

THE WORKER



Published by the Communist Party of Britain (Marxist-Leninist) No 28 10th August 1978 5p

NOT GUIDELINES BUT BATTLE LINES

Labour says 'more of less, less of more'

AT LAST the General Council of the TUC has been driven to outright rejection of a Government wages dictum and has decisively thrown out the 5 per cent gambit of Healey and Callaghan.

It has taken the labour movement 10 years to learn that the TUC function is the maintenance and improvement of wages and working conditions. Today, in spite of false claims of improved living standards, we, the workers, are still a minimum of 6 per cent behind the levels of 1975 in real earnings - and that of course only applies to those who are employed. For the ever growing number of unemployed, the drop in the standard of living is horrifying.

Every effort was made to woo the unions into submission right up to the Tuesday before the General Council meeting on July 26. The comedians Callaghan and Healey, within the portentous setting of No. 10 awesomely summoned an assembly of the whole General Council - and utterly failed to shake their resolve.

The Prime Minister plaintively objected that workers seem to believe it is right to present annual wage claims. Such effrontery! Why not follow the US system of once every 3 years.

The Prime Minister, having set the scene, handed over to Healey who, with memories of his pantomime role in the Wizard of Oz, sought to spellbind with 'economics', though from time to time switching parts and exuding false bonhomie

The next issue

The next issue of The Worker will appear in 2 weeks' time on 24th August.

with smiles like Petèr Pan's crocodile.

It has taken the TUC General Council almost the full year to stand by last Congress's policy for collective bargaining agreed in September 1977. It should be remembered that previously they passively accepted the 10 per cent declaration of Healey, never really challenged it, submitted to the tyranny of sanctions and were prepared to permit the crushing of the firemen's revolt.

Now we hear the 'true liberal voice' as expressed through Steele who is for compulsory legislation on our wages and no restraint on dividends, so that profits can go on accruing in an ever-rising spiral. Callaghan's promise of dividend restriction was empty and only came about through a parliamentary action - not that that is any more than a sop to the unions anyway.

Though now the position of the unions is clear and for unfettered bargaining, the Government position and declaration must not be under-

estimated. The strength it gives to the employers makes it a mighty weapon against workers. The CBI, whatever they might say about differentials, will advise all who it represents to adhere to 5 per cent while, at the same time, opposing any controls on profits and prices. Without doubt the Engineering Employers Federation will circulate all engineering employers speciously arguing for conforming with Government strictures of 5 per cent to avoid sanctions such as loss of Government contracts.

In preparing for the struggle we should read and understand the White Paper on 5 per cent limitation. To be deceived by the thought of a shorter working week would be a digression. The road must be straight and our actions clear. We must reject the suggestion within the White Paper that we might take a shorter working week to the tune of 5 per cent and forego a monetary claim, since to achieve 35 hours, a 5 hour reduction

Continued on page 4

Victory in London's dockland

IN THE FACE of mounting opposition in East London the Government has reversed its plan to close London's Upper Docks. The Government decision represents a significant victory for Dockland, and demonstrates the only way to prevent closures - fight them tooth and nail.

For a long time the Port of London Authority (PLA) has been arguing that the docks are not viable. The Government has been giving the PLA its backing. Last May, Prime Minister Callaghan asserted that there could be no long term future for the

London docks if they continued to receive subsidies.

But Callaghan and the PLA reckoned without the vigorous opposition of dockers and other workers in the threatened area.

Their slogan was, "Keep the locks off the docks and keep East London alive." The bleatings of the PLA about financial difficulties were discounted and there developed an awareness that the closure plan was politically inspired: an attack on the working class in an area of traditional strength. Indeed, the plan was seen as a crucial

Labour in all-out attack on collective bargaining

THE OVERWHELMING vote by the TUC General Council for collective bargaining and against another year of Labour Government wage-fixing might never have happened as far as Healey and Callaghan are concerned.

The TUC's massive opposition to the Government's 5 per cent guideline was raised in the House of Commons and Healey waved it aside with the claim that, "TUC members will adhere to the guideline set down at least to the degree that they have over the past 12 months." A few days later he was even more insulting by confidently predicting that "TUC opposition to wage controls would be even less this year than last."

When the Labour Government's White Paper on incomes policy was presented in the House of Commons on July 21, it showed utter contempt for the labour movement's decision to return to collective bargaining. Announcing the stage four guideline of 5 per cent,

Healey stated that it would be backed by sanctions, pressures on the nationalised sector and all the other restrictive measures of previous stages.

