

THE WORKER



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SECURE OUR UNIONS FOR FURTHER ADVANCES

Having rejected the social contract the organised working class must be vigilant in strengthening the restored sovereignty of our unions

"THE Social Contract is dead. Long live the Social Contract." This is the tenor of the Government's latest attack on our class. As the formal union votes for a "return to free collective bargaining" mount, supporters of the Social Contract are seen to shift their ground. Now the exhortation is to worship of the "12 month rule", and for an "orderly" return to free collective bargaining. We are told by Healey that the aim is for "moderate settlements at twelve-monthly intervals", and as we are peppered with phrases like "no free for all", and "no pay explosion" the upper limit of 10 per cent is set. At the same time Government figures themselves reveal that the rate of price increases is double the rate of increase of earnings, and the official annual inflation rate is put at 16.3 per cent, in the first 10 months of this year. The declared Government objective, to quote Healey, is that Phase II policy will "affect the level of the nation's earnings until the last settlement made under it expires at the end of July, 1978".

Our class must be clear on two points: firstly, that all calls for "moderation", "10 per cent",

"12 month rules" and the like, are merely new forms of the old familiar - the Social Contract. To reject the Social Contract by demanding the return to free collective bargaining, but then to fall in line with 10 per cent, or 12 month limits would be in practice to accept the extension of the Social Contract.

And secondly, the Social Contract, whatever its particular guise at the moment, is not, and never has been since its conception, a strategy for the control of inflation. It is not about "preventing a pay explosion". It is a strategy for the defence of political power by the employers.

It is always presented to us as an economic bargain - a plan for the lowering of inflation by a gentlemen's agreement between two sides, each giving and each gaining in mutual benefit. This is the employers' definition. Those who have opposed the Social Contract to date on the grounds that it is a "confidence trick" - another example of false promises and broken words - do in fact support the employers' definition and support their strategy, for they attempt to justify past commitment to the contract and thereby suggest

a possible basis for future support. To the extent that our class has allowed the debate to continue in such terms, and to the extent that our class falls in line with the "12 month or 10 per cent" device, to that extent do we add one more scaffold to the framework of the employers' intent. Support for the contract is provided not only by a 'Yes' at a union conference - it is given equally by default, by a reluctance to act to reject the contract in principle, in all its forms, not because any group of workers is a "special case" or has fallen badly behind other groups, but to reject it for what it is really about - the destruction of trade union initiative, the destruction of our class's means and will act in its own defence

The vote for the Social Contract, by active support or by default, is equally, in reality a vote for fascism. It abandons our country to a bitter future - for it is a vote against the survival of the independence and integrity which has been the history of our class and its organisations in this country.

Reject all extensions of the Social Contract!

EEC v Working Class

MORE than £500m is added each year to the price the British housewife has to pay for fruit and vegetables by the EEC's grading regulations.

It works like this. There used to be three grades of fruit and vegetables priced according to grade, so that housewives having to budget their purchases could feed their families perfectly well on the cheaper grades 2 and 3. But in order to raise prices for farmers, mainly on the Continent, the EEC regulations now ban the sale of all fruit and vegetables in grade 3 and some in grade 2 which, therefore, have to be dumped. This reduces the amount of food on the market and hikes the price of grade 3 fruit and vegetables still higher. Those who used to buy the cheaper grades are now forced to buy only top grade at such prices as the £ cauliflowers and £ cabbages which have been appearing on the barrows and in the shops.

This dumping of edible food to keep prices high is exactly like the old capitalist scandal of destroying wheat and corn crops in a world starving for bread grains just to maintain prices at a suitable height for big profits.

But this is not the end of the story. Some types of fruit and vegetables are outlawed altogether by EEC regulations just

because they are cheap - like cauliflowers below a certain size, Canary tomatoes and all fruit and vegetables slightly damaged in harvesting or transporting. Bramley cooking apples were ruled out at one time because European consumers don't much like the look of them.

Big cuts have been made in the EEC's draft budget for 1978 which radically reduce the appropriations for the regional fund and for other non-agricultural sectors.

