

THE WORKER



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DIRECT ALL STRUGGLE TO REVOLUTION TUC 1977

AS THE Trade Union Congress meets on September 5th, the question before the working class is which way forward.

Having come to realise our mistake in accepting the social contract we cannot now embrace the same order that led to it in the first place. Having rejected social democracy as embodied in the social contract we cannot now embrace the social democracy as of old.

Too often we fought the employers, the capitalists. Rarely did we fight capitalism. For generations we fought in order to live with capitalism. Reforms and improvements were wrung from the teeth of greedy capitalists through hard and costly struggle. All these reforms and achievements are under attack by a ruling class whose sights are set on Europe and nations beyond the seas rather than on Britain. As for Britain, after squeezing out of it the last pound of profit, it may sink for all they care.

The old fight for existence within capitalism is over. It is no more, even if we desired to continue it in the old way. The fight to retain our standard of living, let alone improve it, has become a fight against the government, against Parliament and, therefore, revolutionary. Divorce, not reconciliation with past policies. This is the issue which delegates to this year's TUC must face.

With the decisive rejection of wage restraint, led by the engineers in May and subsequently reinforced by the NUM, the TGWU and many other unions, this year's Congress has the clear responsibility of reaffirming that rejection. Such a task however demands the maximum clarity. Those delegates whose own unions have already reasserted their fundamental right to bargain 'freely' with employers, have now to face the basic truth that 'free' collective bargaining is never free from the united opposition of employers and governments (particularly Labour governments). It cannot now therefore be taken for granted. In fact, no sooner had the democratic process of trade union decision begun to renounce the social contract, than the forces of social democracy had already begun to regroup. Now Healey on behalf of the ruling class hopes for a reconciliation - particularly with those who are unwilling guardians of their own unions' rejection of pay policy - or with those whose members have yet to reject

decisively the policy of wage control.

Yet two things should be clear: Firstly, policy decided by organised workers in rejection of the social contract is binding upon all members, willing or unwilling. Secondly, the TUC may be the parliament of our unions - an arena in which common agreement allows common approaches to common problems - but it is by no means their government. Thus, for delegates in the name of fraternal 'unity' to forsake the spirit of their own policy in favour of a convenient form of words on percentages and a twelve month rule, would mean not just accepting phase III but would be a negation of British trade union democracy itself.

However, besides such lack of clarity on the proper role of a TUC - itself exacerbated by ideas peddled by the 'ultra-lefts' who despise all trade union bodies - it is lack of clear thinking on the social contract itself which represents the threat.

The issue to be faced squarely now is not that we were faithful to our side of the contract while the government didn't know theirs. The issue to be faced is that we were thoroughly unfaithful to our

class and the fundamental aims of our trade union organisations. If anything, the experience of what has happened since the social contract was introduced has re-emphasised the fact that there can be no contract with capitalism. Our contract is with our class. Those at the TUC who attempt to justify their past support for wage restraint muddle the issue, and open the way to acceptance of new shackles upon the trade union movement.

The two other key issues facing this year's Congress and which demand the same honesty and realism are the question of unemployment and industrial decline and the question of Britain's membership of the EEC.

Last year's Congress declared "The present level of unemployment is totally unacceptable..." (what level is acceptable?) This year's TUC must not abandon that position in favour of a mish-mash of recommendations - piecemeal solutions conceived as a means of avoiding outright condemnation of unemployment and thus a 'labour' government.

The real answer to the future of industry - particularly the young - lies in the hands of trade union members where they work. It is there that we must have our own 'industrial strategy' and our 'job creation' schemes.

We must have our own initiative too on ending Britain's membership of the EEC. With calls for withdrawal growing from every corner of the labour movement, this year's TUC must not be allowed to dodge the question with calls for renegotiation etc. The EEC issue, like collective bargaining, is fundamental to the future of Britain. It demands our trade union movement gets back to basics, the very thing which capitalism in decline cannot and will not allow - yet it is the only future for our class.

