

THE WORKER



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After union rejection of Govt Pay Policy

NOW INTO ACTION WITH COLLECTIVE BARGAINING

CALLAGHAN'S performance at the TUC recently, out of tune and with the wrong words, has received replies from several sections of workers currently putting wage claims. The sections involved are following their unions' policy for collective bargaining and simply ignoring the Labour

Government's 5 per cent guidelines. In effect, as the old music hall song goes, they are saying to Mr Callaghan, "We don't want to lose you, but we think you ought to go".

Conflict is assured by last week's discovery that the Government has secretly introduced a new curb on collective

bargaining. Over one million local authority manual workers seeking a £60 a week wage, many of whom live on the poverty line, have decided on protest action against the new norm. The new norm states that workers who got over 10 per cent last year will have the percentage they were over last year taken away from the 5 per cent this year. Latest news that the Retail Price Index has exactly doubled since February 1974, while wages have fallen well below, explains the latest claims.

The CBI reveals that 30 major claims are running between 20-30 per cent. British Oxygen (Gases Division) has received a claim for 20 per cent on basic rates and 50 per cent on overtime earnings. Road haulage drivers who won 15 per cent last year have a claim for a substantial increase this year.

Atomic energy workers want a 20 per cent raise for

craftsmen. Ford workers want a substantial increase from the firm that made £236 m pre-tax profit last year. The lowest paid, the farm workers, want an 86 per cent rise and a 5-hour reduction in the working week. The Steel Industry Management Association, representing 12,000 workers at BSC, have told the employers they want 12 per cent and have warned of industrial action: 'working strictly to job specification'. The British Association of Colliery Management has pressed for free collective bargaining as will the 19000 power station engineers of the Engineers and Managers' Association.

The Labour Government is surrounded by enemies, many their former friends, who now realise what a self-delusion the Social Contract was. Getting together a workable majority in Parliament could prove to be the least of their worries.

What's so special about subversion

THE TUC has passed a motion expressing 'concern and alarm' at certain activities of the Special Patrol Group. And well they might. For, in practice, the prefix 'special' means these police sections are a law unto themselves.

The SPG travel in unmarked vans manned 12 at a time, carrying firearms and are selected for their special capacity for violence against pickets and demonstrations. These 'snatch squads' played an infamous part in the Grunwick dispute. They were set up by the Labour Government in 1965, but no doubt Wilson did not know about them either.

More sinister is the activity of the Special Branch. The SPG is no more than a group of overgrown bullies, but all can see them for what they are. Special Branch works outside the public gaze, undercover and underhand.

Special Branch is concerned with 'subversion', recently defined by the Labour Home Secretary, Merlyn Rees as 'activities which threaten the safety or well-being of the State, and are intended to undermine or overthrow parliamentary democracy by political, industrial or violent means' (Hansard, 6.4.78). Armed with this definition, there is nothing in the way of everyday trade union and political activity that Special Branch cannot investigate.

Given the central role played by successive capitalist governments, Labour and Tory, in industry and the economy, we see that all who oppose their policies are 'subversives'. The 1966 'wage freeze', challenged by the seamen's strike which was led, said Wilson, by 'a small group of politically-motivated men', was subversive. So too was the opposition to 'In Place of Strife' in 1969. And the AUEW opposition to the Industrial Relations Act produced a 'subversive' result, along with the 'two million outlaws' who struck on May Day 1973 against Stage Three of Tory incomes policy. The SB has increased in size 7-fold since the early sixties. One in every 30 police officers is Special Branch, 1,359, to be exact. At present, they are transferring 600,000 individual records on to the new police computer, from Special Branch alone.

The fight for wages has become a political threat to the employing class, justifying the expanded role of the Special Branch. The small group of politically-motivated men and women who oversee the affairs of capitalism are apparently afraid.

GREENWICH social workers picket the Town Hall in support of their claim for local pay negotiations and regrading. Social workers in Greenwich have agreed to go on a one-day strike on the 27th September and will be carrying out a ballot of members to determine whether to take further action.