It will be remembered the donations to depressed areas of Scotland and the Northeast of the regional fund were paid for the sugar coating used to get British public to swallow the EEC pill. Cuts in appropriations for non-agricultural sectors naturally hits highly industrial Britain hardest. But object to the cuts were raised by Italy and Ireland who were also beneficiaries of the regional fund. Workers of Spain, Portugal, Greece may take note that in EEC, as in the capitalist world at large, poor countries get poorer and the rich richer.

In addition the 1978 budget has been drawn up in new units account entailing a big increase in Britain's contribution which West Germany is insisting be paid in full. The cost to fish workers of being flooded the Common Market is gone



Factory occupations at ITT, Glasgow, and at Stanmore and Crosfields in London.

The working class will have to occupy the industrial base of Britain to save it from capitalist destruction.

Who can solve the problem of the Middle East?

IN CASE anyone had any doubts about the lengths to which the United States will go in support of its main base in the Middle East, President Carter has just agreed to yet another massive round of military aid to Israel. This followed the visit to the US by the ex-terrorist Begin, the new Prime Minister of Israel.

A reconvening of the Geneva Conference has once again been mooted with the US and the Soviet Union sharing the chairmanship. Under what pretext could these two imperialist countries claim a right to convene such a conference, except their mutual desire to interfere in the affairs of countries thousands of miles away? That the US feels confident in calling for such a conference reflects the disarray and confusion that exists among the people and countries involved. How else

would the Israeli Government dare to continue to establish permanent settlements in the occupied Palestinian land of the west bank of the Jordan? The people of the Middle East must insist that their problems will be resolved and can only be resolved by their own effort, by their own struggle. Never has the need to proceed on the basis of self-reliance been so essential for the Palestinian people.

Fight for nurseries

IN ITS efforts to reduce the standard of education in Oxfordshire, the Oxfordshire County Council plans to 'scrap' 80 of the 500 nursery places in the county, 4 teachers and ancillary helpers in order to save a mere £21,000 in its annual budget. No longer are excuses such as 'substandard

buildings", "efficiency" and "rationalisation" used to disguise their moves. This is a blatant attack on the part of the County Council to end Nursery Education in Oxfordshire, which it sees as an unnecessary luxury.

However, parents and teachers (think otherwise, Parents' pressure groups have sprung up around each existing nursery class threatened, and have now formed a co-ordinating committee to launch an all-Oxford Nursery Campaign. The parents realise they have no sanctions to implement but their energy has been put into organising petitions, surveys of need and extending waiting lists, as well as lobbying the Councillors and Education Committee meetings. They are very aware of the present teachers' struggle with the Oxfordshire County Council and are using their campaigns to broaden support for the teachers' action.

ERRATUM
The reference in Issue No. 14 to "Julian Hodges" is unreservedly withdrawn as factually incorrect and of no consequence to the argument of the article.

Revisionist disarray

MANY workers in Britain must feel slightly confused at the current spate of headlines proclaiming splits and chasms between Moscow and the various revisionist parties scattered around the world. Is it the end of an era? Is a new age dawning for revisionism, a Second Coming?

Of course not. You don't even have to read between the lines to see that there's no difference between the vassals pledging "allegiance" to the Soviet Union and the upstarts who would "criticise" it. The argument is not about how to have a revolution, but how to avoid it.

Much has been made, for instance, of the yawning gulf said to exist between Senor Carrillo, of the Spanish 'Communist' Party, and the Russian Party. But when Carrillo said, as he did recently, that he wished the Russians had attacked him earlier because it would have gained him hundreds of thousands of votes in the general election, he really betrayed his

colours. For if that is true, and he wanted those votes, then he is admitting either that the Soviet Union is not a socialist country, or, that he would do anything to get votes - and probably both.

Placing whitewash over the tar left by the Russian imperialist brush is no simple job. Nor it seems is winning an election. The French and Italian revisionists have decided that even if you can't win an election, you can at least form part of any government, however reactionary and catholic it may be.

The truth is, of course, that what is holding back electoral success for these paragons of social democracy is not the fact that Russia is a blatantly capitalist country which exploits and oppresses its working class - which it certainly does - but the fact that workers are not flooding to support the social democratic policies they are putting forward in their own countries.