The stock market reaction was highly favourable and the international money dealers were so pleased that the pound immediately went up in relation to other currencies. But for the working class this was an insolent slap in the face. The Government's sugar-coating for the bitter pill of wage-fixing is dividend restraint which, thanks to the surprise support of the Scottish nationalists, was kept in being for a further period. But anybody who thinks that dividend restraint is a quid pro quo for wage-fixing fully deserves to be defrauded by this Government!

Self-financing productivity deals to set worker against worker will again be encouraged and there will be no reduction in hours of work which could lead to any increase in labour costs. So the Labour Government says.

This White Paper on incomes policy is a charter for working class enslavement. It must be torn to shreds.

In the very first issue of THE WORKER, January 1, 1969, the headline described the Labour Government as "the enemy of the working class". Ten years later the workers of Britain have had ample opportunity to test and confirm this political truth by their own bitter experience. We simply cannot go on saying Labour is terrible but Thatcher would be worse. We have to say capitalism is terrible - whichever party operates it against us. We have to be rid

Continued on page 4

HISTORIC NOTES**The fight for the 8 hour day****THE WEEK**

BY THE LAST decades of the nineteenth century workers were getting weary of their position. It was increasingly irksome to vote Liberal, the 'left' of the two parties, when the boss was Liberal and often sent police and troops to break strikes. People were increasingly agitated by the 'theory' that poverty was caused by laziness or 'lack of character'. Unemployment was on the increase, housing conditions showed no signs of improvement, and still sickness or old age meant destitution. Neither Liberals nor Tories would do anything - for 'state interference' they said, was against good economic sense. Winning the vote had brought few real gains.

New socialist groupings grew demanding far reaching reforms, blaming the system not the individual for poverty, and demanding 'independent labour representation' to push reforms through parliament. Until this, the TUC had concentrated on removing

anti-working class legislation and had generally opposed anything more. But as the President told the TUC of 1887: "Gentlemen, we can do with state interference if the homes of the people can be improved, or work to the unemployed be given, or bread to the hungry, or hope and succour to the uncared for of our large towns. Let it be used to help the poor, the down trodden and ill paid, and overworked toilers... Gentlemen, we recognise our most serious evils in the unrestrained, unscrupulous and remorseless forces of capitalism."

But many were opposed to this new approach, and it was the demand for a legally enforced 8 hour day that brought the debate to a head. Should such social progress be won via parliament or by trade union action? The socialists insisted that it was the responsibility of the state.

The Cleveland Miners, however, argued "that if an eight hour day were given by law, instead of by

organized efforts, the workers would not be persuaded to organize at all." Broadhurst of the Stonemasons pleaded, "... for God's sake, let them do this work for themselves and no grovelling to the doors of parliament like paupers seeking a weekly dole. The iron workers and carpenters opposed the idea on the grounds that parliament was a capitalist institution. And finally the TUC of 1890 decided against the move on the grounds that "to relegate this important question to the Imperial Parliament, which is necessarily from its position antagonistic to the rights of labour, will only indefinitely delay this much needed reform."

"Socialists", argued Frederick Rogers of the Vellum Binders a year later, "are teaching us that the functions of the State can be enlarged, that Government is omnipotent to protect. But they make the common mistake of all enthusiasts, when they say there is one remedy for all social dis-

eases, and that remedy is theirs... There must be independent life within the State to prevent the Government becoming tyranny, and the Trade Unions will be chief among those who shall call this independent life into being."

The 8 hour day debate was the first major impetus to the demand for 'independent labour representation' and a party with a new attitude towards the workers role within the state. The desire was truly for social progress and proved in many instances to be a practical way forward. But today we should remember also the warnings of those who bitterly opposed the new direction.

"Self-help and self-reliance are extended and strengthened by combination... but with these lessons others have been inculcated which would render nugatory the power of the Unions, namely reliance upon State aid, State regulation and State control. The two systems cannot co-exist; they are contradictory and opposed."

Albania has many friends

JUST as the removal of the Russian technicians failed to intimidate China in 1959, so the similar act by the Chinese in 1978 will fail to stop socialist Albania pursuing its independent foreign policy and its defence of socialism in the world today. The Albanians are well aware of the difficulties created by the encirclement of two major imperialist forces grouped in NATO and the Warsaw Pact, but it has only shown more forcefully the strength and impact that their policy of socialist self-reliance has,

In Albania the development of the economy, of the skills and living standards of the people and the international stand have never been separated. They flow from one another. The development of socialism internally is the basis of her national independence, and this in turn is the basis of her internationalism.