Southwark, Tower Hamlets and Newcastle social workers (NALGO) are already on strike, whilst Lewisham are about to ballot their members and Newham and Hackney are meeting to decide their reaction to the employers' latest offer. Wandsworth social workers held a one-day strike on the 19th September in London and Newcastle in support of NALGO's policy of seeking local negotiations for social workers to replace Whitley-style national negotiations

(picture The Worker),



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HISTORIC NOTES

THROUGHOUT the summer of 1831, one issue above all others was in the forefront of working class political activity. A Reform Bill was to go before Parliament which would, for the first time, enfranchise a section of the working class. A small proportion, certainly, but the significance of the Bill went beyond the numbers involved. It represented the first recognition that the workers of Britain were an important political force. This was not, of course, the reason for the Bill being proposed by bourgeois parliamentarians. They wished to establish the political supremacy of the manufacturing bourgeoisie over the landed aristocracy in Parliament; but in order to do this, they had to disenfranchise the old rotten boroughs, and give the vote to some workers in the new

industrial cities. The significance of the Bill was not lost upon the working class.

As with all reforms passed by parliament, the workers had to fight to bring it out of them. As the anti-reform lobby mobilised, so too did the working class. Tension grew, and disturbances in support of the Bill occurred in London, Nottingham, and Derby. The Government became alarmed; and on October 7th, 1831, the House of Lords rejected the Reform Bill.

On October 29th, Sir Charles Wetherall, recorder of Bristol, and a leading opponent of the Bill, returned to the city to open the Assizes. The workers of Bristol, strongly favouring reform, decided to make their feelings known, and several thousand gathered to stone his coach as it entered the city. He

Bristol fights for the vote

survived the gauntlet, and having opened (and immediately adjourned) the Assizes, he retreated to the Mansion House in Queen Square. A crowd of angry workers soon gathered outside. "Specfals" moved in to break up the crowd, and a running fight commenced. The Mayor emerged, and appealed for an end to the violence; he was met with a barrage of missiles. Wetherall, observing that the crowd wanted blood, and his for preference, disguised himself as a servant, and escaped over the rooftops.

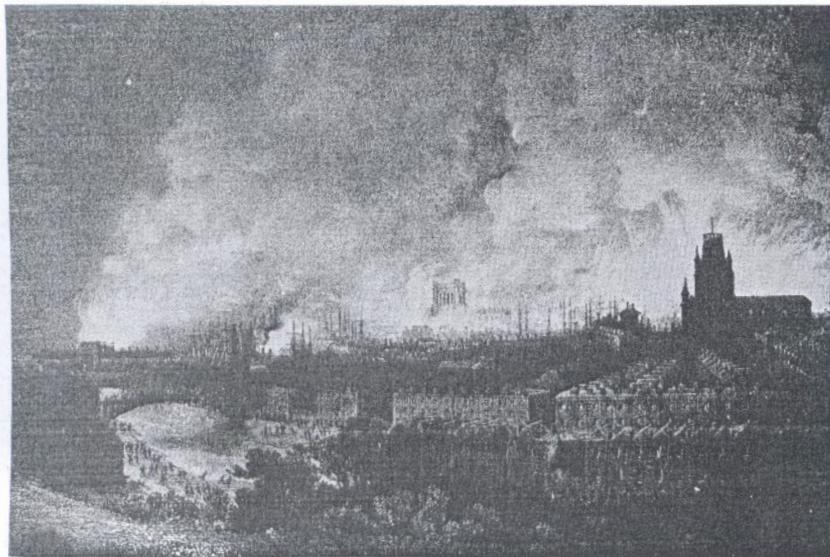
That evening, the crowd attacked the Council house; troops opened fire, and one man was killed. The next day, the crowd, by now good and angry, broke into and looted the Mansion House, and then moved onto the Bridewell to release their arrested brothers. The New Gaol was

next, swiftly followed by the County gaol. By the evening of the 30th, the riot was well under way. The toll houses were burnt, as was the Bishops Palace. (The Bishop of Bristol had voted against the Bill in the House of Lords). Back in Queen Square, the Mansion House was the next to go up in flames, followed by the Customs House, the Excise House, and the methodical firing of some forty Corporation owned properties. Charles Kingsley described the scene: "by ten o'clock that night, one seemed to be looking down on Dante's inferno... higher and higher the fog was shrivelled upwards by the fierce heat below, glowing through and through with reflected glare... miles away, I could see the lovely tower of Dundry shining red - the symbol of the old faith looking down in stately wonder and sorrow upon the fearful birth throes of a new age".

