

THE WORKER



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NO HALT TO CAPITALIST DECLINE

LEADERS of the capitalist world are dashing about frantically trying to shore up the crumbling dikes of their economic empire.

Callaghan has a plan for capitalism's salvation which he discusses with Schmidt and then takes to Washington for Carter's approval. Carter launches out on a whirlwind tour of the US's economic empire to try to regain confidence in the fallen dollar.

One of the reasons for Callaghan's rushing about is the Labour Government's excuse that the economic decline of Britain cannot be reversed because of the world wide decline of capitalism. And what are his proposals for world recovery of the capitalist system? There must be higher growth, greater stability of currencies, and more trade to avoid the spread of protectionism. But capitalism's inability to produce these things is precisely what is wrong with it.

Callaghan's proposals are like telling a dying man that his cure would consist of picking up his bed and walking. But no miracle is going to save capitalism.

The real cause of capitalism's decline is the struggle of the working class and the dialectical development of the force for socialism.

The Times

WHEN maintenance engineers working for THE TIMES refused to cover for posts which have been vacant for some while, the management of THE TIMES declared that the 93 engineers had sacked themselves. The men claimed that it was the comparatively low rate paid by THE TIMES which accounted for the posts remaining vacant.

Since the other Fleet Street strike by SOGAT was holding up the distribution of newspapers, the non-printing of THE TIMES was saving the management money.

Reg Birch negotiating on behalf of the engineers pointed out that management had actually dismissed the union, the AUEW, and had better think again.

Under pressure of wanting to get the paper back in circulation as the distribution strike ends, management suddenly declared that the whole staff of THE TIMES was dismissed as from Monday April 3, if any workers refused to make it possible for THE TIMES to reappear.

It is to be hoped that good sense will prevail, that THE TIMES can begin coming out again and that, having returned to the situation before the so-called "self-sacking", the engineers can take up any claims with management on the basis of collective bargaining.

Productivity kills

FIGURES for the accident and death rate in British pits for the first two months of this year reveal a disturbing trend.

Since the introduction of the productivity schemes deaths have gone up by 166 per cent - with 3 miners killed in the first two months of 1977 against 8 killed in January and February this year. The comparative figures for serious accidents in the two month period were 56 in 1977 and 89 this year - an increase of 59 per cent.

Within this relatively short period of time the schemes have had a devastating effect throughout the coal industry. The above figures show but one sad aspect of the miners' decision to operate the divisive schemes. Sadly also, we witness the destruction of the NUM with miner set against miner, pit against pit and area against area, bitterly arguing who gets what percentage of the bonus payments.

The engine-winding men at Doncaster are showing how vital they are to the industry with 10 pits now at a standstill because of their withdrawal of labour. What an opportunity for those same workers to take the lead in saying "to hell with the schemes - we are not against our fellow workers, our grievance is with the employers". By not saying this they are merely highlighting the divisive nature

of the schemes and saying "to hell with the NUM, our unity and strength is of no consequence". Continued on page 4

Teachers' wages victory

NATIONAL teachers' action, the first since the interim pay award campaign of 1969-70, has ended in victory. Delegates to the National Union of Teachers' Conference in Blackpool at Easter ratified the settlement made by their representatives with the employers on the Burnham Salaries Committee.

The unity achieved and the determination demonstrated within the profession not to kowtow to Government plans are of more importance than the money gained, yet the award is not without significance.

The settlement is for a 10 per cent increase for all teachers. There are additional payments, but they will not be made at the expense of the general increase. In particular it will not be reduced to the extent to which the employers claim the annual pay increments system is no longer self financing. The education authorities also stated that they were committed to the restoration of the 1975 Houghton salary relativities, although the Government dissociated itself from this statement. Clearly it is not even committed to saying it values the profession.

The Government has claimed that the three offers it has made have all been '10 per cent' offers - yet as the teachers' action spread the offers

increased and the final settlement was announced, like the 'first, by the press as '10 per cent'.

Teachers did not retreat in the face of Government guidelines. This regained independence should be cherished and built on in the other struggles in which they are engaged: class size and teacher unemployment. Indeed salaries are a most important item of educational provision.