By staying free from the clutches of both USA and USSR and any other who would try and dominate Albania has given a clarion call

to the people of the world by rejecting the idea that some 'third world' is a force which can exempt itself from the struggle of socialism against capitalism.

This principled stand, based on the magnificent example at home, is the reason for Albania's growing influence throughout the world. It's lasting contribution to the well being of the people of the world is increasingly being recognised.

It is because the Albanians in turn see the growing strength of the fight against exploitation and war throughout the world that they claim, quite rightly, that they are not isolated - no matter what the Chinese or anyone else might do. As they themselves put it, "Throughout the world there are millions of honest people, fighters for the truth. We Albanians regard these fighters for freedom as our friends." That is why we in Britain regard Albania as our friend and why our fight for freedom from exploitation is more than a fight for our own liberation, but a duty to socialist Albania and the people of the world.

But who will drive the tank

"THE THIRD WORLD WAR, August 1985". Such is the title of a recent book by a General Sir John Hackett and others. It dates the outbreak of World War III.

Many millions died in the 1st World War and many more died in the 2nd World War. How many millions will die in the third? And how are we to prepare for this happy event, this third world holocaust in a mere 7 years time? Why - by spending yet more money on arms so that it can be even bigger and better than the last.

The primary purpose of this book is to preach the doctrine of the need to strengthen NATO. It is meticulous in detail and fanciful in ending. The 1st World War lasted 4 years and the 2nd 5 years. The 3rd? One month says the General. Who is he kidding, and if the war is to be finished so rapidly by a "limited nuclear strike" (sic) why call for a massive expansion of conventional forces?

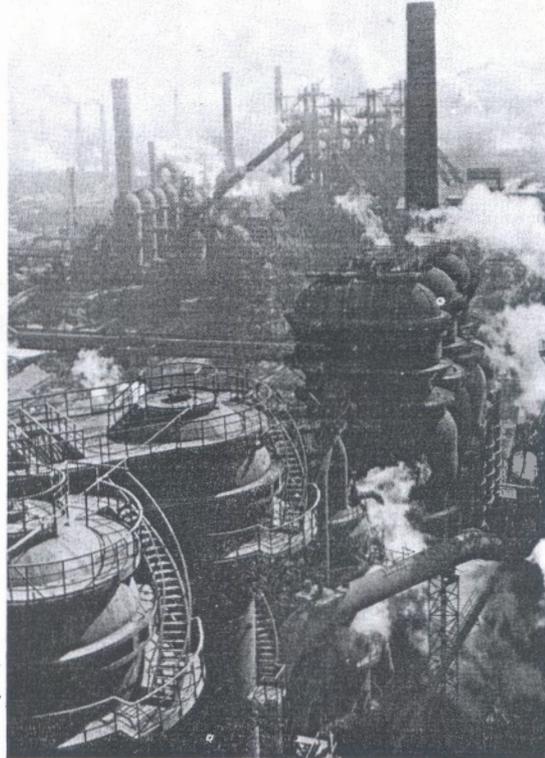
The General is unfortunately no Dr Strangelove, but erstwhile Commander of NORTHAG (Northern Army Group). He and others would do well to remember the words of Bertold Brecht's poem.

"General, that tank of yours is some car.
It can wreck a forest, crush a hundred men,
But it has one falling:
It needs a driver.

General, you've got a good bomber there.
It can fly faster than the wind, carry more than an elephant can.
But it has one falling:
It needs a mechanic.

General, a man is a useful creature.
He can fly and he can kill.
But he has one falling:
He can think."

We shall not prepare for war but prevent it - by revolution. War on the warmongers.



China's Anshan Iron and Steel complex. An example of the tremendous industrial upsurge in China under socialism. (Picture by Hsinhua)

Filthy prison reflects imperialist rule

CONDITIONS at the Maze Prison Long Kesh are inhuman and disgusting. Human excrement covers the walls and urine runs freely through the corridors. Prisoners do not wear clothes and have had all furniture removed from their cells. They sleep on mattresses on the floor, some of these soaking wet. The prisoners are locked in their cells, without books or stimulation of any kind. Brutal treatment by warders has been alleged by some prisoners. These conditions have prevailed for nearly two years.

