similar effect if the lessons of those two events are learned. What both demonstrated is that it is vitally necessary that a consistent campaign is necessary to awaken apprentices to action. This is particularly important if a durable and broad apprentice movement is to be built. The limited attempts made at the moment indicates that the feeling is there. The starting point could be the AEF Junior Workers Youth Charter. The important demands made are: 1) A big percentage increase in rates of pay bringing 20 year old apprentices to 90% of the skilled man's rate; 2) 35 hour week, which is also TUC policy; 3) Abolition of compulsory night work; 4) Payment of full wages when sick; 5) 4 weeks holiday a year. Not one of these demands is at all "extreme". In fact overall they are exceptionally modest. To this should be added the all-important demand: a living wage for all apprentices, with a cost of living clause to combat the huge rises in the cost of living.

In the past it has often been seen that apprentices have been used as cheap labour by the bosses. The fact that they are not "allowed" to strike, and that they lack experience has made it possible for bosses to use them as strike-breakers. This has de-

monstrated to the workers that their interests are tied to the apprentices' in the short term as well as in the long term. Some prejudice still exists, particularly among older workers, as a result of their having suffered badly as apprentices themselves in their time. They sometimes tend to look upon today's apprentices as molly-coddled and almost to wish that they should suffer as they themselves did. This attitude must be broken down. An active campaign must be waged to win support of all sections of the workers, at shop and site-level, at branch and at conference:—and not just at the place of work; Parents should be shown the exploitation of their sons and daughters, whether as apprentices or in other fields such as shop-assistants, restaurant workers, or just cheap unskilled factory-labour. (A strike has already been called by U.S.D.A.W. over long hours worked by assistants in shoe shops, though this could apply equally well elsewhere as well).

The rank-and-file must demand that the T.U. leadership takes up the demands of the apprentices. Many union leaders have shown little or no interest; shamefully, in the 1960 strike some gave the bosses a free hand to take action against those who had gone on strike! Youth must be allowed a voice! A real step forward would be permanent Apprentices Committees with powers to elect representatives on to shop stewards committees and to convene regular conferences, in the area and nationally. Youth sections should be formed to deal with the problems facing apprentices and all young workers.

A real campaign on these issues, waged among apprentices throughout the Labour and Trade Union movement will have an enormous impact, stretching out even to the unorganised sections.

# AID GREEK WORKERS!

December witnessed a magnificent response to our campaign in aid of the imprisoned Greek Marxists. Since going to print last time we have learnt that there are now 9 Marxists in the prisons of the Greek Colonels.

High point of the campaign so far was the meeting held in NUFTO Hall on December 8th. From all sections of the Labour Movement 70 people came to listen to Sid Bidwell, Labour M.P. for Southall, and Ted Grant outline the situation in Greece and the plans to assist the imprisoned fighters. The meeting was chaired by Arthur Dean, Administrative Officer of the Chemical Workers Union. Sid Bidwell gave the meeting a send off by revealing that a much bigger proportion of MPs would have signed the appeal to the Greek Embassy if it had not been necessary to post it off urgently. He showed that there was enormous support in the Labour Movement for the Greek workers. Showing the connection between the struggle of British and Greek workers he said "Democracy is not fully possible without Socialism but so too Socialism is nothing without full democracy." He was sure that the campaign would meet with a big success and stressed his willingness to assist in every way. Ted Grant explained why the committee had put to the fore the case of the 9 Marxists. He revealed that the two main capitalist newspapers, the TIMES and GUARDIAN, had not printed the appeal for assistance on behalf of Dumas, Thomadakis and the others. The reasons for this he stated was because only these comrades had provided a clear programme around which it would be possible not only to defeat the junta but also to open up the prospect of a Socialist Greece. His analysis of the history of the class struggle in Greece for the last twenty years met with the enthusiastic approval of the audience. The lesson he hammered home was that there was no long term solution to the Greek workers problems other than a socialist one. Both speakers were given warm applause by those attending the meetings. A lively session of questions and discussion followed which is a good pointer to prospects for future meetings.