Finally, on the 31st reinforcements arrived, and troops cleared the streets, arresting over 100, and causing deaths variously estimated as between twelve and five hundred. Five of the leading figures in the rioting were sentenced to death.

Of all the agitation in support of the Reform Bill, the Bristol Riots were the most spirited example. The events certainly attracted the attention of, and worried, the Government; the enthusiasm with which the administration forced the Bill through was in no small part due to their fear of the consequences if they did not. The Bill became law eight months after the riots.

There was a footnote. Bourgeois reformers in Bristol decided to throw a party to celebrate, for the 'respectable' pro-reform faction. The workers also wanted to celebrate, however, and thirty thousand of them showed up at the open air banquet. They seized the food and devoured it, and stole the fireworks prepared for the evening's fun.



October 30th 1831: Bristol toll and customs buildings on fire as workers fight for electoral reform.

Peruvians not defeated

A STATE of emergency and suspension of civil guarantees has been declared by the Peruvian government. As five major mining regions have been paralysed by a strike called by the National Miners Federation, the government has given itself the power to take control of the mines, search trade union offices and homes, make arrests and use force where deemed necessary

"to guarantee mining production and eliminate subversive activity".

Supposedly different from other Latin American countries, with 'free' elections, and the nationalisation of farmland, oil, mineral and fishing resources, Peru was supposed to be a good example of the way a non-aligned country could fight imperialism.

Now the truth has come out. Peru is in hock to American

imperialism and does its evil bidding. With a foreign debt of over 8000 million dollars (2000 million of which has been spent on arms) Peru carried out the orders of the IMF in devaluing its currency in May, and again in June. The result has been widespread misery as prices of basic foodstuffs have gone up by fifty per cent. As one commentator put it: "the six and a half million people who live in Lima, (most of them forced out of the countryside to look for work) have moved from malnutrition to the brink of starvation".

A two day general strike on May 22 and 23rd against the price increases was savagely suppressed with over 2000 arrests (including many trade union leaders) and at least 38 people murdered. Now the miners have come out to continue the resistance. Their courageous action shows the Peruvian people uncowed. Whether they win or lose this immediate battle such a display of spirit is proof that they cannot be defeated... and an inspiration to workers everywhere to continue fighting.

US workers fiercely defend jobs and standards of living

DESPITE the urgings and warnings of all shades of politicians over the current weakness of the dollar and the 'fiscal crisis', many workers in the USA have been putting up a fierce resistance to employers' attempts to lower their standards of living. In recent weeks the actions of workers in defence of their living standards and jobs have paralysed sections of the newspaper industry, food distribution and retail outlets, public transport, city services, education and at the time of writing, the majority of postal workers have voted for strike action in support of their demands for a new contract.

One of the most militant sections has been public workers in the cities. As the 'city crisis'

has spread throughout the country, the city fathers have attempted to solve the problem in the familiar manner of slashing services to the bone, sacking workers, reducing their living standards and generally blaming the "lazy, wasteful public workers" for the deteriorating standards. One effect of these cuts has been that as many as 400 deaths by fire in New York City alone could have been prevented, union officials estimate, if 25 per cent of the department had not been laid off since 1972.

The response to these cuts has not been confined to the more traditionally organised workers such as drivers and firemen. In Memphis, Tennessee, policemen went on strike and many were

arrested by the National Guard when they attempted to prevent the Guards from carrying on scab work. In Philadelphia, 20,000 public authority workers rejected a contract that would freeze wages and make 3500 workers redundant. They mounted a ten day strike, in defiance of court orders and threats, which resulted in a pay increase and a review of the redundancy proposals.

One of the most extensive and bitter struggles in the private sector has been that of the food distribution workers and supermarket cashiers in California. The distribution workers struck over speed-up in production and they have conducted a strong and united fight with the support

of related workers despite attempts to divide them on racial grounds and in the face of intimidation and threats from scabs, police and gun-toting hoodlums hired by the employers.

These and other striking workers have one clear answer to both old and new fangled theories which deny the basic class contradictions inherent in capitalist USA. As one of the striking food workers said: "Basically it is a question of them and us. They set the targets and wages for us workers while they sit on their fat asses all day and grow richer. The only way we can gain anything is by organising ourselves as workers and hitting them where it hurts most".