The Northern Ireland Office claims that the prisoners are themselves responsible for this. It may well be the case that dreadful conditions at the prison are punishments devised against protestors but the ultimate responsibility for such conditions lies with the British Government. It is British imperialism which divides the Irish people and pre-

vents them from deciding their own future. It is the British Government who dispensed with trial by jury in Ulster and who hound and imprison men and women on evidence that would not gain an indictment in Britain.

The recent Amnesty report made clear the alarming level of police brutality and Britain has already appeared before an international court to answer charges of inhuman treatment in dealings with the Irish people. British politicians prate ever more loudly about human rights in far away lands but take no notice when these rights are denied on their own doorstep.

The excuse for all this is that terrorists cannot be combatted in the ordinary way. But that's no business of Britain's. Once British troops are withdrawn the Irish proletariat can deal with terrorism and all the other hideous legacies of British imperialism!

REACTIONARIES both in and outside the NUS have welcomed the attempt to bring students' unions under further control of the State under various 'progressive' pretexts. Mr William Van Stroubenzee, the architect of the notorious proposals of 1971 - which provoked one of the most widespread of student actions ever - says: "It seems to me that these are the Tory proposals revamped and, as such, I naturally wish them well."

A LABOUR MP has demanded an inquiry into the role played by Saatchi and Saatchi, the advertising company, in acting for the Manpower Services Commission and the Conservative Party.

He complained that the company, on behalf of the commission, was engaged in explaining and promoting Government policies to combat unemployment while, on behalf of the Conservative Party, it was marketing a "disreputable" and misleading advertising campaign on unemployment, which includes a poster showing a dole queue, according to some, made up of Saatchi and Saatchi employees.

What a nonsense this shows electioneering to be when the same advertising firm presents the case for both parties.

HUNDREDS of teachers, students and other trade unionists struck a blow against fascism by joining in a lobby of Enfield councillors recently. The council reversed a previous decision to allow racist organisations to hold meetings in local schools in opposition to trade union opinion.

UNEMPLOYMENT will rise above 2 million by 1982, compared with 1.4 million at present if current trends continue, according to a study by the Centre for Industrial, Economic and Business Research at Warwick University.

Rhodesian terrorism

RHODESIAN forces have again crossed into Mozambique. This time they have done so at the behest of the Transitional Government. The raid occurred when the racist Smith's accomplices Muzorewa and Sithole were conveniently out of the country. The raid was aimed at the 'militant wing of the Patriotic Front' but sources in Mozambique have claimed that a school was destroyed in the process.

Ndabaningi Sithole was the first member of the government to excuse the attack and did so in the name of 'democracy' - a favourite way to condone acts of terrorism. It is thought that the raid was on the same scale as in November when 1,200 guerrillas were killed and several hundred wounded - a very civilized and democratic act and perpetrated on foreign soil.

This foray into another country to kill hundreds of people reveals the true nature of the 'progressive' multi-racial government. Its nature is the same as its notorious predecessor. Black as well as white oppressors will have to be defeated in Zimbabwe.

EDITORIAL

LENIN said of the October Revolution: "What has been won by the Russian Revolution is inalienable. No power on earth can deprive us of that." For the international working class, for the workers of the world, that remains true - even after a failure in vigilance on the part of the working people of the Soviet Union allowed a revisionist clique to usurp state power and restore bureaucratic capitalism in socialism's first home.

Lenin went on to say, "For hundreds of years states have been built on the bourgeois model, and now for the first time a non-bourgeois form of state has been discovered. . . However bad our state apparatus is - still it has been created: a most important historical invention has been made, a proletarian type of state has been created. Therefore let the whole of Europe, let thousands of bourgeois newspapers, carry news about the horrors and poverty and sufferings which the workers endure in our country - still all over the world workers are attracted to the Soviet state."

That great working class victory of establishing a dictatorship of the proletariat in Russia and building a socialist society from which exploitation was eliminated belongs to us workers still. The proof is that the bourgeoisie and their hacks have never ceased to revile those who made the October Revolution, the working masses and their leaders: they know that, whatever reversions, defections and betrayals may have taken place since, the world will never again be a comfortable place for them.

Under socialism the backward, imperialist Tsarist state which had been a by-word for reaction and repression was transformed into a mighty industrial democracy capable of meeting on the field of battle and defeating a tremendous fascist armada which was capitalism's last desperate throw at strangling socialism in the land of its birth, a victory which lifted fascism off the backs of the working class in many countries. We workers will never forget that magnificent example of what our class can do once socialism has been established nor the great leader, Stalin, who led the working people of the Soviet Union to triumph.