Editorial

IT SHOULD be obvious to all of us by now that the capitalist Labour Government is not really concerned about cutting inflation. Its real concern is cutting wages and for this purpose, at a time when workers would fight too hard over a flat reduction in take-home pay, inflation is the best instrument capitalism has for quietly stealing back a large part of the wages in our pockets.

Inflation is not something bad which has happened to capitalism and therefore it has to come to us workers and ask us to help it out of a jam. Inflation is something bad which capitalism uses against us workers - and then blame us for having caused!

The proof of this is shown by what has happened to our wages over the period of the 'social contract' which was supposed to be a remedy against inflation. Over the last year, according to the Government's own figures, the gap between earnings and price increases was more than 8 per cent, the greatest erosion of working-class living standards since the war. According to a recent West German study, for every £1 a British worker earns an Irish or a Japanese worker earns £1.13, an Italian £1.27, a Frenchman £1.40, an Austrian £1.47, a Swiss £2.07, an American £2.13, a West German £2.27, a Belgian £2.33, a Dane £2.40 and a Swede £2.73.

That gives you some idea of the cost to us as a class of agreeing not to use our unions for their traditional purpose of protecting our standard of living.

The Government is busily devising ways like the 12-month rule and "recommended" limits on our wages, which in the public sector they will try to enforce as statutory, so that wage cuts can go under another name. But as Reg Birch pointed out at the time of the AUEW National Committee's rejection of the 'social contract': "We've had lots and lots of wage restraints in history but there is still capitalist society and it is still a sick dog. So whatever their concept of restraint, it never cured. All wage curbs ever did was to decrease the spending power of workers and create mass unemployment."

Putting it even more strongly, Reg Birch pointed out: "If we say that wages are a cause of inflation, if we say that restraint will cure capitalist society, if we say the limitation of spending power will increase consumption and therefore more people will work - let us all work for a year for nothing!"

And to those who might still argue that we ought to accept this or that limitation, that the return to collective bargaining "ought to be orderly" Reg Birch said it was like asking whether we would have a union or not. "Because if you are going to ask permission whether you will have what is euphemistically termed 'free collective bargaining', which is the result of endless sacrifices by those better than we are, now dead, to create that right to bargain with an employer, to get up off one's knees, then why do we bother with a union?"

If anyone thinks the Labour Government really wants to get rid of inflation, why the continuous price rises and increased profits at our expense in the nationalised industries? why the pegging of the pound at an artificially low rate? Inflation cuts down home consumption and favours the more profitable business of exports. Inflation depresses our living standards and encourages the more profitable business of tourism. Inflation here increases the relative value of investments abroad.

And don't let anyone suppose that capitalism would hesitate to use inflation on a Weimar Republic scale in some desperate throw to maintain control. Just remember that after the chaos of worthless paper money, after the rise of the Nazis and after the Second World War, the giant Ruhr factories were still in the same hands. The same capitalist class still rules Germany today.

Report from Albania

THE historic city of Korca, an industrial centre situated in central Albania, was chosen by the Albanian Trade Unions as the site to hold their 8th Congress. It was a fitting site for this venue since this city produced the first communist group to be formed in Albania and ever since has played a leading role in the revolutionary and patriotic movement of the country.

Korca's working class has produced many outstanding communists and its inhabitants welcomed the arrival of the delegates to their city as a continuation of this revolutionary tradition. In the early hours of the morning crowds began to gather to welcome their arrival growing steadily to a huge cheering mass of thousands when the delegates finally walked through the main thoroughfare to the sports stadium that was to house their conference for the next four days. The delegates arriving from all parts of Albania, chosen by their workmates, and representing factories, construction sites, collectives and state farms were to live for these four days as guests in homes of the people of Korca

In Albania, being a socialist country, one in which the working class is in power, the trade unions have a very important role to play. This extends into the ideological, political and social fields and is based not on the apparatus of the unions but upon the activists, the militants themselves. Their role is to strengthen the working class's control of its destiny by always

giving a lead in organising and educating the mass of the membership in the necessity to fulfill the aims the Albanian people set themselves through their Party with regard to production and quality in the various fields of their country's economy. The Congress quite clearly showed the ATU carrying out this role as schools of communism, discussing, criticising and pledging ways and means of building the economic strength of their country.

