

LONDON COMMUNISTS IN POLICE COURT

CHARGE OF INCITING TO MUTINY.

MR. LANSBURY GOES BAIL.

POLICE DESCRIBE HOW THE ARRESTS WERE MADE.

The six Communists who were arrested in London on Wednesday evening were charged at Bow Street Police Court yesterday before Sir Chartres Biron. Sir Travers Humphreys prosecuted on behalf of the Director of Public Prosecutions, Sir Archibald Bodkin, who occupied a seat next to Sir Travers, and Mr. Arthur Henderson, jun., appeared for the defence. The men charged are:—

Albert Inkpin, secretary of the Communist party of Great Britain;

John Ross Campbell, editor of the "Workers Weekly";

Harry Pollitt, secretary of the National Minority Movement;

Ernest W. Cant, London district secretary of the Communist party;

William Rust, secretary of the Young Communists' League; and

Thomas Wintringham, assistant editor of the "Workers Weekly."

The dock was insufficient to accommodate the six defendants, two of whom were given permission to take a seat in front of it.

The Charge.

Sir Travers Humphreys said that the charge against the defendants at the moment was that they conspired together with other persons to publish seditious libels and that they conspired together to incite other people to breaches of the Incitement to Mutiny Act of 1797. He understood that Mr. Henderson, representing the defendants, desired a remand. It was a perfectly reasonable application on his part and he (Sir Travers) proposed only formally to prove arrest and then to ask for a remand for eight days.

Inspector Harry Norwood, of New Scotland Yard, the first witness, said that on Wednesday afternoon he went to offices at 38, Great Ormonde Street, on the third floor. On the door were the initials "Y.C.L." (Young Communists' League). There he saw William Charles Rust. The witness said to him "I am a police inspector. Is your name William Rust?" He replied "Yes." "I said," continued the witness, "'Are you the secretary of the Young Communists' League?' He said 'Yes, I am.' I said 'Are you the William Rust whose name appears on this pamphlet?' (This pamphlet, it was stated, would be produced on a subsequent occasion.) He said 'Yes.' I said 'I have a warrant for your arrest.' I cautioned him and read the warrant. He said 'What exactly is the charge?' I said 'The warrant has been read to you and the charge will be preferred at Bow Street Police Station.' I then conveyed him to Bow Street Police Station and he was charged by Police Inspector Parker.

"Later that same day I went back to 38, Great Ormonde Street and went into the office of the National Minority Movement on the third floor. There I saw Harry Pollitt. I said to him," continued the witness, "'Is your name Harry Pollitt?' He replied, 'Yes.' I said 'Are you the secretary of the National Minority Movement?' He said 'Yes.' I told him I had a warrant for his arrest and cautioned him and read the warrant. He made no reply and was conveyed to Bow Street and later charged."

Raid on "Workers' Weekly" Offices.

Detective Sergeant Albert Foster described how on Wednesday afternoon he went with other officers to the first floor of No. 1, Dr. Johnson's Buildings, Temple. He there saw the defendant Wintringham and said to him, "I would like to see Mr. T. H. Wintringham." He replied, "I am Mr. Wintringham." The witness then said, "Are you the Mr. Wintringham who is the sub-editor of the 'Workers Weekly'?" He replied, "Assistant editor."

The witness produced to him a leaflet and said, "I take it you are the Mr. Wintringham referred to at the foot of this leaflet?" He replied, "Yes." The witness informed him that he had a warrant for his arrest. "I cautioned him," went on witness, "and read the warrant to him, and he made no reply."

Sir Travers Humphreys: These rooms consist of a set of chambers?—Yes, sir.

In one of the rooms of that set of chambers did you see the defendant Campbell?—Yes, sir.

What did you say to him?—I said to him, "I have also a warrant for your arrest. I take it that you are the Mr. Campbell, editor of the 'Workers Weekly,' and a member of the Executive Committee of the Communist party." He replied, "Yes."

The witness added, "I began to read the warrant to him, and he asked me if he could read it himself. I permitted him to do

so, and he returned it to me without comment. I took these two to Bow Street Police Station."

How Mr. Inkpin was Arrested.

Chief Inspector Edward Parker, of the Special Branch of Scotland Yard, said that on Wednesday afternoon he went to offices at 16, King Street, Covent Garden, which bore the address of the headquarters of the Communist party of Great Britain. In a room on the first floor he saw the defendant Inkpin. He asked him if he was Albert Inkpin, and he replied that he was. The witness disclosed his own identity, and produced a copy of the "Workers Weekly" of October 9. He pointed to page 2 of it, and said to Mr. Inkpin, "I see you are down here as the secretary. Is that correct?" He said, "Yes."

At that moment, the prisoner Ernest Walter Cant was brought into the room. The witness said to him, "Are you Mr. Ernest Cant?" and he replied, "Yes." The witness said, "Are you the London organiser of the Communist party?" and he replied, "No, I am not the London organiser, I am just messing about."

There was laughter at this, in which all the prisoners joined. The witness added that Cant then said, "I was sacked from that position about six weeks ago." The witness told him he was a police officer, and had a warrant for his arrest. He read the warrant to both the prisoners, and neither made any reply. They were then taken to Bow Street police station where later they were charged.

Sir Travers Humphreys: Were they all six charged together?—The witness: Yes, none of them made any reply.

The witness proceeded that he had taken possession of a large quantity of documents from 16, King Street. He had not had time to examine them all yet.

Mr. Henderson: Can you tell his worship whether these documents include this week's issue of "The Workers Weekly"?—Witness: Yes, they do.

Mr. Henderson stated that he was instructed to ask that the defendants be committed to bail. "They are men," he said, "of the highest respectability, and I suggest that their own securities would be sufficient."

The Magistrate: No: it is too serious for that. I shall take two sureties in £50 in each case.

Mr. Henderson said he understood the charge went back to previous issues of the "Workers Weekly," and he asked that this week's issue should be released at the earliest possible opportunity.

The Magistrate: That is not in my hands. It is a matter entirely for the discretion of the police.

Remanded on Bail.

The Magistrate said the next hearing would be to-morrow week at 11.30. That, he stated, would give defendants a chance of knowing what they had to meet. Then he would like Tuesday and Wednesday of the following week to try the case.

At this stage Mr. Henderson suggested that the sureties should be in £100 in each case, and the Magistrate made it optional—£100 surety or two of £50 in each case.

Mr. Lansbury said he was prepared to go bail for each of the defendants in the sum of £100 each. Mr. Saklatvala also said he was willing to go bail, and the prisoners were, therefore, remanded on bail.

The demeanour of the accused differed considerably. Mr. Pollitt's face wore an amused smile. He looked round frequently, and, catching the eye of a friend in court, nodded cheerfully. Mr. Wintringham appeared rather bored. The others for the most part followed the formal evidence of arrest very closely.

Scene Outside the Court

By the time the proceedings were over there were over three hundred people outside the court. When the defendants appeared, in company with Mr. George Lansbury and Mr. Saklatvala, cries of "Good old George" were raised, and the crowd surrounded Mr. Lansbury's car and sang "The Red Flag." For a brief period road traffic outside the court was completely held up. The defendants got into waiting taxi-cabs and were driven away, but Mr. Thomas Wintringham left on foot, accompanied by his wife and an admiring crowd.