A silly little band of bourgeois intellectuals who are trying to rehabilitate Bukharin at the expense of Stalin and socialism are only the latest of several generations of hacks whose hatred of Stalin is a measure of his services to the working class. Revisionists, Trotskyists and the rest of the bourgeoisie go on frantically trying to bury Stalin and Marxism with him; but as long as workers go on struggling to end exploitation, Stalin's spirit walks among us and talks to us.

Albania's unaided defeat of the occupying forces of fascist Italy and Germany and its self-reliant building of socialism in the face of the hostility of imperialist countries, including erstwhile friends, is another inalienable victory of ours. So is the Vietnamese people's glorious vindication of the unconquerable might of people's war in humbling and expelling the strongest imperialist power of our time, the US.

In China too, whatever the current deviations from Marxism, there are great proletarian victories which are inalienable. Under the leadership of the Communist Party of China the Chinese people liberated themselves from imperialist aggression, carried out their revolution and set about transforming their country. Feeding, clothing and housing eight hundred million people, a quarter of the world's population, guaranteeing their health and well-being and a steadily rising standard of living were some of socialism's greatest achievements and gave the lie for all time to the capitalist claim that shortages and suffering are the inevitable lot of populous, under-industrialised countries. The Chinese working class filled the gap created by the Soviet Union's defection from the socialist camp and drove themselves not only to raise the technological development of China to undreamt of levels, but also shared that development with fraternal socialist countries like Vietnam and Albania. We can never forget the magnanimity of socialist China, when having defeated India's aggressive policy over disputed border lands, the People's Liberation Army halted an advance the Indians could not have stopped, released all prisoners and returned all captured arms after repairing those which had been damaged in the fighting.

When the Soviet revisionists dared to threaten Albania, Mao Tsetung, speaking for the Chinese people, said that anyone attacking Albania would have to answer to China. To the people of Vietnam, heroically resisting the aggressive forces of US imperialism, the Chinese Party and people said: regard our country as your well-defended rear area to be used by you till complete victory over the enemy is achieved. When the revisionists brought about a split in the world communist movement, the Chinese Communist Party gave fraternal encouragement to the formation of new Marxist-Leninist parties

And remembering those victories we shall always hold in the greatest fraternal esteem the leaders of the Chinese people, Mao Tsetung who made such creative contributions to Marxist-Leninist understanding and Chou En-lai. Krushchev denigrated Stalin as part of the campaign to reject socialism. It is a greater calumny to pretend that non-Marxist, counter-revolutionary ideas stem from the works of Mao Tsetung. Those who do so would be ideologically happier with the pro-Bukharin group of Western intellectuals. Bukharin also emphasised forces of production to the exclusion of relations of production in order to play down and to eliminate revolution.

All these triumphs and victories of the working class are inalienable, however much mean, petty, selfish little men in capitalism's service may try to obscure and subvert them. We demonstrate the profound truth of this inalienability by the way we throw ourselves into the class war against exploitation encouraged, enlightened and fixed in resolve by our Russian and Chinese comrades who have blazed the trail before us.

Wide variety of skills fighting for more pay

INDUSTRIAL civil servants in Britain number some 183,000 workers encompassing a great variety of skills. Their action in support of their wage claim has brought this variety into prominence. The official drivers have refused to drive ministers to their "work", the dockworkers have caused a great panic in the Admiralty and NATO by blacking work on Polaris submarines, workers at the Driver and Vehicle Licensing Centre in Swansea have disrupted the feeding of information to the police computer at Hendon.

Workers employed at places as exotic as Aldermaston nuclear base and the National Physics Laboratory in London have joined in the struggle for decent wages. So much for the old divisive argument that governments treat workers in such places with respect. The eleven union joint co-ordinating committee has twice rejected the government's offer

since their claim was lodged in March and are demanding pay comparability with workers in private industry.

Actually the only comparability is that everyone has to face up to their employers in organised struggle if they want their demands to be realised. It is organisation on which power lies and it is the willingness to use this power that causes such great concern to the employing class and their government.

Meetings of 2500 dockyard workers at Clydeside Naval bases voted overwhelmingly to black work on Polaris Submarine, Resolution, in support of the pay claim.