The battle was won against predictable media opposition, which attempted in vain to incite pupils against their teachers. The Government which has shown itself of late to be so concerned about the welfare of the children can now demonstrate this by announcing the end of education cuts and the full implementation of the 1968 national agreement by ensuring all meals supervision is done by trained ancillary staff.

The Union now has a chance to sort out its ideas on salaries. Can it afford again to relinquish its role as wage negotiator to an outside body, be it the TUC or Houghton? Are teachers to return to 35 per cent increases for the better paid and 16 per cent for those on the lowest scale? The lesson learnt from this struggle is that the way forward is a common percentage increase for all, irrespective of government policy.



Workers in the Garners Steak House are now in the tenth week of their strike for union recognition. Even though 80% of the staff are members of the TGWU, Garners' management refuse to discuss unionisation.

The proud rebirth of the Irish nation

AT MIDDAY on April 24, Easter Monday, 1916 James Connolly led a company of men from Liberty Hall, the headquarters of the Irish Transport Workers Union in Dublin. Numbers of these men wore the green uniforms of the Irish Citizens' Army and the Irish Volunteers. They marched smartly to Dublin's General Post Office which they proceeded to occupy. Shortly the tricolour of the Irish Republic was flying above the building.

Patrick Pearse came out to address those outside, in his hands the historic proclamation of the Republic. It declared "the right of the people of Ireland to the ownership of Ireland and to the unfettered control of Irish destinies, to be sovereign and indefeasible. . . Standing on that fundamental right and again asserting it in arms in the eyes of the world we hereby proclaim the Irish Republic as a sovereign Independent State."

The Easter Rising had begun.

In August 1914, immediately after the outbreak of the imperialist war in Europe, the Supreme Council of the Irish Republican Brotherhood (IRB) decided on the necessity of a rising to end British rule in Ireland. It constituted a Military Council to organise this, composed ultimately of seven men, among them Patrick Pearse and James Connolly. These seven men were the signatories to the Proclamation.

The force for the rising was to be Connolly's Irish Citizens' Army and the Irish Volunteers over which the IRB exercised a great measure of control. Arrangements were made through John Devoy and Roger Casement in Germany and the Revolutionary Directory of Clann na-Gael in New York for the shipping of arms and ammunition to Ireland.

On April 8, 1916, Pearse, in his capacity as Director of Org-

anisation of the Irish Volunteers, issued the order for full mobilisation of all units in the country on Easter Sunday. The Chief of Staff of the Volunteers, MacNeill, opposed the rising but the arguments of the IRB prevailed.

Then, the Friday before Easter, the arms ship was captured by British Naval forces, and Roger Casement was arr-

rested after his landing from a submarine. The news of these setbacks caused MacNeill to issue orders cancelling all plans for the mobilisation of the Volunteers.

On Easter Sunday the full Military Council met in Liberty Hall, their carefully laid plans seemingly in ruins, but these men of vision and courage refused to be intimidated. They resolved to bring into action all the forces

**POBLAChT NA H EIREANN,
THE PROVISIONAL GOVERNMENT
OF THE
IRISH REPUBLIC
TO THE PEOPLE OF IRELAND.**

IRISHMEN AND IRISHWOMEN: In the name of God and of the dead generations from which she receives her old tradition of nationhood, Ireland, through us, summons her children to her flag and strikes for her freedom.

Having organised and trained her manhood through her secret revolutionary organisation, the Irish Republican Brotherhood, and through her open military organisations, the Irish Volunteers and the Irish Citizen Army, having patiently perfected her discipline, having resolutely waited for the right moment to reveal itself, she now seizes that moment, and, supported by her exiled children in America and by gallant allies in Europe, but relying in the first on her own strength, she strikes in full confidence of victory.