This is true in Britain too. For the revisionist 'CPGB', it seems, any publicity is good

publicity. The newspapers have been full of imminent and actual splits. The division is between those who think capitalist Russia is a good place and say so, and those who agree but are not sure the idea goes down too well with the British working class. There was even a ridiculous argument about whether a communist party which had won an election ought to let the capitalists vote it out of power again!

In truth, there are no splits at all, for all 'Euro-communists' have no wish for revolution. All of them believe the working class to be incapable of solving its problems itself. For them, politics is a question for political parties, not for workers. Not a question of proletarian thought and action but of votes, crosses on paper once every four years.

While 'Euro-communists' find Soviet imperialism embarrassing to them in their mad scramble for votes, they have it in common that real socialism under the dictatorship of the proletariat is anathema to them all.

Spanish Congress letters

THE Central Committee of the Communist Party of Britain (Marxist-Leninist) greets the second Congress of the Communist Party of Spain (Marxist-Leninist) and hopes its deliberations will further strengthen its revolutionary programme and tasks.

The great struggle of the Spanish working class which aroused the world some 40 years ago during the Spanish Civil War has reached new heights in the recent struggles against the forces of imperialism, fascism and modern revisionism. Under the leadership of the Communist Party of Spain (M-L) the working class will surely be able to fight the present enemies of revolution who wish to confuse and divert with mock elections and the facade of democracy while revitalising the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie which, in the conditions of Spain, continues to reek of fascism.

We salute you comrades! Ours will be a long and arduous struggle to overcome monopoly capital now gangging up together in the EEC with alliances old and new with United States imperialism and the false left headed by the revisionists of Russia and a multitude of pseudo-socialists whose main task is to divide and confuse the revolutionary road.

But the goal is clear: the dictatorship of the working class for which so many of your heroic men and women have shed their blood. We look forward to the struggle in which correct theory - Marxism-Leninism - developed and moulded by the concrete conditions of each country and rooted in the only mass base possible - the working class - will steer us. There can be no shortcuts, no opportunistic alliances with the class enemy. Only self reliance and the closest links with the people will guide us.

Long live the international communist movement!
Workers of the world unite!

Reg Birch, Chairman for CC.
Message from the Second Congress of the Communist Party of Spain (Marxist-Leninist) to the Central Committee of the CPB(M-L).

Dear Comrades,
We wish to inform you that the Second Congress of the CPS(M-L) has been held with great revolutionary enthusiasm. At it a unanimous decision was taken to send revolutionary and internationalist greetings to the different M-L parties and organisations that had sent equally warm and internationalist greetings to our Congress.

The Second Congress of the CPS(M-L) has reaffirmed the need to prepare through daily struggle all our people for future revolutionary confrontations and people's war, which will end the oligarchy's power and the domination and intervention of foreign powers, above all that of the yankee imperialists. It underlined the importance at the present time of continuing and intensifying support for and extension of all different forms of mass revolutionary combat that have arisen in the struggles of the last few years.

The Second Congress represented a confirmation at all levels that the Spanish proletariat, led by its Party, the CPS(M-L), is today at the head of the popular struggles, fulfilling its historical role as leader of the Spanish revolution.

The Second Congress of the CPS(M-L) has enthusiastically acclaimed the messages sent by the various M-L parties and organisations of the world. The proletarian internationalist spirit of the Spanish working class at all times dominated the sessions of our congress. In particular the Congress acclaimed the important message sent by Comrade Enver Hoxha on behalf of the CC of the PLA representing valuable support to our Party and to the struggle of the Spanish proletariat, and summing up with notable clarity several truly M-L positions and points of view on the political situation in Spain as well as on the international situation . . .

Dear comrades, on behalf of the Second Congress and of the CC unanimously elected, once again we repeat our revolutionary greetings welcoming the warm message sent by comrade Reg Birch on behalf of your CC and we wish you new successes on the road of organising and mobilising the British proletariat for revolution.

Long live proletarian internationalism!
Long live Marxism-Leninism!

CC of the Communist Party of Spain (Marxist-Leninist)

CHINESE WOMENS' BATTLE FOR IDEAS

LIBERATION of women did not automatically follow the liberation of the Chinese people in 1949: and in the rural areas, especially, a struggle has been waged ever since then to change old ideas about women which had been imbued through centuries of oppression.