THE WEEK

ALTHOUGH world wide the production of food is falling further behind demand, the Industrialised Countries produce a surplus. A surplus that can not be sold profitably. At the British Association meeting in Bath, scientists described research which could provide a profitable use for this 'surplus' - conversion into fuel and plastics! As capitalism squanders Oil supplies it looks around desperately for a replacement. Already Fiat have designed a car to run on alcohol made from sugar.

It shows again that man's ingenuity is limitless - there doesn't have to be a shortage of food or fuel - but a system that burns food rather than feed hungry people is revolting.

AS THE plot at Camp David proceeds, Begin will not forget his departure from Israel. One hundred thousand Israelis demonstrated their contempt for his policies of war and expansion.

A CONFERENCE was held last week in St Andrew's and St John's Primary School in Waterloo to launch the National Association for the Support of Small Schools.

The meeting represented 25 counties and 125 representatives determined to prevent the closure of small schools.

Battles to save small schools are in progress all over the country and parents are determined to win.

TUC delegates in Brighton this week accepted without dissent a proposal that legislation might be considered to compel employers to take on a proportion of young people in the same way as disabled people.

What a commentary on a sorry state of affairs!

AN Internal EEC Commission report on the microelectronics industry, to be presented to officials in Brussels next month, predicts that Western Europe will remain dependent on US and Japanese microprocessors and microelectronic technology until at least the mid 1990's.

The Common Market has been such an effective vehicle for US penetration into Europe that the prevalent view of the European microelectronics industry now facing the fait accompli of US dominance, is that Europe should concentrate on applying the new technology, whilst leaving development and manufacture to the US and Japan.

A South African was found guilty this week of murdering his servant. He hit her when she brought back the wrong brand of cigarettes. He was fined £60.

AT Greenwich District Hospital 400 demonstrators, mostly women and children, blocked traffic in protest at plans to move the children's ward.

The hospital, scene of a recent dispute when a theatre nursing officer was sacked but later reinstated, would lose its 39-bed children's ward under proposals from the area health authority.

EDITORIAL

THE aim of the British ruling class is the destruction of industry in Britain, that being the only means by which they can curtail and destroy the powerful force opposing them, the British working class.

That workers would take part in their own destruction, is not an easy thing to understand. Yet, the hiving off, asset-stripping, the destruction of British Leyland shows only too clearly that some of us are bent on self-destruction.

That is how we must view the toolmakers' dispute.

The SU toolmakers finally agreed to meet the District Committee of their union, the AUEW, only after threat of expulsion, having previously refused such a meeting five times. That a democratic union would expel members who refuse to comply with the rules is fundamental. The rules are the decisions of the members as a whole and must be safeguarded, not shoved aside for temporary gain.

The real danger for us in Britain today is not the attack of a decaying ruling class, rather our refusal to attend to our defence, neglecting our union machinery so skillfully built.

It was only to be expected that Edwardes would want to lay about him with the weapon of the sack. The efforts of the AUEW District Committee not to exacerbate the situation and of Executive Council to stand by the District Committee are the expression of unity against the employer which all AUEW members ought to appreciate.

The toolmakers at Leyland appear to prefer to set up their own parochial parallel organisation instead of taking part in the democratic organisation of their union.

Anyone can make out a case for parity. But to link a claim for parity with an acceptance of five per cent in accordance with the latest Government edict is sheer cowardice and, moreover, is contrary to the policy of the AUEW - free collective bargaining.

Leyland workers need to consolidate their organisation to defend their industry from destruction. Our task is to build our union and use it to attack the ruling class.

More than a matter of money

THE real intention of the Labour Government has been made clear by the appearance of the '5 per cent' policy. Labour wants a permanent incomes policy, permanent wage restraint.

At the core of the argument is the old chestnut, that wage rises cause inflation; which is only another way of saying that if employers think they can get away with it they'll raise their prices if they could any way, with or without wage rises. Price rises and all the other methods of boosting profits - redundancies, 'productivity' deals (which means the same thing), lock outs and so on are just various ways of stopping us getting away with a real rise in wages.

The 'attack on inflation' amounts to more than deceit. It is a threat - that if we actually fight to defend our living standards inflation will somehow 'follow'. In other words, unless we submit to their whims totally, government and employers will do their damndest to make us suffer for our 'sins' ... be it via inflation, unemployment, cuts, anti-union laws, or any combination of these.