We declare the right of the people of Ireland to the ownership of Ireland, and to the unqualified control of Irish destinies, to be sovereign and indefeasible. The long usurpation of that right by a foreign people and government has not extinguished the right, nor can it ever be extinguished except by the destruction of the Irish people. In every generation the Irish people have asserted their right to national freedom and sovereignty: six times during the past three hundred years they have asserted it in arms. Standing on that fundamental right and again asserting it in arms in the face of the world, we hereby proclaim the Irish Republic as a Sovereign Independent State, and we pledge our lives and the lives of our comrades-in-arms to the cause of its freedom, of its welfare, and of its exaltation among the nations.

The Irish Republic is entitled to, and hereby claims, the allegiance of every Irishman and Irishwoman. The Republic guarantees religious and civil liberty, equal rights and equal opportunities to all its citizens, and declares its resolve to pursue the happiness and prosperity of the whole nation and of all its parts, cherishing all the children of the nation equally, and oblivious of the differences carefully fostered by an alien government, which have divided a minority from the majority in the past.

Until our arms have brought the opportune moment for the establishment of a permanent National Government, representative of the whole people of Ireland and elected by the suffrages of all her men and women, the Provisional Government, hereby constituted, will administer the civil and military affairs of the Republic in trust for the people.

We place the cause of the Irish Republic under the protection of the Most High God, Whose blessing we invoke upon our arms, and we pray that no one who serves that cause will dishonour it by cowardice, inhumanity, or rapine. In this supreme hour the Irish nation must, by its valour and discipline and by the readiness of its children, to sacrifice themselves for the common good, prove itself worthy of the august destiny to which it is called.

Signed on behalf of the Provisional Government,

THOMAS J. CLARKE,
SEAN Mac DIARADA, THOMAS MacDONAGH,
P. H. PEARSE, EAMONN CEANN, JAMES CONNOLLY, JOSEPH PLUNKETT.

this exploitation.

Must people applaud the fact that the Spanish oligarchy can take a seat at the great banquet of European "democratic" exploitation? Must they applaud Spain's entry into the aggressive bloc of NATO which would mean the reinforcement of Spain's role as a military platform of imperialism?

That is what Felipe Gonzalez's social democrats and Carrillo's Eurocommunists intend. That is what the "three worlds" opportunists intend. For them the interests of Spain's proletariat and peoples do not count for anything.

The position of the Party is made clear in issue no. 223 of Vanguardia Obrera: "Unite Spain's peoples under the leadership of the proletariat in order to overthrow the monarcho-fascist dictatorship and expel Yankee imperialism; establish a Peoples' Federated Republic which will guarantee bread, work and freedom for the people and will obtain and preserve national independence from the claws of any imperialist power."

TAFT-HARTLEY BEATEN AS US MINERS END SUCCESSFUL STRUGGLE

COAL miners in the US have ended their 110-day strike, the longest in the history of the American coal-mining industry. By a comfortable majority, the 160,000 striking miners voted to return to work having succeeded in making the employers, the Bituminous Coal Operators Association, concede their most important demands.

The miners are to get a 39 per cent increase in wages over the next three years, but the strike was not primarily about pay. The coal mine owners wanted to introduce a proposal for firing miners who became involved in what they called "wild-cat strikes", that is, strikes which are not entered into according to procedures acceptable to the employers. Once employers are allowed to define which strikes are proper

at their disposal in Dublin and strike against the occupation forces the following day.

Dublin was ringed by British military barracks. Inside that ring the rebel forces, now named the Irish Republic Army, established an inner ring of posts in strong buildings around the heart of the city. Headquarters were at the GPO, where Pearse and Connolly were located. The 1st Battalion seized the Four Courts and buildings around it, the 2nd Battalion occupied Jacobs Biscuit Factory and a number of outposts, the 3rd Battalion took a number of buildings based around Boland's Mills and the 4th Battalion took the South Dublin Union. A combined force of the Citizen's Army took up positions at St. Stephen's Green and the College of Surgeons.

The first Irish casualty was Sean Connolly, killed leading a company of men on Dublin Castle. An attack on the GPO by the British was repulsed. Soon there was fierce fighting throughout Dublin. Faced with the fierce resistance of the Irish forces the British began moving artillery into the city and started shelling the rebel positions.