The fight for equality began as women joined the Chinese revolution in their hundreds of thousands. During the Land Reform Movement women duly gained their own shares of land, and the Constitution of the People's Republic of China guarantees equal rights for men and women.

The workers in the Hsuehchaw Production Brigade near Peking discovered that, although the material conditions for equality existed after liberation, ideas took much longer to alter, and women consequently found they were still being discriminated against. Although the women did

the same amount of farm work as men, they were paid less for their work and were still given full responsibility for household chores. Women also suffered from superstitions that had always been held in this region: that it was unlucky for women to do such jobs as digging, house-building, sowing and livestock-feeding.

Women were actually forbidden to work in the fields.

The Party comrades of the Brigade decided that this would not change simply by issuing orders, but that there would have to be long discussion and argument, and also be shown in practice how ridiculous such ideas were.

When the Brigade was reclaiming a big tract of riverside land for paddy cultivation, there was a shortage of workhands in the paddy fields. Women took on the transplanting of the seedlings and completed the work in record

time. The Brigade entered into study and debate, and after long discussions about the work being done by the women, all finally agreed completely that the women played an equal role in production and should receive equal pay.

As a result of this struggle of ideas, the women and men of Hsuehchaw Brigade share the housework, and women are able to take a full part in work and study. Women now serve as tractor drivers, electricians, animal breeders, fruit-growing technicians and masons.

With this progress, old customs have also broken down. Formerly, girls had to leave their homes and go and live with their husbands' families. This meant that parents preferred sons to daughters, for only sons would remain to take care of them in their old age. In Hsuehchaw today, these matters are sorted out within the families according to need instead of custom.

Anti socialists attack Vietnam

IN RECENT weeks there have been several attacks on the socialist revolution now in progress in Vietnam. Those who did their utmost to stop the revolution by bombing and killing the people - United States imperialists - naturally continue to lead the campaign, though it takes some gall to preach 'human rights' and at the same time whitewash the most brutal colonial war of our day. Speaking in the heart of America's deep south, President Carter said he was not in favour of 'writing off' a country that had been 'an enemy' of the United States. While with his ever-growing generosity, Carter was prepared to let Vietnam into the United Nations, there could be no question of paying reparations for the war damage inflicted on the people.

The British Government, totally loyal to the United States, gave every kind of help to it - military, economic and moral - throughout the bloody years of the war in Indochina. Labour and Tory alike were sickening in their support of US aggression. It was only in 1975 that the Labour Government, realising that the Vietnamese people were the obvious victors, decided to stop recognising the puppet regime and institute diplomatic relations with the then Democratic Republic and now the united Socialist Republic of Vietnam.

For all the verbiage about human rights and the plight of oppressed peoples amongst social democrats (and the forthcoming Labour Party conference will have plenty of it), when it comes to reality, the Government shows its true commitment - to capitalism - and its abhorrence of real socialism - millions of peasants and workers becoming masters of their own destiny as in Vietnam today. Once again, the alleged detention in Vietnam of an Englishman who used to work in Saigon long before liberation as an 'economic adviser' and who decided to stay on after liberation to 'help the Protestant church' - if our Sunday papers are to be believed - is being used by Government and media to attack socialism. It is a pity that ostensible champions of freedom like Amnesty International should be so ready to take up such a doubtful cause.

EDITORIAL

ONE of the original architects of European Unity was the fascist supporter of Hitler, Moseley, who soon after the war called for a united white Europe strong enough to be independent of both Washington and Moscow with black Africa as its backyard for exploitation. Thus would be achieved the result the Nazis had failed to bring about by force.

The North Atlantic military alliance was formed by the US out of defeated or weakened European powers as a combine of capitalist countries against the socialist Soviet Union; but its main use was to stamp out nascent socialism within Western Europe and to suppress liberation movements in Western Europe's remaining colonial empires. This was even more the case once capitalism had been restored in the

Soviet Union and it became a competing imperialist power with whom it was possible to do business, rather than a standing threat to the very existence of capitalism itself.

The EEC has never been anything but the social and economic arm of NATO, coming in time to include all those European countries in which the US has big military bases - just as Comecon is nothing but the economic arm of the Warsaw pact. The EEC has to be seen as a huge monopoly capitalist cartel, mainly inspired by West German revanchism, a frustrated French desire for La Gloire and a British dream of retaining her Empire: all of which fits in perfectly with US imperialism's over-all strategy.