Delegate after delegate took the rostrum and expressed the determination of the workers of this or that particular combine or factory to increase production overcome obstacles and setbacks and so increase the well-being and the quality of life for the people of the country as a whole. The role played by the unions in stamping out bureaucratic excesses and revisionist tendencies, from whatever quarter they might appear, was much in evidence.

The Congress culminated with a rally at a nearby open air stadium where the delegates and population of Korca were entertained by revolutionary folk singing and dancing. The following day crowds once again lined the streets to bid farewell to the delegates as they made their way back to their home towns, determined and confident that the four days had been well-spent and a great deal of good work carried out to strengthen the dictatorship of the proletariat and further secure the immense gains already achieved by the Albanian people.

Hospitals occupied

WORKERS AT Hounslow hospital are continuing their occupation of defiance. Total closure of the hospital is planned for the end of August - but the staff have other ideas. Already deadlines for some departments have been averted by the action. Now as the total closure date beckons, the campaign is going from strength to strength. The occupiers point out that efficiency has risen to a far greater level since the occupation began in March. Whereas before there was a shortage of patients - now there is a shortage of bedspace. Extra nurses had had to be introduced to cope with the increased needs of patients. Indeed having consolidated their position staff are now seeking the reopening of the emergency and accidents department and have started a picket to win the return of the doctor transferred when the department was closed.

The success of the action so far is due to the solid support of all concerned. Both NALGO and NUPE have given official backing and among many other trade union sympathisers, recently the joint shop steward committee at nearby Heathrow promised all support requested. The philosophy has been to act as if the hospital was under no threat at all. Thus general practitioners and consultants still refer patients to the hospital. A spokesman for the committee of GP's formed to fight the closure said they would continue to do this even if instructed not to. Those who run the hospital emergency bed service are still sending patients to Hounslow. The medical practitioners branch of ASTMS has said it will run a rota system if management withdraw medical cover. In other words the

hospital will continue whatever the destroyers try to do. Even the annual hospital fete was held to raise funds... for the future. The enthusiasm and commitment is obvious - as a spokesman said 'We wouldn't have gone into this if we didn't think we'd win.'

Now the message is spreading. Nearby Southwest Middlesex hospital is also occupied. July 31st should have marked the closure of a convalescent ward for surgical orthopaedic patients. The total closure of the hospital with the removing of the geriatric ward is planned next April. Spurred by Hounslow a 'work in' is flourishing here too. Cases are still being referred and the consultants in the ophthalmic ward have refused to be transferred and work on. They say they object to moving 'from one second class theatre to another.' If this orthopaedic closure went ahead, staff say waits of six weeks could become a year to eighteen months. Ambulancemen are refusing to move patients without the ward sisters' permission and relatives are writing to management requesting that their relations are not moved. Thus a second hospital in the area still thrives when plans meant the opposite.

The workers at Hounslow and South Middlesex have shown whom the health system belongs to and that no one can stop our class when it stands up for itself. More than that they have shown why the capitalist class fears the organised working class. Why it fears our health. The workers have made it obvious that they don't need capitalism to run a health service. They do it better themselves.

Asclepius in toils of Social democracy

"The Right to Health - Labour's Plans for the National Health Service", so reads the title of a recent pamphlet produced by the Labour Party. It is the Labour Party's evidence to the Royal Commission on the National Health Service. In reading it you wonder if the Labour Party itself isn't so schizophrenic that it ought to be locked up in a mental institution since the same Party putting forward its commitment in this document to "the principle of a National Health Service... free at time of use" when acting as the Party in political power is closing down hospitals and destroying the NHS.

The pamphlet states that "We are resolutely opposed to charges in the National Health Service... the first to go must be prescription charges." But it was a Labour Government that reintroduced prescription charges. The National Health Service is underfinanced, the pamphlet says, but under the

present Labour Government spending on hospital buildings alone is to be cut by £80 million over two years.