The action by industrial civil servants is already having effect in other sections. Civil service unions are examining the most vulnerable areas and work places where action would be taken against Government attempts to impose its 5 per cent limit.

Teachers fight closures

WANDSWORTH teachers, parents and children left the ILEA (Inner London Education Authority) in no doubt as to their intention to continue to fight the transfer of teachers and the closure of schools when they lobbied the Education Committee just before the end of the summer term. The recent fight against the transfer of teachers from local primary schools and for reduced class size and a general increase in individual attention for children of all abilities has resulted in parents forming the Save Our Schools campaign, which has links with all the Parent Teacher Associations in the borough and organises action in cooperation with the local branch of the National Union of Teachers.

In the middle of the campaign just a month before the end of term, the Authority announced that one local secondary school, Lavender Hill, was yet again under threat of closure. All consultation with staff, parents and governors was to be carried out before the end of the term. Such lack of notice and indecent haste must serve as a warning to other schools threatened with closure.

The ILEA say that they intend

to close Lavender Hill because it is no longer a "popular" school but this is hardly surprising when just at the time when local parents were choosing schools for their children a London evening paper conveniently leaked the possible closure of the school. The ILEA officials received a very hot reception from parents and teachers when they went to the school to "consult" the parents at Lavender Hill. Enthusiasts of "consultation" should note that all the bodies consulted over the proposed closure of another London comprehensive, Robert Montefiore School, came out in opposition to the closure but the ILEA is still going ahead with plans to close that school.

Wandsworth teachers and parents are determined not to be beaten. Plans are already afoot to continue the fight to save Lavender Hill immediately term restarts in September and the SOS campaign plans to oppose the next round of teacher transfers that are on the cards for next spring. The success of the fight depends on the enthusiasm of teachers to fight for an improved education service, and to oppose the closure of all schools.

Struggle against Plessey sackings

IN announcing 600 redundancies at Edge Lane plant, Plesseys has made it clear that this is part of an "ongoing review of manpower". The workforce are beginning to realise that the redundancies will only stop with site closure.

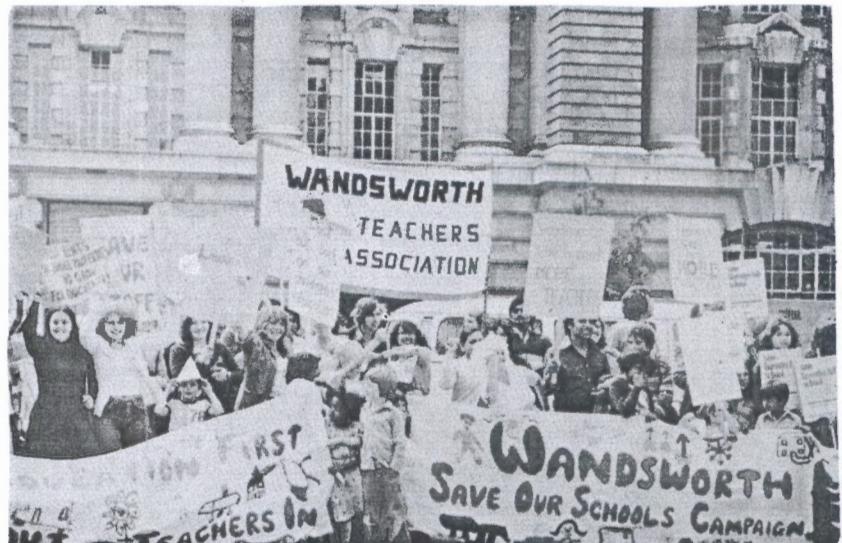
This almost yearly declaration of redundancies is breeding demoralisation. In successive fights for the right to work the Plessey workers have taken stronger action each time. It is estimated that last year's round of "work-ins" saved 400 jobs.

This year, however, workers seem in danger of becoming accustomed to redundancy, and have declared a position that they will act only if any attempt is made to compulsorily sack anyone.

Plessey workers, along with workers elsewhere, are asking, "How can we win if there is no work, no orders." Victory can only be attained ultimately when we have overthrown our capitalist "masters", and when we can plan our production requirements on the sensible basis of need, not profit. To achieve this end it is important that we do not lose our productive skills, it is important that we make the employer pay for the lack of orders and change of technology, not us. If we do not fight on this basis, then the final victory of socialism will be that much harder, and take that much longer to achieve. Struggles against redundancy can never be seen as an end in themselves, rather as battles that must be fought to strengthen our ability to win the war against capitalism.