Now in all of these political manoeuvrings of monopoly capitalists to shore up defences within and without at a time of absolute capitalist decline the working class of Britain, or of any other country, has never figured except as an enemy force to be contained and disarmed. It is the working class in every country, east and west, metropolitan and colonial, against whom all these pacts and treaties and blocs and combines are ultimately directed. Since capitalism has never found a better means of dividing, disrupting, decimating and defeating the working class than war, all these pacts and treaties and blocs and combines must be seen as ways not of preventing but of provoking wars - any one of which could escalate into a third world imperialist war. Just as NATO represents capitalism's necessity to make aggressive war, the EEC represents its necessity to make economic war "on us".

In trying to sell the EEC to British voters, the vast majority of whom are working class, the opposite of its real economic intentions was put forward. It was supposed to reduce unemployment and keep down prices. Of course, as we warned at the time, the exact reverse has taken place. The same threats and promises were used to get the 'organised working class to agree to the 'social contract' which served precisely the same capitalist purpose; and the capitalist argument for staying in the EEC, that unemployment and soaring prices would be still worse if we were outside, is precisely like the capitalist Labour Government's argument for claiming continued working class support - it might be even worse under the Tories.

But although unemployment has got worse and prices have risen astronomically, although the standard of living of our working class has deteriorated disastrously since going into Europe, that is not the main reason why we must take Britain out of the EEC. To stay in Europe, to remain in Nato and to leave US bases in Britain is to march with our bourgeoisie toward a third imperialist war to divide up the capitalist world's spoils once again. We have to get out of the EEC to save Britain. We workers who made Britain are the only ones who can or care to defend it from war and we can only prevent Britain from being engulfed in war by taking it out of the EEC and, since British capitalism depends on the EEC, taking Britain out is a revolutionary act. The only true patriots, the only real nationalists in Britain today are revolutionaries.

Our class duty is to make revolution here. We have the same task before us as the Bolsheviks had, as workers have everywhere, to build socialism in one country - our own, in the teeth of our own bourgeoisie. But this duty to ourselves, is also our proletarian responsibility to our working class brothers - in Spain, in Portugal, in Greece who in trying to throw off local fascist rule are being hustled into the wider, potentially fascist rule of the EEC. In taking Britain out of the EEC we help to destroy this monopoly capitalist combine which enslaves and endangers our fellow workers both on the Continent and in colonial countries.

The question of Britain's membership is coming up again as many who acquiesced after the shameful vote in favour are once more voicing their doubts. We welcome all friends in this campaign but we must rely on our own Party as the only political base for concerted action. All those who are sincere in wanting to take Britain out will come to realise that a counter-revolutionary capitalist party like Labour cannot be the political base for so revolutionary a move. When capitalism is bent on Britain's destruction, saving Britain is a revolutionary act.

How can we workers begin our struggle to take Britain out? By beginning to act as though no such treaties, pacts, bargains and contracts serving the interests of our bourgeoisie exist. We can keep out imports of any country which discriminates against the products of British workers, including the US and Japan as well as Europe. We can blast the mountains of food piled up by the EEC to maintain high prices when our own people are going hungry. We can see to it that skilled British workers are not exported to become indentured labourers in the steel mills of the Ruhr.

If the consequence of such actions is that Britain becomes isolated, forced back on our own self-reliant efforts, so much the better. We shall not be isolated from the international working class. In serving ourselves by making revolution here we serve them also.

British troops out of Ireland!

British officials out of Rhodesia!

Britain out of EEC!



Rationalising education out of existence

FOR the second year running the teachers in the London Borough of Haringey have been hit by massive cutbacks in numbers. In the Primary Section alone, over 20 schools were to experience staffing cuts of 1 to 3 teachers each from this September. This has resulted not only in many NUT meetings confirming the membership's total opposition to any reduction in establishment numbers, but also in a decision to ballot the members with a view to imposing 'no cover' sanctions where severe cuts in teacher numbers are experienced. In addition, a relatively new and very considerable involvement of parents has

occurred in support of the teachers' efforts not only to maintain the standards in schools but to campaign to improve them.