Among other things wrong with the N. H. S. that the pamphlet points out are:

Over half our hospital beds are in buildings dating back to the last century;

a serious lack of special care units for babies accounts for our poor infant mortality rate which is behind that of many other advanced countries; the capacity of many diagnostic and treatment facilities is so limited that there are disgraceful delays in admissions; only about half of the abortions are performed under the NHS because of a lack of facilities;

there are just under a third of the beds needed in psychiatric units in general hospitals, less than a fifth of the day centre places needed, only 40 per cent of places needed in residential homes and the situation for the

mentally handicapped is even worse.

And what is the Labour Government doing about these deficiencies? Closing down more hospitals!

Britain has 135 doctors per 100,000 inhabitants compared with 196 in Austria, 199 in Italy, 161 in the US and 275 in the Soviet Union. The solution to doctor unemployment is not to restrict entry but to destroy a system that keeps doctors out of work when their services are needed - not a solution put forward in this pamphlet!

In a section entitled priorities it states: "The health standards of our society are savagely unequal... the largest and most worrying differences in mortality rates are by social class... There has been no narrowing in social class differences in infant mortality rates during the last 50 years." This covers a period during which no fewer than eight Labour Governments have been elected!

loved by the locals. Patients from Thamesmead and Plumstead are to be offered the alternatives of Greenwich District or Queen Mary's, Sidcup, both much harder to get to. A local GP said at the rally that he had patients who would have died if it hadn't been for the closeness of St. Nick's.

Waiting lists in the area for 'non-urgent' surgery and other services number over 2,000 and St. Nick's alone has 306 on its waiting list for general surgery. Yet the Area Health Authority claims there are too many beds in the area. On this rationale surgical facilities at the Mem-

orial Hospital, with 100 on its waiting list, have been shut down, convalescent and accident first-aid services are to close down at the Eltham and Motingham hospitals and the Bexley and Welling hospital is to close down fully; and when all casualty patients except walking patients can no longer use St. Nick's, the Brook casualty and surgical services, already overworked, will be put under an intolerable strain.

ERRATUM
The last issue of THE WORKER was incorrectly numbered as No. 16 instead of 15.

Save St Nick's

On the 7th August an estimated 3,000 people converged on a hillock in Leasness Park, Abbey Wood, to take part in a rally to save St. Nicholas' Hospital, Plumstead, now finally due for closure after years of vacillation by the Area Health Authority.

St. Nick's has lower operating costs and a faster patient turnover than other newer hospitals in the area, and is much

ASEAN - Son of Uncle Sam

WHEN the South East Treaty Organisation, was recently disbanded Anglo-American imperialism found in the ten-year old Association of South-East Asian Nations a trustworthy successor. Indeed it was the United States which had been instrumental in its formation with the connivance of allies and client states all equally concerned about the red menace emanating from China and Vietnam. America wanted its anti-red crusade to have an Asian countenance since SEATO was proving less and less acceptable.

Ten years ago, as now, in four of the five component member states - the Philippines, Singapore, Malaysia and Thailand - revolutionary movements under the leadership of firmly-based communist parties were taking the form of guerrilla war against imperialism and domestic reaction. In Indonesia, the fifth member, it was the failure to launch this very thing - protracted people's war - that led to the biggest massacre of communists in peacetime in the coup of 1965 when the US-controlled military junta under Suharto came into power.

This fundamental purpose - the destruction of communism - lies at the heart of ASEAN and accounts for the praise showered on its second summit meeting which concluded in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, earlier this month. The five heads of state, all incidentally in the top league of world reaction, must have smiled more cynically than usual when in the final communique they expressed their aim to establish

a "zone of peace, freedom and neutrality."

Peace? It was only at the end of July that one of several joint actions involving some 10,000 Thai and Malaysian soldiers had tried to flush out elusive communist guerrillas in the Thai-Malayan border, military operations that involved heavy artillery fire and aerial bombing raids. The present Thai government, installed by the US in last year's bloody putsch, has kept up warlike acts against the neighbouring socialist republics of Laos and Cambodia as well as US-armed anti-insurgency operations against the ever-growing successful Thai Peoples' Liberation Army.