In Brief

ONLY one mildly sensible voice emerged from the conference of the so-called "non-aligned" 'third world' countries in Belgrade. It came from the Foreign Minister of Ceylon, who pointed out that last year these 'third world' countries spent £8.2 billion on military purchases - and none of it was used against imperialist or colonialist powers. In fact, he said, these countries were already being used by the major imperialist blocks to fight a new Third World War by proxy. So much for the argument that the 'non-aligned' 'third world' movement was an effective force for national independence against imperialism.



(Picture: The Worker)

Sun journalists set a shining example

JOURNALISTS on The Sun newspaper have made the headlines themselves this past fortnight without writing a word. The paper's 224 members of the National Union of Journalists were dismissed after taking industrial action in pursuit of a wage claim. They are demanding a 10 per cent pay rise plus a 12½ per cent productivity deal - an increase of about £2000 a year. Even then, they will not be keeping up with other wage rates in Fleet Street newspapers.

Of course, their claim is way beyond the Government guidelines, but that has not worried the journalists in their battle. Their strength has been well demonstrated in unified votes of defiance and determination against management threats.

It is the most clear practical proof that the NUJ's annual conference in April fully reflected the aspirations of the membership. In an unambiguously worded resolution, the NUJ said 'no' to the

guidelines and 'no' to interferences in wage bargaining. Instead the resolution stated that negotiators should draw up claims based solely on their members' needs and desires.

The Sun is just one example of the correctness of that decision. Journalists at the Press Association news agency have been 'imposing sanctions' - a polite way of saying a work-to-rule - to press their latest claim, which exceeds the guidelines.

At Mirror Group Newspapers, journalists on the Daily Mirror, Sunday Mirror and Sunday People have just completed a deal which smashes the guidelines to smithereens. NUJ members at the three papers have won a 10 per cent rise, plus an extra £380 a year in what management call a productivity deal, blatantly phoney. They also agreed under the package to a 10 per cent rise on July 1, 1979 - making a nonsense of the 'phase 4, 5 per cent' guidelines.

The Mirror deal has given heart to colleagues on the Sun and the PA. And there are significant rumblings at other Fleet Street papers, particularly the Daily Mail where journalists held a long meeting last week.

It is no surprise that the NUJ's executive was able to endorse the action of the Sun journalists speedily since free collective bargaining is the Union's unequivocal policy.

The only danger is that journalists will keep these phoney productivity deals secret. That would be bad for their less well-organised colleagues in other sectors of the industry and in the provinces. Indeed, it would be bad for the working class as a whole.

Nobody who bursts through the shameful guidelines should hide their success. They should proudly proclaim their victory - a victory against corporatism and a victory for the class.

WORKER INTERVIEW

SINCE the beginning of July, Post Office Engineers in West Yorkshire have been engaged in the struggle for a 35 hour week. 'The Worker' interviewed one of the members involved.

Q. What is the current action about?

A. The action is in support of a 35-hour week. In our industry this would not mean the creation of a large number of new jobs but it would protect the jobs already there. Over the last few years we have lost about 3000 jobs in the industry. With the new exchanges we could lose a lot more.

Q. What actions are you taking at present?

A. On July 1st, two members from the Dewsbury area were suspended without pay for refusing to install new equipment, in line with Union instructions. The management are taking a tough line and the following week suspended another engineer for the same reason. On the first day that the two men were suspended, the Leeds Telephone Area engineers held a one-day strike in protest. It was supported 100 per cent by the 1600 members in the area. Since that time we've been operating an overtime ban and work-to-rule and also selective stoppages in order to have our men re-instated with no further disciplinary action against them. Of course, we still haven't lost sight of our original claim for the 35 hour week.

Q. Why have you adopted these tactics?

A. In our branch and nationally it's been decided that an all-out strike by engineers wouldn't be very effective because a lot of the automatic equipment would run itself for months before you had any major breakdowns. So it's been decided to put a levy on the membership and hold selective stoppages. We are fitting our tactics to suit the situation we find ourselves in.

Q. To return to the question of the 35-hour week. Is it just a question of job loss or are there other aspects to it which have prompted your demands?