On the Friday after a five-hour battle the 5th Battalion routed a superior force of Royal Irish Constabulary at Ashbourne Co. Meath. Within the city the British artillery had got within range of the GPO. By evening, after a fierce bombardment, the building was in flames and Irish forces retreated to new positions. The battle continued to rage for two days. Finally at 3.45 pm on Sunday, April 30, Pearse signed an Order for general unconditional surrender.

The Rising ended in military defeat for the Republican forces. But the military failure proved to be less significant than the effect it had upon the minds of the Irish people. It was the expression in action of what had been thought merely a dream, the translation of an old aspiration into living history. In Easter Week 1916 the historic Irish nation was reborn.

THE current pay claim being put to the Nurses' and Midwives' Whitley Council by the Staff Side is of great significance - it calls for all-round wage increases, improved special duty payments, a 35-hour week and many other improvements, rejecting the Government's suggested productivity payments and the 10 per cent guidelines.

The danger in this kind of 'shopping-list' of demands is that winning a few of them in part tends to be regarded as 'the best we could get', and so we end up with a real wage cut: as was the case with the recent ancillary workers' settlement. Instead let nurses, through their local union branches, demonstrate to their negotiators that we will fight to get, first and foremost, a real wage increase.

THE REPORT by the Select Committee on Race Relations shows that fascism resides deep in crisis-ridden British parliamentary democracy. The unanimous report talks of the need of allaying fears by the British people of continued black immigration, using these so-called "fears" - which the National Front has been trying to force on the working class - as an excuse for proposing new measures of fascist oppression on the people of Britain. If fascism is allowed to come to Britain it will not be through the jackboot but through the respectability of parliamentary reports and the statute book. By the time the Tory and Labour politicians have had their say, the National Front will be rendered redundant.

THE AMOCO Cadiz accident has turned into a major international disaster. Tons of oil has polluted the sea off the shores of Brittany, destroying sea life and blackening the beaches. The cost of cleaning up is estimated at about £1 million a day. The oil monopolies have their ancestors - the early capitalists who rendered fertile forests into deserts, annihilated the buffalo and drove millions off their farms turning them into grazing land in the blind search for profit.

THE terrorists of Italy who kidnap politicians provide a caricature of the false friend of the working class. The plan of these "revolutionaries" is to commit such horrific crimes that fascism will come and the people will rise in revolt. Workers will not be impressed. They have long known the role of the agent provocateur. And they are not moron.

MURDERED by capitalism - Stephen Dayus, 16 years, who spent 8 months trying to get a job. He wanted to be an electrician and committed suicide in desperation at not finding work.

THE VATICAN has shifted nearly five billion dollars out of Italy and into the United States because it has lost confidence in democratic European governments, according to a former Jesuit priest.

No to EEC say Spanish communists

WITH Spain's entry in the European Parliament and the recent appointment of a Minister for Relations with Europe, the Spanish Government has taken a new step towards Spain's entry in the EEC and NATO. Actually, both are already in Spain with the presence of US military bases and big European monopolies such as Siemens, Krupp, Bayer, Citroen, St. Gobain and Fiat

The position of the Communist Party of Spain Marxist-Leninist has been and is one of clear cut opposition. The entry of Spain into the Common Market and NATO is an attack on the real interests of the Spanish peoples because it will increase dependence on US and European imperialism.

The Second Party Congress has once again defined the Common Market as "an alliance by big European monopolies for the better exploitation and plunder of the peoples, not only in Europe but in the whole world". Although officially the US is not a member, through its close links particularly with German and British imperialism and through NATO it is fully implicated in

'The Worker'

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NAME.....
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EDITORIAL

ON THREE separate occasions in the last few weeks workers have succeeded in forcing their employers to bargain over pay and conditions. On each occasion, those employers sought to hide behind the attempts of a capitalist government to outlaw collective bargaining on their behalf. And in each case the base on which the successful struggle was waged was a properly functioning trade union.

The teachers demonstrated that they were far from powerless when it came to union-organised industrial action. They twice forced the employers to come to the negotiating table straight away with an improved offer instead of delaying for months by various procedures till the claim was worthless.