This has resulted in some success, in that the Local Authority has had to withdraw its intention to cut staff numbers in many of the schools concerned.

However, a greater devastation looms over and above this immediate problem. The Authority has issued a 'Green Paper' outlining its aims for the next 7 years. This 'rationalisation' of the education service in the borough involves amongst other things, the total closure of up to 6 secondary schools and as many as half the total number of prim-

ary schools.

On its release, parents and teachers arranged a very well attended and successful meeting to discuss the action necessary to force the withdrawal of this Paper. A committee was set up which, as its first step, organised an immediate and again well attended demonstration on 11th July to lobby the Council.

It will be a lengthy and testing campaign if not only Haringey but the whole of the country is to maintain even a semblance of an education service. The cuts must be fought, the schools kept open, the teachers employed: the children must be taught.

For education - no green paper chase

IT IS no coincidence that the much-heralded Government Green Paper on education was published in July, the very month that the largest ever number of qualified teachers have gone straight from college to the unemployment queue. As a National Union of Teachers' spokesman succinctly put it: "By ignoring the key question of spending cuts the Green Paper will be seen by many as a smokescreen to hide the devastating effect of the cuts."

Much of the Paper is concerned with the fatuous suggestion that literacy and numeracy should be included in a 'core curriculum'. It is rather like suggesting that hospitals should commit themselves to healing the sick! The Government has the brass neck to emphasise too the need to prepare the young for the transition from school to work, when everyone knows that the young have scarcely any jobs to go to apart from digging holes and filling them in, and the like. Now that nearly all children must learn in comprehensives, the establishment clearly thinks that an effective stop can be put to an 'over ambitious' range of

subjects 'inappropriate to the needs of their future employment'. The traditional obsession that the working class is getting above its station in life shows itself as strongly as ever.

Now that the Government has manufactured a glut of teachers it can set about finding new ways of sacking the 'incompetent' - and seeks Union help in doing it. This has been met, creditably, by a sharp rebuff from the NUT. The incompetence of teachers can be set against the competence of their masters who can manage oversize class and jobless teachers at the same time! A much tougher probation period is planned for those newly qualified teachers lucky enough to gain employment. The registration with the DES, that all newly qualified receive, apparently counts for nothing. The probation year that all must pass through dates from the thirties and has been kept largely in reserve, as a potential means of controlling teacher numbers. Now it is to be used for its original purpose.

As for teacher training, what little has not been dismantled

THE Labour Government has succeeded in recruiting the largest reserve army of unemployed assembled since the last great war.

With an admitted figure of 1,613,956 unemployed which would actually be well over the 2,000,000 mark, 253,379 of whom are school leavers eager to begin their apprenticeship of learning the skills of various trades and professions, the Labour Government can boast of rendering nearly 7 per cent of the work force non-effectives on behalf of capitalist profit.

Of course, another way capitalism can make use of huge reserve armies of the unemployed is to put them to work killing each other off in a war.



FOR seven weeks now, six members of the AUEW (TASS) have been on strike for union recognition at the firm of Radford Electronics, Bristol. Story in next issue.

Save steel

Govt. presses on with destruction

WHEN most nationalised industries were reporting huge profits at the public's expense, the British Steel Corporation's announcement of a £95m loss heralds another stage in the Government's plans to destroy the very basis of Britain's manufacturing capability

Not surprisingly the responsibility for a large part of the loss, £27m out of the £56m lost by the BSC's Welsh steel division, is charged against the electricians' strike at Port Talbot. Since it was the organised workers at Port Talbot who forced the Government earlier this year to go ahead with the much-delayed

£835m investment to double production at the plant, this attack on those very workers can be seen as part of capitalism's strategy to destroy the working class's base in steel production.

Indeed, BSC's chairman has announced that the first state of Port Talbot's investment allocation of £36m for the coming year has been 'squandered' by the electricians' strike. He also announces that any 'wage explosion' would further jeopardise investment by leaving the BSC exposed and 'defenceless to foreign competition'.

Just as the workers who forced the Government to promise more

Post Office report

DUE to public pressure over rising prices the Carter commission was set up 18 months ago 'to examine the main features of the organisation of the post office'. Published this week, the results of the commission are in line with the Government's economic strategy of slashing public services which cannot be made to yield a profit.