This threatening, oppressive attitude lies at the kernel of the whole wages debate. It is not only a matter of our take home pay. It goes inwards to our very heart and soul. Are our aspirations to be reduced to the miserable, mean and degrading ... and hopeless task of keeping the rate of price increases down?

Trade unionism was and is more than a fight for mere physical sustenance, a refuelling of a work-unit. It is the fight for the security, resources and leisure that makes life worth living.

At one time it was hoped that the Labour Party would give political expression to this modest ideal. But today its message is totally the opposite. It has accepted the 'dismal science' of capitalist economics. 'Economic necessity' has made our modest aspirations mere eye-wash, day dreams. Education and health?

Too expensive! The right to work? An admirable slogan ... but 'impractical'. A wage rise? Not on your nelly! Where is the humanity or hope in this future?

In strictly logical terms the entire economy, and the whole approach of the governments rests on a simple fallacy - that money, the measure of wealth, is more important than real wealth itself. Marx pointed this out so many years ago. "Everything which the political economist takes from you in life and humanity", he said, "he replaces for you in money ... The less you eat, drink and buy books; the less you go to the theatre, the dance hall, the public house; the less you think, love, theorize, sing, paint, fence, etc., the more you save ... And the more governments and employers' save the faster the decline of industries and our wages. The trouble is that logic will never persuade the profit system to disappear.

Acceptance of permanent wage restraint is merely acceptance of the spiral of decline it is imposing on us in Britain. Capitalist economic necessity is the very opposite of our, working class, economic necessity.

When we fight to break five per cent, we are fighting for a lot more than a bit of money - and we are fighting against a lot more than one employer, or one government. The '5 per cent' should be approached with this in mind.

Gwent jobs saved

PROPOSALS by the Gwent Area Health Authority to reduce manning levels on ambulances have met with a swift response from drivers.

170 ambulancemen, all NUPE members, have been on strike since 7th Sept, whilst ambulancemen in other unions, GMWU and COHSE, are operating an 'emergency only' service in the area.

The ambulancemen's action has forced the Authority to defer the cuts in manning levels and they have returned to work having achieved their purpose.

Government taxes people not profits

CAPITALISM never invented taxation any more than it invented exploitation in general, but it certainly made it into a science. How many times have we been regaled with the old story that taxation is a means of redistributing wealth from the rich to the poor? And how many times are we asked to give a thought for the poor old rich whose burden of tax is crippling them? Well, such tales must exist beyond living memory if only because they are as perennial as nursery rhymes and fables.

Things do change however, and we don't hear the moans about "taxpayers' money" so much any more because it is so obvious that the working class pays the bulk of the tax anyway. In 1950 the percentage of revenue raised through income tax was about 26 per cent, but today it is well over 50 per cent. It is also the case that the biggest

companies in Britain paid no tax on their profits last year. So much for the Labour Government's talk of cuts in taxation!

It's not so much a fiddle as a whole orchestra of devices to escape taxation that enables companies to do this. On the one hand they "notionally" deduct large sums from their pre-tax profits - the "deferred tax" on stocks and capital equipment which the Labour Government has said will never be asked for. This came to some £500 million for the top 20 companies last year. On the other hand there is a neat device called "current cost replacement accounting" which can transform a profit into a loss at the stroke of a pen. This is still frowned on by some accountants but is invaluable mathematics to companies.

Current cost accounting enabled British Gas to reduce its profits in 1976/77 from

somewhere around £362m to a more modest £32m, and reduce gas profits in 1977/78 from some £500m to £180m. This year it enabled the Electricity Council to change £300m into £130m. This "inflation accounting" has similarly reduced the profits of the Post Office. The Coal Board refused to use this modern method of accounting; otherwise its profit would have fallen so far from £20m as to have become a loss!

Just in the nationalised companies some £900m profit has been dissolved this year. So what must the real figure be? And how much tax would it have had to yield? Perhaps someone's been reading Lenin who said "every cook must learn how to govern", only, as usual, they got it back to front, so they say "every governor must learn how to cook - the books!"

It's equal shares of pie in the sky

THE GENERAL Council of the TUC has welcomed the Development Charter of the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions entitled "Towards a New Economic and Social Order". Purporting to set out "a trade union approach to world development issues" it is a rather belated response to the 1974 UN General Assembly Declaration and Programme of Action for the Establishment of a New International Economic Order.