The engineers with their strike threat put a stop to the attempts of the Engineering Employers Federation to beg off a settlement on the grounds that it might expose them to Government pay policy sanctions. While the NUT executive in its call for action on a pay claim was carrying out the expressed will of the members who ratified the settlement in Conference, the Executive Council of the AUEW initiated themselves the challenge to the employers of a two-day national strike which was then endorsed by the democratic policy-making body, the National Committee.

In the US the coal-miners, with their three to four month well-disciplined strike, forced the mine owners to come back to the negotiating table with an offer conceding most of their demands. This was despite the President's invocation of the notorious Taft-Hartley Act to try to drive the miners back to work. The earlier unsatisfactory offers which were designed to prohibit 'unofficial' strikes and to cut back union-operated health and pension schemes were accepted by the Union of Mineworkers' executive. The members did not scream 'sell-out' and allow a bad deal to go through. They forced their own negotiators as well as the employers, to negotiate a settlement they were prepared to accept.

When the ruling capitalist class can no longer afford collective bargaining, the steps taken by organised workers to enforce it in the face of government opposition are the first steps on the way to overthrowing that capitalist class. Since properly-functioning trade unions are the key to the workers' struggle to maintain collective bargaining, it is easy to see why the main drive of the capitalist class and its government is directed against trade unions. They are made responsible for inflation, low investment, low productivity and, even, mass employment - though all these symptoms of capitalism in decline exist where unionism is weak or even non-existent.

The attempt by the British capitalist government to emasculate unions legally with an equivalent of the Taft-Hartley Act, the Industrial Relations Act, was defeated. But the attempt by other means, social contracts, wage policies and guidelines, still goes on. Even nationalisation, which the labour movement expected to give workers better opportunities to organise and bargain about terms and conditions has, like all social democratic illusions, had exactly the opposite effect. It is one of the principal ways of wage fixing by the government.

Before the war, trade unions on the whole negotiated industry-wide agreements with federations of employers. After the war, in the period of relatively full employment, workplace bargaining became more important, culminating in the engineers' guerrilla struggle of the early seventies. The attempt to contain and roll back these bargaining campaigns was a factor in the further growth of monopolisation. Between 1953 and 1971 the proportion of the gross national product produced by the 100 largest firms in Britain rose from 25 per cent to 40 per cent and the number of workplaces per firm rose from 6 to 20.

To meet the consequently greater capacity of the employers to play off one section of workers against another there grew up the joint shop stewards committees or combines. But where these combines superseded union organization claiming to speak for the whole work force while being cut off from the real base of working class power in the individual unions, they played into the employers' hands.

In some cases it has been possible for management to 'capture' such combines for its own purposes; in others the attempt is made to set up such combines under the guise of worker-participation schemes, like the two-tiered boards proposed by Bullock. The demand of the chairman of the TUC steel committee that a third of the seats on the BSC Board should be occupied by workers will not keep a single steel plant open. It will merely provide the cover of 'worker participation' for the continued destruction of the steel industry.

Sometimes that old, completely incorrect, idea of 'red' unions to replace those which workers have established over years of struggle is taken up by these combines when they are dominated by the pseudo left. The Corporate Plan drawn up by the Lucas Aerospace Committee called for a switch of Lucas production away from the manufacture of military equipment into 'socially useful' products - a worthy but pious hope as long as the profit system continues. The Company pointed out that it would not be profitable while making another 1500 workers redundant on Merseyside. Workers will not be able to decide what is to be made for whom until they have won state power.

The employers will try to use the combine to get across the message that better living standards demand higher productivity. We know from years of struggle, of which our unions are the most productive result, that maintaining living standards demands harder bargaining.

This does not mean that there should not be industry-wide and even nation-wide organisations of workers. But they should never be apart from, nor outside, our basic union organisation. There is an economic, political and moral need for workers to coordinate and support each others' struggles but the basic fortress we have to maintain to be able to sally forth in successful battle is our own trade union.