Coupled with the meetings has been the drive to commit the Labour Movement to assisting the imprisoned fighters with legal aid etc. The response here has been magnificent. Particularly encouraging has been donations from the Labour Party and Trade Union branches. We have received donations from the following: Liverpool Constructional Engineering Union — £7.2.0.; Swansea Labour Association — 26/-; Birkenhead C.L.P. — 18/-; Birkenhead Trades Council — £2.0.0.; London Railway workers — £2.2.0.; Alexandra Ward Labour Party (Manchester) £1.0.0.; Clapham L.P.Y.S.—9/9.; London Teachers—£1.6.6.; Lanchester College (Coventry)—£4.; Newcastle Militant supporters—£2.15.0.; Sussex University Students Union £5.5.0.; Nottingham Labour Club—£1.3.6.; Collection of Nottingham Students—£.23.6.; Hackney ETU—£2.; Chemical Workers Union (Stepney Branch)—£2.

This is a magnificent beginning. We hope to be able to report an even bigger response next months.

Arthur Deane  
Administrative Officer  
Chemical Workers Union.  
Treasurer

"MILITANT"

TEACHERS MEETING  
THE EDUCATION CUTS

General Picton, Caledonian Road,  
near King's Cross  
7.30 p.m.  
Sunday 19th January 1969

SPEAKER: TED COXHEAD  
(Finchley C.L.P.)

ALL WELCOME

# NURSES FIGHT

In today's so called egalitarian society British women are among the most exploited sections of the working class. Employers still do not wish to accept them as an equal labour force, they still try to project the image of women as the underdog, the feeble housewife and mother — so they can justify unfair wages for hours worked and work done.

The employers base their wage battle on sentiment: — the best example of this is the nursing profession "Surely the most rewarding job in the world". Nurses are blackmailed, into accepting poor pay and conditions, with the heartfelt plea that nursing is a "vocation" not a job, and the people entering into this profession are not concerned over money and conditions, but are dedicated workers only concerned with human salvation. This is just a confidence trick to make the nurses think if they ask for more money or better conditions they are not fit to be in the profession, and are just money-grabbing.

A first year students wage is £7 per week for approx. 42 hours; this rising to £8 at the age of 21 or 3rd year of training. On qualification the S.R.N. can expect to earn approx. £13 per week. But question of wages is not the only cause for concern; working hours are long. A nurse on night duty can work a 12 shift week, and day duty of up to 10 days without a break. These sort of hours can be damaging to any young girl's health, physical and mental. Even after a full day's work the nurse is expected to return to her room and take out

her books, which she had to purchase herself, and study for at least 2 hours. The time actually spent in the classroom is approx. 20 weeks in 3 years. In certain hospitals nurses are expected to attend lectures when they are on night duty or even on days. All in all, this extra work accounts for nothing in extra money or extra time off.

To combat these conditions nurses must be prepared to fight and be militant, even with the present difficulties of organisation, the large number of overseas nurses and general dis-unity. They must try to break down the old traditions and ideas within their own ranks and try to ensure a progressive and constructive attitude of the matrons.

Nurses are dependent on other workers to help their fight. This is why they depend so much on the T.U.C. and the rank and file labour movement. If the nurses under severe conditions were to fight and win the sympathy of the other workers, this could cause great upheavals. The very fact that on one occasion the London busmen came out on strike in support of the nurses, who did not strike themselves, shows that there is support.

As it is, patients cannot be given the attention they need. There is a serious shortage of staff. The fight is part of the general struggle for better conditions. The nurses must show that they, too understand this. If necessary even industrial action must be considered: e.g. refusing to carry out the menial tasks which nurses

A STATE REGISTERED NURSE

are forced to do at present while the government refuses to pay for extra staff.

READ THE  
"MERSEYSIDE  
YOUNG SOCIALIST",

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