The most important recommendation made in the report is that the Post Office should be split into two entirely autonomous corporations, one to handle the postal services, the other to become a 'Telecommunications Authority'.

Telecommunications which primarily serves industrial needs is both growing and profitable. The postal services, including telegrams which the commission proposes should be scrapped, primarily serves the public. The commission also proposes to integrate the parcels

investment are being made the excuse for postponing it, so the BSC blames organised workers for weakening BSC in the face of foreign competition! And yet the BSC is sabotaging British steel by importing from Sweden and Holland quasi-flake and rolled coil which should be supplied by Landore and Port Talbot.

Even the Government's plea that it is out-of-date plants which are being eliminated is shown up as a lie by the latest victim of the BSC's investment cutbacks - the Orb works at Newport which provides highly profitable and competitive steel for the high-quality electrical steels market.

weighing more than three kilograms if this section "cannot be made to cover its costs". Such rationalisation as ever, can only lead to redundancies.

The telecomms section would be modernised by purchasing such modern systems as 'System X' from outside Britain as British manufacturers are claimed to be unable to supply such up-to-date equipment.

To split the Post Office into one section to serve industry, the other the public can lead us to one conclusion. One section is to be used to streamline profit, the other, a public service is to be rundown. This was emphasised by the record profits in telecomms of £265m while post only brought in £24m.

The Commission's findings are strongly opposed by the Union of Post Office Workers who forecast "a growth in the bureaucracy and higher prices".

Drax B the struggle for power

THE capacity to harness natural energy for production was a hallmark of the industrial revolution. A hallmark of today's industrial counter revolution is the destruction of that capacity. This is the basic fact underlying the struggle of the workers of Scotland and the North East to save the power plant manufacturing industry which makes the boilers, turbines and generator sets which are at the heart of any power station.

The Government's recent decision to proceed with the construction of Drax B marks a successful outcome to the first battle of this campaign: the war however is far from over.

Prior to and following the announcement it was abundantly clear that both the Westminster GEC empire, which seeks a monopoly in this sphere, and the Department of Industry and its 'Think Tank', together had only one aim; to destroy much of the remaining skill and industrial capacity which still exists in this key sector of industry. In the present situation of continuing industrial contraction, rising electricity prices, lower real wages - and on top of all this a 'Save It' campaign, the real issues have been deliberately obscured. Workers have been told, not that too little electricity is being used (no mention is made of the electricity not used by 2 million who are denied work) but that we produce too much. The

answer, therefore, is that turbine and boiler manufacture must be cut down and rationalised under the 'beneficent' control of GEC.

Notwithstanding the effect which such measures would have upon employment and the whole future for industrial youth in areas such as the Tyne, the 'Think Tank' itself could not avoid cataloguing the recent history of redundancy and closure in the industry. Yet workers have been quick to point out that in view of this, further cuts and rationalisation now would make it impossible for this section to meet any future overseas orders for power stations. Thus apart from destroying a capacity to export, deliberately not making use of local coal resources, and boosting local rates of unemployment (Tyne already in excess of 10 per cent) the proposals of the rationalisers would mean future imports of power generation equipment at present made here. What then has prompted the furious reaction in the capitalist press to the Drax B decision? What is the method in their madness? The answer must surely be that while the aim of capitalism in decay in Britain is to wring the last ounce of profit from already emaciated industry at home (whilst investing ever more abroad) the workers who are directly involved have declared their intention for an industrial future where they live.

Grunwick and the law

AS PART OF their contribution to the now defunct social contract the Labour Government introduced their much vaunted trade union legislation designed to 'enhance', and 'protect' the right of trade unionists. Yet, despite all the paraphernalia of the law, the Grunwick dispute is very much alive after nearly a year when the first group of workers walked out of the factory.

The Grunwick workers' experience of the 'benevolence' of the law began on October 15th, last year, when their Union, APEX, referred the recognition issue to ACAS (the conciliation and arbitration service). As a

result of continual obstruction by the employer, ACAS was not able to submit its recommendation until March of this year. When Grunwick refused to implement the ACAS recommendation (that they recognise APEX) the law, as embodied in the Employment Protection Act, provides that APEX must allow the employer two months to implement the recommendation. Once this period is up APEX could then, again, refer Grunwick's refusal to ACAS which must, under the law, attempt further conciliation. If this fails the union can refer the issue to a body called the Central Arbitration Committee which must consider the ACAS recommendation and if it decides in favour of the recommendation its decision will have legal effect.