NHS is a political priority say doctors

SURGEONS

CONSULTANT surgeon Mr John Cozens-Hardy from the Good Hope Hospital in Birmingham hired a public hall in early March and explained to his patients why they have to endure pain for so long before he can operate. 95 patients attended, many physically supported by relatives, on crutches or in wheelchairs. The majority of them required hip replacements and, due to an acute lack of beds, theatres and shortage of trained nursing staff, Mr Cozens-Hardy was only able to do two such operations last year. At the present rate of progress he estimated that people may have to wait 36 years for surgery.

The pain and misery his patients endure have forced him to reveal the true facts of their situation. He has warned them that they must wait several years for relief and has been criticised by the hospital management who feel that this knowledge would "distress" the patients and it is better for them to live in hope, albeit false.

He referred in his introduc-

tion to a comment made by the Minister of Health David Ennals.

"In spite of the prophets of doom, some of them on the inside who ought to know better, the National Health Service is very much alive and is providing a magnificent service to our people. I must ask," Mr Cozens-Hardy said, "Are we then, our people?"

CORNWALL

DOCTORS at Truro's Trelliske Hospital, the most modern in Cornwall, have spelt out what the health cuts mean for their patients. In an open letter released recently they paint this damning picture: - Every morning doctors scour the lists of medical patients to discharge the 'least ill' even though they will often not be ready to be moved. Patients stay on average for 7.7 days, little over half the national average of 13.5 days.

- There are only 365 'acute' beds, 100 less than the minimum laid down by the Government.

- Literally hundreds of patients face years on the waiting list before they get an operation. Even those officially classed as urgent

are waiting months for a bed. - Doctors are sometimes working for 48 hours without a break. Many are working 100 hour weeks.

In the letter the doctors pour scorn on the idea that the standards of health care are being maintained despite the cuts. "We know they are not," they write, "and so do our patients. We are sending patients home before they are fully investigated, seriously undermining not only their confidence in us but also the morale of the medical staff who know they are dealing with the problems inadequately. The situation is worsening."

They conclude: "It is a sad reflection on the country that pioneered nationalised health care that it now spends a smaller proportion of its gross national product on health than most developed countries. Health no longer seems to be a political priority."

This situation is being repeated up and down the country. While attempts are made to cover up the cuts, those involved know the truth. Patients are dying and others are suffering pain needlessly. That is the morality of capitalism. The morality of the working class gave us the health service now that same morality must fight to keep it. Who will suffer if we don't succeed?

Potters' proud history To ourselves be true

STOKE pottery workers have fought their employers for a living wage from the beginning of the pottery industry in the late eighteenth century. The early development of a factory system in the industry accompanied an early development of unionism.

Each generation of pottery workers has fought successful wage battles, combining selective and general strikes in a very effective application of guerrilla tactics. Each of these wage fights was also a fight for the independence of the Union: in 1834-36 the potters won a 25 per cent increase and a guaranteed working week; in 1845 they struck to stop the truck system; in 1866 they smashed the system of the "Annual Hiring"; in 1898-1900 they broke away from the employers' profit-sharing scheme fiasco and won a wage increase of 5 per cent; in 1919 they amalgamated all pottery workers into one Union and won a wage increase of 11 per cent; and in 1960-62 they ended the system of compulsory arbitration and broke through the Government's pay pause.

However, this record of courageous struggle is punctuated by diversions from the basic wage fight. As the Union's general secretary has commented: "their

search for solutions through emigration, cooperative production, arbitration and so on temporarily diverted potters from the real source of strength - well organised trade unions."

Since the 1966 wage freeze, potters have each year suffered wage-stops enforced by governments. Several years ago the general secretary described the Wilson Government's freeze as 'an action typical of this anti-trade union government... which is the best that employers have ever had' and the potters withheld their affiliation fees from the Labour Party.

Now, the fight for workers in the pottery industry must be for a living wage, to save their industry from decline. Every year since 1952, 1000 jobs have been lost - a loss of production, of skill, of job opportunities for the young.

Pottery workers must secure the right to bargain with the employer by rejecting any form of wage restraint by any Government, ending the custom of the annual settlement, a relic of the feudal "Annual Hiring", which weakens the Union. Only by determining their own wage guidelines now, and fighting on this basis, can they remain true to their Union's proud history.