Freedom? Obviously not internal freedom when even the bourgeois media of the west have to talk of the savage repression of elementary civil rights used against every shade of democratic opinion in all five states.

External freedom? It must have bemused the workers and peasants of the entire area where the depredations of the international monopolies in sugar, rubber and oil are daily facts of life to be told that their rulers were talking of "un-alignment", a trendy version of "nonalignment" while at the same time begging the Prime Minister of Japan to invest a billion dollars in industrialising the region.

Neutral? Right from the opening remarks of the summit conference the ASEAN leaders were full of the "hostile challenge" from socialist Indochina and the need to cooperate closely with

each other and with the major industrialised nations such as the EEC, Canada and Japan. Only in the doubletalk of our times can the manipulations of comprador capitalists and feudal landlords - the class basis of the ASEAN states - be described as "neutrality".

One was not entirely surprised that the final communique kept quiet about military cooperation. The Times, in its special supplement to mark the event, referred to ASEAN spokesmen having indicated that they would prefer no mention of military cooperation between member states and others. There are in fact all kinds of bilateral and multilateral military agreements between the ASEAN states and the old alliance between the USA, Australia and New Zealand, ANZUS. From time to time the presence of ANZUS personnel and arms in the many counter-insurgency operations undertaken in the Philippines, Thailand and Malaysia come to light through painstaking investigation. The US presence in maintaining Indonesian dictatorship is too well known for Suharto's claims to be anti-colonial not to seem to be grotesque.

Imperialism will not disappear voluntarily nor will it be liquidated through blocs of reactionaries pretending to be progressive. Real freedom for the peasants of Southeast Asia like the workers of Western Europe will come not through manoeuvres with the class enemy but through the revolutionary road of Marxism-Leninism.

Absolute decline of the Social Services Teachers must step up fight for education

THE Government's 'Think Tank', the Central Policy Review Staff, have published a Report which discloses some of capitalism's long-range battle plans for the next quarter century. The Report, "Population and the Social Services", uses the falling birthrate to propose a scheme for demolishing the achievements of a century and more of working class struggle.

The Report's team of demographers make three projections of Britain's population to the year 2001. Two assume that the exceptionally low birthrate of 1974 - 5 will be reversed in the 1980's. But the Report lays special stress on the third, a 'very low' projection which assumes that the 29 per cent decline in the number of births between 1964 and 1974 will continue unchecked till the end of the century.

Impartial social scientists to a man, the Report staff explore, with mounting fascination, the implications of this assumption. Government Ministers are left no room for doubt that, if they need 'scientific justification' for permanent decline in services, demography is the science to provide it.

The most striking effects of the falling birthrate will be felt in school education. Here the lowest number of births ever is already with us. Children born from 1974 to 1977 will be going through our schools till the early 1990s. What the Report does is to assume that this very low birthrate will continue and become the norm. On this assumption, the Think Tank throws up proposals that mean the end of education as we know it - 106,000 'surplus' teachers to be disposed of in the mid-80s; a further reduction of teacher-training places below even Shirley Williams' final figure of 35,000; widespread redeployment of teachers between primary and secondary schools; selling-off of 'surplus' school buildings that 'won't be needed' after 1985.

In higher education the planners have more of a problem. Student numbers will rise by 165,000 between 1975 and 1985, falling thereafter by 99,000 in the decade 1985 to 1995. The problem is: what to do with the mid-80s bulge? Should new colleges and facilities be provided for them?

No, says the Report, because this would result in 'excess capacity' in the 1990s. What about opening up wider opportunity for young people to enter higher education in the '90s to use up this spare capacity? Again, No! Increased opportunities would be 'difficult to

achieve', and are not a 'priority objective on present policies'. Instead the 1980s bulge will be dealt with by further tightening of staff ratios and harder entry requirements.

Those who believe that the current crisis of capitalism is but a passing dark cloud, had better see that Government is planning now for less and less for our class to the end of the century and beyond. In fact the Report's authors claim they can predict demographic trends (and their awful policy consequences) for 40 years to come, but they restrain themselves to 2001 - for the time being.