Unlike the theorists of the 'Third World' it sees through the hypocrisy of "those governments which have insisted upon international economic reforms while refusing to accept the need for fundamental social reforms within their own countries." Yet because the root causes of the 'deterioration of the international economy' are seen in terms of 'speculation', 'disorderly trade relations' and 'structural imbalances', its solutions are equally naive. 'Reflation' and a 'fair distribution of income and wealth' are the goals to be achieved by means which are nothing other than Social Contract corporatism writ large on a world scale. 'Tripartite commissions', 'special measures to keep inflation under control' and 'a consultative system whereby trade unions and employers organisations can discuss and reach agreement about long term changes', all have a

familiar ring to our ears.

Its practical proposals nearly all read like a pious appeal to capitalism to invest without regard to the prospect of the level of profit. It advocates a 'basic needs approach' to create employment, to focus attention on rural development, to ensure certain minimum requirements for family consumption (especially adequate food, shelter and clothing) and essential community services (safe drinking water, sanitation, public transport, and health and educational facilities) - precisely those sectors of the economy which capitalism in decline is seeking most to destroy.

Multinationals

Nevertheless the ICFTU Charter is not totally blind to reality. It recognises that "free trade can not be defended if the only beneficiaries are the rich and multinational companies. Most of the problems of so-called low cost imports from developing countries are caused by multinationals setting up overseas branches mainly for exporting to a few industrialised countries, rather than for meeting the needs of the peoples of developing countries".

It also deplores "the impact of the Green Revolution, the techniques of which have improved food production, but merely to the advantage of the big landowners who can

afford to purchase seeds, fertilisers and the necessary equipment and who control essential water supplies. The situation in the rural areas is further aggravated when the dominant group joins forces with foreign commercial and industrial interests."

Some of its conclusions are also eminently sensible. "Trade union freedom is a basic necessity; workpeople need it in the face of state power and the growing concentration of capital, whatever the nature of its ownership." "Workers' organisations must be allowed to exercise their right to engage in collective bargaining... Measures which restrict the bargaining power of organised workers do not solve the problems of inequalities but merely create more widespread poverty".

They also realise the imperative need to create "representative and independent organisations of rural workers including landless labourers, tenants, sharecroppers and subsistence farmers."

The workers and peasants of the world will not, however, limit themselves to creating these organisations as a 'countervailing power', but use them as weapons in their struggle for state power for themselves, creating the only new international economic and social order that will solve their urgent needs - a free and equal community of socialist nations.

Capitalism destroys petro-chemicals

THE LATEST declining industry in Britain and Western Europe is a victim of self-inflicted wounds. The petro-chemical industry for which the EEC has already ordered a substantial cutback for Common Market refineries due to overcapacity is wincing under the impact of cheap imports, not this time from Japan or South Korea but from COMECON, to which Western firms exported the technology to build refineries in the first place. These refineries, in fact, were constructed under the agreement that they were to be paid for on a 'buy-back' basis, by

which the firms which built them would accept payment in kind, in terms of finished products eventually produced by these refineries. It is now these same 'buy-back' finished products which are undercutting the home-produced ones. Apparently so eager were Western capitalists to make a profit, they were prepared to sell their long-term prospects to their Eastern counterparts, for short-term gain. Once the buy-back agreements have expired it is unlikely that their COMECON partners, having acquired a taste of easy profits, will cease to ex-

port to the West, with the result that the present EEC surplus in its overall chemical trade with COMECON is expected to turn into a massive deficit by 1985.

The position in this industry is expected to deteriorate still further once refineries in OPEC countries, also built with Western technology, start exporting their products to Western Europe.

The contradictions of capitalism are such that in seeking immediate gains capitalists are always, in the long run, cutting their own throats. They must not destroy us in the process

THE TUC devoted an afternoon of Congress to the subject of Education and showed clearly that Education is of vital importance to millions of people. The Prime Minister did not return, in his address to the Congress, to the rhetoric of the 'great debate' and failed to outline the Labour Government's future intentions for the education of our children. A leak from the DES reveals that this plan includes a reduction of 100,000 teachers in the next twelve years. The 30,000 newly qualified teachers will join the 7000 registered unemployed in the fight for jobs. Even half of the teachers on the £3½ million retraining scheme for shortage subjects have failed to find teaching posts.