Counter-revolutionary mission of NATO in the world

We are told more and more that defence expenditure must increase, that we are letting down our NATO partners, not contributing to the 'fight against Soviet imperialism'. It is helpful to look at the development of NATO. The alliance was set up to oppose revolution in the world after 1945: in Germany the Nazis were restored to economic and political power, in Greece a fascist regime was set up by British troops, in France and Italy NATO troops crushed revolution. The shameful record of counter-

revolutionary war by members of the pact continued in Malaya, Korea, Vietnam, Aden: in the twenty years after World War Two NATO troops are estimated to have killed four million people in such wars. It is apparent that the primary purpose of NATO has always been the suppression of internal revolt in the capitalist world.

The recent calls for more spending on 'defence' (of the bourgeoisie) coincide with an expectation of more trouble at home. If

9½ million young people are to be unemployed in the EEC by 1985 trouble is to be anticipated (although as communists we must realise such a situation of despair reduces the chances for a positive revolutionary movement). Increasingly the military are used as policeman and strike breakers - how long will it be before our

NATO 'allies' send troops here to scab because our own mercenaries have too much on their hands. The EEC rules permit such interference.

MINERS continued from page 1

The engine-winding men are also asking for such schemes to be decided on an area basis because of all the anomalies created by individual pit agreements. The ultimate conclusion, when area schemes are seen also to have discrepancies, is a national agreement. Perhaps the National Power Loading Agreement, bitterly fought for to restore unity into the industry in the early 1970s, will come into being again, with the miners having gained little and lost a great deal.

The reason for the productivity schemes is clearly not to produce more coal since the Coal Board itself claims it will have great difficulty in selling

any increased output. To add to the feeling of insecurity within the industry a league table of 'productive' and 'un-productive' pits is published and circulated at regular intervals giving a clear indication of the pits due for closure in the near future. Thus the real reason for the schemes is laid bare - the destruction of a vital industry and therefore the weakening of the working class movement.

The way forward must be a total rejection of such schemes in whichever guise they come. The miners' task is to re-establish their unity which can only be done through real struggle - the struggle against the Government.

COMMUNIST PARTY OF BRITAIN (ML)

MAYDAY MEETING

ONE WORLD - TWO CLASSES



**WORKERS THROW OFF
YOUR CHAINS!**



Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, London, WC1 May 1 7.30

AUEW HALL, Mount Pleasant, Liverpool May 2 7.30

**Swarthmore Educational Centre, Woodhouse Square,
Leeds 3 April 30 3pm**

Dr Johnson House, Bull St, Birmingham April 29 7.30

Swan Hotel, Stokes Croft, Bristol May 1 7.30

Wage restraint erodes trade union independence

THE continual process of dying capitalism demands more and more wage control, stated the speaker at a recent public meeting held at the Bellman Book shop.

Wage restraint is now a way of life in Britain that is quickly eroding trade union independence. It is this independence, the speaker stressed, that is more important and vital to the working class than just the fight for higher wages. The struggle for more money should be the base where our strength is built and which then acts as a springboard for the battle to overthrow the whole capitalist system.

During the discussion it became clear that productivity

deals were being used to supposedly take rises above the 10 per cent. Closer inspection revealed many strings attached that meant increased labour which did not bring correspondingly better rewards and conditions. In the case of the miners, the terms they accepted are leading to serious deteriorations in safety standards and increasing discontent between the sections as differentials widen. Even a group of teachers (in a private American school in London) were offered a productivity deal. How do you improve the productivity of a 5-year-old?

The speaker gave the meeting this excellent advice for action: say "no" to all forms

of wage restraint and work for a return to free collective bargaining. This will only be achieved through full and correct participation within the union structure and fighting for realistic wage claims, that is claims which unite all members in struggle.

LETTER Health cuts

Dear Editor,

The WORKER article on Darenth Park hospital (March 9, number 9) reminded me of conversations I had with nurses at another hospital for the mentally subnormal - Levensden hospital in Hertfordshire.