Demand for maternity services would seem to present our bulldozing whizkids with more of a headache, since couples, inconsiderately, don't give the planners several years warning in advance of their intentions! But we would be foolish to underestimate the guile of capitalism in a tight spot.

The Report starts from the premise of a current 'excess of 3000 maternity beds in England'. Births fell by 5 per cent per annum between 1970 and 1973, but trained medical staff rose by 3 - 4 per cent, and costs by 4 per cent per annum. The Report congratulates the Department of Health and Social Security for cutting spending on maternity services by 2 per cent per annum (£9 million) between 1975 and 1980, entailing the closure of 1350 beds. If, as the Report hopes, the birth rate continues at its very low 1974 level, 1600 more beds can go in 1980.

But if you slash beds like this, what about the bulge generation, born in the mid-80s, who will have children in the late 80s? There must, on no account, says the Report, be any 'over-provision', no more than the minimum necessary, whatever the suffering. 'It will be necessary to consider how to deal adequately with the peak (of the late 1980s), and at the same time minimise surplus capacity in the 1990s.' Single purpose maternity units must be closed, all of them. Mothers must make shorter stays in hospital. The DHSS is given another pat on the back for pointing out to consultants and administrators 'the importance of this factor as an influence on costs.'

The Report's sharpest sting is in its tail, its 'conclusions', which set out the new philosophy of capitalism in its absolute decline. The Report bemoans the "virtual insatiability of 'needs' in the social services". Public expenditure has soared out of all proportion to national output, it appears. Instead of

merely keeping pace with population growth, this increased spending has gone "to provide real improvements in standards" a deplorable outcome in the Report's view.

"Yet needs were far from satisfied. Indeed, public expectation of yet further improvements seemed to grow with increased provision. It is clear that resources can never be provided on a scale which will meet to the full the hopes of professional practitioners, the ambitions of pressure groups or perhaps even the expectations of the public. There is no reason to expect that in the future governments will be able to finance the rates of increase of social services we saw in the recent past, certainly not to exceed them, and public expectations will need to accommodate this."

So there we have it. Not only are we to get less, not only are we to feel guilty for having won 'real improvements' in health and education, improvements which which, in our arrogance, we call needs, but we will be re-educated to lower our expectations. Slaves were we and slaves are we to be.

What must we do? Throughout the Report there is a chink in the armour of its ruthlessness, an awareness that the 'public' want and have won real improvements, and will not abandon them lightly. The destruction planned by the Report can only succeed if the working class abandons its traditional aims and allows the massacre to happen. And how do we prevent it? Only by seeing what the Report itself makes crystal clear - that capitalism, in the misery of its decline, offers us no future, that the only way for a future is to make revolution and build Britain anew. This is a responsibility for the whole of our class.

For those working in the social services, there are some particular lessons. To accept the falling birth rate as necessitating cutback, to make redeployment agreements and restrict ourselves to saving jobs of those already employed, is to protect an ever-shrinking cake. It means abandoning our children, and the unemployed who seek work in the social services, it means suicide for ourselves and the rest of our class as patients or parents.

We must fight for better hospitals and schools, improved staffing, the right to work and study, for all who want and need them. We cannot afford to submit to what capitalism has in store for us. We must demand a future - a revolutionary demand.

large schools 'unviable') is to blame in itself. Blame must attach to the motives. The glaring fact is that our ruling class don't want us any more. We no longer fulfil their purpose, which is to fill their pockets. So, like an old horse left to die without water, we are to be denied the nourishment of education. The trouble is, for our capitalist masters, there is life in the old horse yet, and out in the lush British countryside it is gathering strength for a mighty hard kick.

An East Anglian reader.

Teachers must step up fight for education

AT ITS last meeting before the summer break the executive committee of the NUT acting on a policy decision of the annual conference, established new criteria on which the union will support members who make a stand on the issue of oversize classes. The new limits are 30 in secondary schools, 32 in junior schools and 27 in classes where children are in their first year of statutory education. Teachers refusing to take classes in excess of these numbers will be supported by the union.