A. Well, there's the question of productivity. In other industries as well as our own, new technology has always been used to increase productivity, in other words, we end up working twice as hard and other workers end up on the dole. Since the Industrial Revolution, people have been talking about new technology increasing leisure time for the workers. This has not come about. More times than not it has meant people being thrown out of work. This has got to change now and we must use the new technology for our benefit. In our case, the ultimate aim is to secure a 35-hour week in four days - an hour per day off over 5 days is not much use. As has been said by many of my colleagues at work, they see more of their work-mates than they do of their wives and families.

Q. How do you see the resolve of the engineers in seeing this struggle through?

A. Well, the management's line seems to be to get tough with the Union and there will probably be more suspensions in the Leeds area in the near future to join the 80 already suspended nationally. However, we are determined. The selective stoppages will begin to take effect, indeed, they've already affected the postal system and TV and radio. Over a period the system will start to slow down.

The Post Office also has a lot of capital invested in the new electronic exchanges and wants to recoup that investment as quickly as possible. So they're caught in a cleft stick really. They want the new equipment working as soon as possible but they're not going to have it unless they give in.

Q. Finally, what effect has this struggle had on the Post Office Engineers?

A. The strike we held was, I believe, only the second in the history of the Union, going back to 1888. We've always been very moderate. Now we're beginning to think differently. We are beginning to realise that we have to fight for our own jobs and better conditions.



Dockers on the march against the Port of London Authority's attempt to close the Royal group of docks. All sorts of arguments of 'technological progress', 'financial necessity' and other excuses have been used to justify this wanton act of destruction. There was even the suggestion that the area could 'provide jobs' by being converted into an Olympic stadium. The dockers' unity, clarity and strength of organisation meant that their strike threat was enough to force the Government to back down. See Story page 1. (Picture: The Worker)

Labour says

'more of less, less of more'

-continued from page 1

would represent a 12½ per cent rise. We must demand both, nor should we be stupid enough to believe there is any way to factorise 5 per cent to accommodate differential adjustment, less still to suffer the appalling hypocrisy which says that so far as the lower paid are concerned they may be brought up to £44 - even if this exceeds 5 per cent. What generosity! So much for increased living standards.

In entering the new area of wage bargaining workers must be clear if they are to smash the barrier of 5 per cent. They will need to fight - and in the most strongly organised way that only they are truly capable of. We are not yet in a 'free' collective bargaining stage.

Capitalism kills babies

FOR over a year the people of Oxford have watched the building of a new hospital, and wondered whether it was ever going to be opened. The problem faced by the Area Health Authority has been that financial provision from the Government has been so cut back that it could afford neither the cost of making the hospital operational nor of paying for it to be kept unopened. As there was no third option, the Government has committed itself to ensuring the opening of the hospital while making it clear that this must be largely at the expense of the other medical services in the county. An indication of what this means has recently come to light. The Area Health Authority plans to close a ten-bed isolation unit at the John Radcliffe 'Maternity Hospital and another ten beds normally reserved for private patients.

Consultants at the Maternity

Hospital say that if implemented this decision could have disastrous consequences, for the unit is specially designed to isolate mothers and their babies who have picked up an infection and to prevent that infection spreading. If the unit is closed, they will have to be put into single rooms on the wards, where there was, not the same degree of isolation. One consultant obstetrician said: "It is time the people of Oxford got to know what is going on. The Area Health Authority wants to reduce the efficiency of care for mothers and new-born babies, which is fundamental to the basic health of the whole area."

It is not only time people got to know, but also time workers both in and out of the medical sector took action to prevent this planned destruction of their health care.

collective bargaining:

continued from page 1

of capitalism and any election which does not enable us to register a vote against capitalism is utterly irrelevant. It is completely irrational and against the interests of the working class to support

collective bargaining as the general secretary of the TGWU has done and at the same time to say that disagreements with the Labour Government do not prevent us from "knowing who our friends are". With friends like the Labour Government the working class has no need of enemies.

Bookshops

Bellman Bookshop, 155 Fortess Road, London NW5
Main Trend Books, 17 Midland Road, St. Philips, Bristol
Brighton Workers Bookshop, 37 Gloucester Road, Brighton
Northern Star Bookshop, 18A Leighton Street, Leeds
Basildon bookstall Tues Fri Sat Marketplace
Liverpool bookstall - every Saturday at Paddies
Market, Great Homer Street, Liverpool
Hull Bookstall - Old Town Market, Saturdays 9.30-4.00

'The Worker'

155 FORTRESS ROAD, LONDON NW5
6 months £2.50 (including postage)
1 year £5.00 (including postage)

NAME.....
ADDRESS.....