Teachers are not subdued by this attack. They rightly see the crucial issue of class size as the way to fight back. The reduction of class size will improve the quality of

The fight for education

the education the children receive: will ensure the employment of unemployed teachers and ensure the continuation of teacher training so that the quality of future education can be maintained and improved.

Since the beginning of the Autumn term, members of the EIS (The Educational Institute of Scotland) have refused to teach 'composite' classes of more than 25. Composite classes are made up of children of different ages. The pressure on the teacher to provide a decent education is obvious. The Scottish teachers are demanding smaller classes to ease this pressure and to employ some of the much-needed teachers standing on the dole queues.

In England and Wales there are almost a thousand schools

taking action of one sort or another. Basildon and Gateshead schools have recently joined eight other areas taking action to force the local authorities to employ more teachers. Union members are refusing to cover for workmates absent for more than one day. They are also refusing to teach classes which exceed maximums set by the NUT.

The action has met with some success. In Devon, for example, the local education authority has been forced to employ 30 more teachers than it intended as a result of determined and disciplined action by teachers.

More teachers must follow the example of their colleagues and must be prepared to take the government on if they want to ensure the future of Education in Britain.

Workers cater for the right of organisation at Garners

GARNERS restaurant staff, now in the seventh month of their strike for union recognition, are still determined to keep up pressure on the management. The strikers regard the termination of the strike at this stage as a defeat for the whole catering industry. A victory at Garners would, in the eyes of workers, be a breakthrough in terms of organising the whole section.

In spite of the length of the strike, support has recently increased from the more organised sections of the TGWU, also from NATKE, who are preventing the purchase of Garners meals by the National Theatre, and the CPSA, who are refusing to staff Garners out of the Catering Job Centre. And when the owner opened up a new restaurant under a new name, he was faced with almost immediate rebellion from his new staff over wages and conditions.

Although the absence of hotel and catering workers on some picket lines has meant supplies getting through, the determination of the small number still taking action has pushed the employer into a position where he has finally agreed to meet union representatives, although from the first he was refusing to deal with even ACAS (Arbitration, Conciliation and Advisory Service).

Garners restaurants occupy prime sites in Central London, and at the height of the tourist season profits were cut by 80 per cent. The pig-headed attitude of this employer has caused some heart-searching amongst even his own class,

who clearly fear the growing militancy of catering workers in the face of such brazen greed and have been urging him to take a softer approach. No wonder, when they see that for all the hardship involved at Garners, at Claridges or Grunwicks, workers will not be discouraged from organising themselves into unions. The figures testify to this - recruits to the Catering Section of the TGWU - 5000 in 1978 so far compared with a total membership of 4000 in 1977. And to the GMWU, a total of 22,000 compared with 13,000 last year.

As recent disputes have shown the unions are no insurance scheme against hardship, but a vehicle for protracted struggle against the employer. Those who join now must join knowing this to be the case. When they join, they enter the arena of working-class struggle for themselves. There can be no relying on those more "experienced" in struggle to fight their battles for them. They would do well to learn from Grunwicks that the failure of that strike was due not so much to the obvious inadequacies of such a social-democratic piece of machinery as ACAS, as to the fact that support from inside the factory went to the boss and not to fellow-workers, in spite of vast numbers on the picket line. It is to be hoped that in the case of Garners the employer will give in before the strikers, but the only real guarantee of this is for the catering workers to rally round and not leave the Garners workers isolated.

THE recent reports of lead poisoning of children living near 'Spaghetti Junction', frightening as they are, have been dealt with in typical 'British' fashion - an argument about the 'facts' and smug protestations that 'it's not that bad' from the authorities.

At one time, pollution of any sort could be blamed on ignorance. How were we to know, for instance, that 25 years after DDT arrived on the scene as a wonder pest killer we would be discovering to our dismay that it is poisoning us too; as well as upsetting delicately balanced ecological systems? But the problem becomes something quite different when pollution continues with full knowledge of its consequences. Over half the world's scientific research is now conducted for military purposes: no doubt a lot of it being on how to use germs and chemicals to kill people. Meanwhile, there is minimal research into the prevention of pollution of our soil, sea air and ozone (which alone protects us from deadly ultra-violet and infra-red rays)

Petrol fumes, for example, have more than lead to make us worry. They also contain carbon monoxide (about 66 million tonnes a year) - a killer in high doses. Part of the 12 million tonnes of hydrocarbons coming from our exhausts is benzopyrene - the constituent of tobacco isolated as the cause of lung cancer. A prototype car driven on methane gas (which can be processed from sewerage)

Pollution is cheaper than care

has been shown to reduce harmful emissions by 99 per cent with only 11 per cent loss of power. It would also be a tremendous saving of that precious resource, oil. But production has not gone ahead because the project was not deemed commercially viable. What do experts say? "Given the economic stimulus," says one, "there are no obvious technological difficulties in solving any pollution problems."