Even then the employer could still refuse recognition. This process could be further obstructed by the employer taking legal action as Grunwick have done. Theoretically this procedure could go on indefinitely by which time the Grunwick workers will have reached retirement age!

In March an industrial tribunal ruled that they had no jurisdiction under the Trade Union and Labour Relations Act to deal with the dismissals of Grunwick workers as they had all been dismissed for striking! Even if they had proclaimed their trade union membership first and then waited to be sacked the tribunal would not have been able to enforce their reinstatement. As a result they have been neatly deprived of any

benefit conferred by the provisions of the Employment Protection Act which enable 'low-paid' workers who are made union members to claim parity with wage levels in other parts of the industry or locality.

Further the Government has used the dispute as an excuse (as if they needed one) to curb picketing. It seems likely that the strike-breaking role of the police will be reinforced by measures designed to restrict numbers on the picket line and to ensure that pickets are members of the union(s) involved in the dispute.

Taken together the Labour Government's legislation shares the same philosophy which lay behind the Tory Industrial Relations Act which is to channel all struggle into the 'civilised' avenues of the law. In fact the Trade Union and Labour Relations Act and the Employment Protection Act retain much of what was in the Industrial Relations Act albeit the names and terms have changed, (for example, the Industrial Relations Court has been re-vamped in the shape of the Employment Appeal Tribunal).

The latest in the Grunwick saga is the verdict of three Appeal Court judges, headed by Lord Denning, that the ACAS recommendation of recognition of APEX by the Company was invalid on the grounds that the views on trade union membership by the scabs still working had not been adequately canvassed. This reversed a decision by the High Court supporting the ACAS recommendation. Now the ACAS has to decide whether to appeal to the House of Lords against the Appeal Court!

The answer to all this is very simple. The law has never conferred any advantages on us as organised workers. We defend our rights in our places of work, not in the courts.

In the Grunwick struggle although there has been a good deal of sympathy with our comrades in dispute with an employer who enjoyed the backing of all the most reactionary elements, although the postmen at Cricklewood took the right kind of action in

support, the working class has so far shown itself incapable of closing down this scab operation.

DOCTORS STRIKE

STRIKE action will be taken by hospital consultants in support of their claim for more money. Delegates representing 13,000 consultants at the annual conference in Glasgow voted overwhelmingly to 'oppose the extension of pay policy proposed by the Government' and called for a one-day national strike this autumn. This decision follows the vote by general practitioners at their meeting to apply sanctions in support of a 15 per cent wage increase.

The strike will be the first by hospital consultants since the NHS was established in 1948. There are two main reasons for this decision, pay and the threatened rundown of the NHS.

In the last 10 years, the 'productivity' of the hospitals has increased. There have been more patients, for shorter stays, in fewer beds. Already highly-skilled consultants have learned new skills. In the surgery of arthritis, for instance, the theory of yesterday has become practice today, with artificial hip and knee joints becoming increasingly common-places. However, in this same 10 years, consultants' real earnings have dropped more than those of any other section of skilled workers. Differentials have narrowed, and even been reversed in comparison with senior administrators.

The cuts in the hospital services, only now beginning to bite, must lead to a deterioration of standards. Long-awaited new departments are cancelled. The purchase of new instruments is restricted. There are still only two of the revolutionary EMI 'total body scanners' in the NHS. There is even talk of rationing total hip replacement, the biggest success in British medicine since the war.

This strike call has met with the expected surly response from those in the TUC attempting to resuscitate the corpse of the social contract - but this Frankenstein is dead as dead can be. A real problem facing any group of health workers on strike is that no capitalist government cares about patients or hospitals. This strike is not just about a pay claim, but is also a defence of the NHS, and should be supported by all.

In Brief

WHEN the TUC General Council endorsed the TUC-Labour Party deal on the 12 month rule, Jack Jones was forced to abstain. Much as he would have preferred to vote in favour, he was bound by the overwhelming vote of the T&GWU membership for rejection of the social contract now.

SAVE THE HEALTH SERVICE!

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