During tea breaks we talked of cuts and of the effects they were having on the hospital and on the residents. Some of the nurses argued that they couldn't possibly act against the cuts because of the effect that such action might have on the patients.

Others of us argued that in fact we were neglecting our responsibilities if we did not make a stand against cuts. If we stood by and let facilities and staff be cut it was the patients who would suffer much more in the long run. The sister of the ward pointed out that before the cuts, when expenditure on this area of the health service was actually expanding, there were often

as many as nine nurses on the ward. In those days there had been time to carry out most of the duties assigned to the nurses, not only washing and dressing patients and making beds but also time for conversation and practical activities with patients. Now, with only three or often two nurses on at any one time there was barely time for even basic duties to be carried out. After being washed and dressed inmates must sit bored and depressed while over-worked nurses try to get through all their other duties.

Yes, it was most certainly the case that patients and staff had greatly suffered from a lack of a stand in the past against the cuts. The same mistakes must not be made again, we must realise our responsibilities to save the health service now.

From a Leicester worker.

Workers must fight to save steel industry

THE IRON and Steel Trades Confederation's (ISTC) acceptance of the recent wage offer from the BSC has given the Government a free hand to put into operation its latest proposals, contained in the White Paper "BSC - The Road to Viability", for the continued dismantling of the iron and steel industry in Britain.

BSC's 10 per cent offer carried with it the acceptance by the ISTC of local negotiations for the early closure of Beswick and other so-called loes-making plants, redundancies (10,000 this year) to achieve "international" manning levels, incentive schemes, and proposals to cut delays in the introduction of new plant through disputes - as with the commissioning of the multi-million pound sinter plant at Port Talbot.

Armed with these concessions, Varley announced to the Commons that £1 billion of investment over the next two years at Port Talbot, Ebbw Vale, Shelton, Hunterston and Ravenscraig would be shelved. 40,000 jobs are to disappear in the industry over the next five years.

South Wales, where a third of BSC's workforce live, and in particular Port Talbot, bears the brunt of this savage attack. Of the original £835 million investment at the plant due to begin in April, after much delay, there will now be

only £80 m (10 per cent) forthcoming for a new continuous-casting strand.

The importance of Port Talbot lies in its supply of rolled coil for the three South Wales plants which produce all of Britain's tinplate. The present strip mill at Port Talbot was designed in 1938, and is scheduled for scrap in 1980-82, without replacement planned.

Coupled with the refusal to replace the Port Talbot strip mill is the shelving of the second phase £40 m investment at the Ebbw Vale tinplate works, originally scheduled for 1979-80.

Workers at these plants have begun plans to reverse these decisions.

The second aim of the White Paper - to achieve 40,000 redundancies over the next 5 years - relies on the cooperation of workers in the designated plants. So far early closures have been negotiated at Clyde, Hartlepool and East Moors. The loss of the 3100 jobs at East Moors in April means that 19,700 workers will be unemployed in the Cardiff area (a jobless rate of 14 per cent). Similarly, talks begin in April for the early closure of all steel-making at Ebbw Vale, affecting 1800 jobs, while at Landore Foundry, Swansea, 217 men will lose their jobs through the transference of ingot mould and

bottom plate production to Dowlais in March 1979.

It is now patently clear that unless both the wage claim and the growing fight - especially among craftsmen - against redundancy and closure are vigorously pursued and developed into a fight to save the steel industry from capitalism, there will soon be no industry.

Glasgow demo

BRITISH STEEL workers will be demonstrating in Glasgow on April 8th about planned BSC closures. Jobs are just a secondary consideration - profits being the primary one - as BSC announce huge investment cuts at Port Talbot and the electric arc plant at Hunterston, at Ravenscraig and Shelton. The Hunterston decision is almost certain to lead to the closure of the blooming mill at Glengarnock, Ayrshire, and the open hearth furnace there.

Closure at Glengarnock, where 1100 men work, would have to be "negotiated" with the steel unions - if you can negotiate yourself out of a job. Will the workers here take high redundancy payments - give up the skills of their lifetime and generations before them and join the unemployment queue with 30 per cent of this town's workforce - or will they fight to save the future?

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