"Industries have found it more economical to discharge waste products into the atmosphere than to exercise waste

control," says another. "In some cases what may be technically feasible may not be economically acceptable."

British pollution law is governed by this approach; pollution should be dealt with by the 'best practicable means'. One of the determining factors of 'practicality' in this context being the 'viability of the industry'. So the sad old story repeats itself. Even when pollution is illegal, the penalties are laughable. The 1961 Rivers (Prevention of Pollution) Act, doubled the maximum fine to 'not exceeding £100.

Aerospace: nationalisation serves as vehicle to destroy industry

THE recent announcement by the government that British Airways has been given permission to buy about 21 American Boeing 757s to re-equip its fleet shows just how far the nationalisation of the British aerospace industry has served as a vehicle for tearing the industry apart in the interests of world capitalism during the short space of 2½ years.

On the one hand British Airways is now under no obligation to buy British, but since the Americans are incapable of producing engines of the same high quality as the RB211, Rolls Royce will get the contract to make the engines for Boeing. British Aerospace was also offered a contract to make wings for the 757, but the price was so low that quite rightly they refused: we can do better for ourselves

than becoming cut-price spare-parts producers trailing along behind US capitalism.

On the other hand, the French are angry because they want British Airways to buy the European Airbus. And so, the government has further decided to sate their greed with a gift of £100 million out of the pockets of British workers to be given to the European consortium that manufactures the Airbus. Apparently, though, competition between European and American producers is now so intense that the European Airbus can only succeed in capitalist terms if production is concentrated at Toulouse, and Europe's aerospace labour force is cut back by 20,000 to 30,000, that is, by about one fifth; so we are also being expected to pay for our own redundancy.

Smallpox and the expenditure cuts

THE RECENT leak of smallpox virus at Birmingham University highlights the hazards faced by laboratory workers throughout the country. In hospital laboratories, those scientists and technicians whose job it is to look after our health are themselves unprotected by a government which does not care. ASTMS, representing hospital laboratory staff, has condemned the Department of Health's code of practice on safety as a "recipe for doing nothing". The Department set up a working party on the safe handling of dangerous pathogens including lassa fever, Marburg virus, rabies and smallpox,

and then watered down the working party's findings on the grounds of cost

The working party had discovered dangers even in new hospitals: "Some very serious hazards to health and safety have been incorporated into the design of some of these new laboratories". In some cases, protective cabinets for high risk materials should have been provided, and in others there were no washing facilities next to high risk areas.

The leader of the working party has stated that his report only recommends "essential requirements", and avoids those which are "merely desir-

able". The working party stated that its recommendations should be compulsory, but the Department of Health decided that any provisions which might involve spending money should be considered as "objectives" - "The Department has no special additional financial resources available to help health authorities to implement the code".

The phrase used by ASTMS, "a recipe for doing nothing", sums up this Government's policy on health care. As a consequence of spending cuts, health workers, their families, friends and neighbours, in fact all of us, are at risk from outbreaks of killer diseases.

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NAME.....
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Public Meetings ALL START AT 7:30pm

THE autumn series of public meetings in London organised by the Communist Party of Britain (Marxist-Leninist), will commence on September 22nd, 1978. The venue of the meetings will alternate between

BELLMAN BOOKSHOP, 155 Fortress Rd, NW5 and CONWAY HALL, Red Lion Square, WC1

Sept 22	Bellman Bookshop	If you vote, you vote for Capitalism
Oct 6	Conway Hall	Albania - Beacon of Marxism-Leninism
Oct 20	Bellman Bookshop	British troops out of Ireland: US Bases out of Britain
OXFORD		
Oct 10	Cowley Community Centre, Oxford	Don't Vote for Capitalism
BRISTOL		
Sept 29	Main Trend Books	Closures and the Run 17 Midland Road, Bristol down of Industry.