This is a great step forward in the struggle to protect education in Britain. The NUT has been fighting the cuts which have been taking place in the education sector for some time. Valiant action has taken place in several parts of the country. Avon, Oldham, Humberside Sutton and Oxfordshire are only some of the areas where teachers

and parents have resisted the efforts of the Government to cut back on the provision of education. The membership of the NUT is now being given the opportunity to raise the level of struggle from one of local skirmishes into that of a national battle.

Teachers must seize this opportunity. It is the duty of every teacher with a class in excess of the new limits to make use of the union machinery to get the matter resolved. It is well known that if all classes in Britain's schools were reduced to 30 then the extra teachers this would require would wipe out the high unemployment within teaching. No teachers should tolerate oversized classes in their schools. No parents should tolerate their children being taught in overcrowded classes. Fight for education. Fight for the future of Britain!



A picket line to save hospitals at the time of a meeting of the West Middlesex Area Health Committee. The fight for hospitals goes on. Andrew Wiard (Report).

Workers say 'No' to compulsory overtime

AFTER seven years with their productivity agreement, maintenance workers at Shell Oil Refinery at Shell Haven, Stanford-le-Hope, Essex, finally gave notice of termination of their agreement in line with the termination clause contained within it.

Although the workers put their trust in the Company when accepting the agreement, that trust was abused on its termination with the attempt to impose compulsory overtime. The Company, having reluctantly accepted notice of termination, have invoked the contract of employment and have told their employees that they must still comply with the conditions of the agreement. On Monday, August 1st, Company representatives detailed men to work extra hours for four evenings and the weekend for that week. When

the men refused this overtime, they were suspended without pay until further notice or until they were prepared to accept the overtime. Subsequently the rest of the maintenance force withdrew their labour, both in sympathy with their colleagues and also to avoid suspension themselves, or possible dismissal.

During the strike, a delegation was sent to picket Shell Centre at the South Bank in London and met higher personnel management. The strike ended on Wednesday, August 17th. A 24-hour picket was in operation and was highly successful. Morale among the workers was very high. While the strike was still on a settlement was negotiated for voluntary overtime and for the removal of suspension notices. Unity and determination had achieved success.

Letter : threat to village schools

Dear Editor,

You will have read in the capitalist press recently of the decision of Norfolk Education Committee to close the schools with fewer than 30 children. The same threat hangs over the heads of hundreds of other small village schools in East Angles.

The argument is that such schools are wasteful. It is more economical to sell them off - often as large private homes - and to bus the children to the nearest big town, with no regard for the loss to the community. Another false argument is that

village schools do not provide the same stimulus as larger schools. 'Children can't learn from each other,' said one official. Lack of teaching resources is also blamed. 'One teacher shouldn't be expected to cater for children from five to eleven and of all abilities.' How true! But penny-pinching Government dedication to the destruction of education can hardly be expected to remedy that situation!

It cannot be said either that the two-tier system (whereby 9 - 11 year-olds are sent to middle schools, thus rendering the vil-

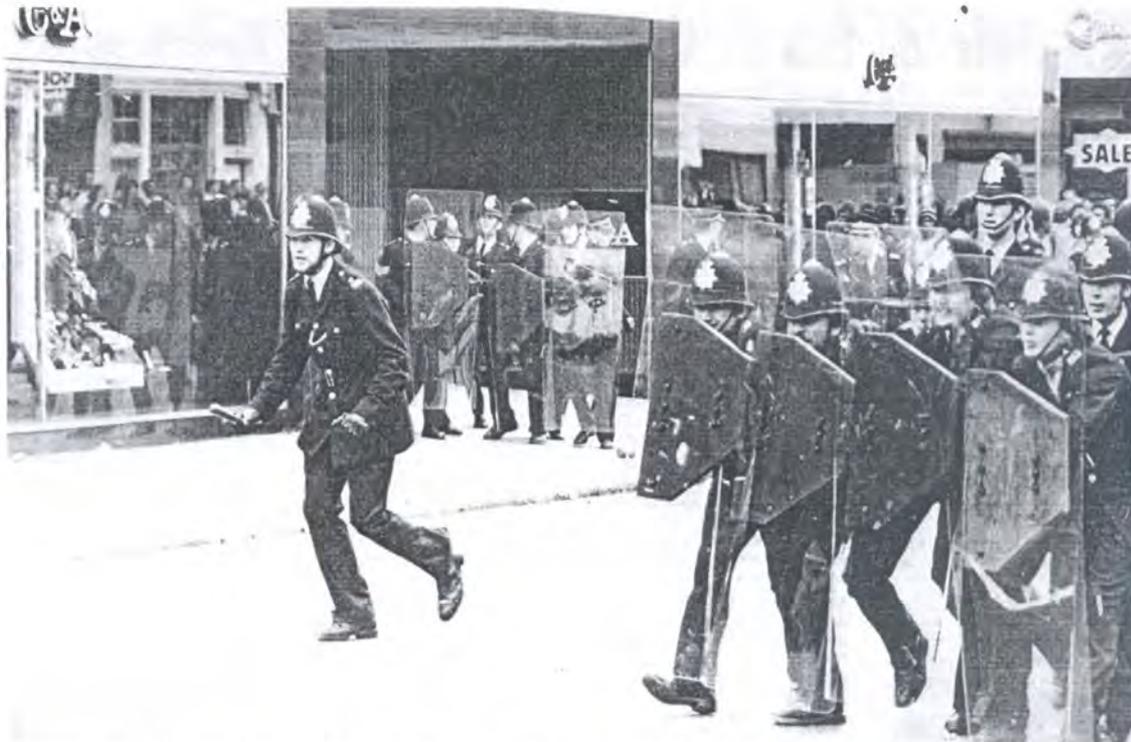
Government sponsored riots

IT IS ridiculous for the Labour Government to try to pretend that they are not ultimately responsible for the riots in Birmingham and Lewisham. It is like the absurd spectacle of Labour MP's and even members of the Government standing outside the gates of Grunwick and deploring, as though it were an act of God, the massed police picketing one little union-baiting manager.

The Government was prepared for one third of the Metropolitan Police force to be used to protect a wretched gathering of racists on a provocative march through Lewisham. The police made the most of their opportunity to try out new weapons of crowd-control, like the riot-shields first used by the British army in northern Ireland.

What purposes do these public circuses serve from the Government's point of view?

They provide a distraction from the real problems of mass unemployment, particularly among youth, and the crumbling destruction of our inner cities and divert people from joint action to do something about them. Lewisham and Birmingham are badly



Lewisham was the second occasion in a few weeks where the police were able to put tactics learned in northern Ireland into practice here in Britain. During the Grunwick picketing the use of the Special Patrol Group and the snatch squad were established as part of police action in industrial disputes. In Lewisham the use of riot-shields was established as a legitimate weapon to use against demonstrators. The riot-shields were issued to the police not as a contingency but as a vital part of the confrontation planned in advance by the police who were aided by "leftists".

Having shepherded the National Front marchers through side streets and safely into waiting trains, the police then turned their attention to the real business of the day. They charged into the counter-demonstrators with batons and horses to be met with missiles hurled from the derelict buildings round about. This was the signal to order the use of the riot-shields. A sight so familiar to us from newsreels of the streets of Belfast has successfully been imported to the streets of south London. Andrew Wiard (Report).



Eight years after the Labour Government ordered the troops into the streets of Belfast and Derry, the north of Ireland remains under British military occupation. Picture shows soldiers with riot shield attacking a crowd of young people in the Andersontown district of Belfast.

affected areas.

More important, they pave the way for legislation which can be used against the organised working class. Out of Grunwick come new laws on picketing to hamper workers in taking effective industrial action. The ban on certain marches that might come out of Lewisham can be used to prevent a protest march of indignant workers against the actions of capitalist government.

Most important of all, they accustom people to the idea of seeing the police armed and in large numbers for the purpose of intimidation. They give the police opportunities for testing new techniques for dealing with the civilian population - in line with Heath's warning that the danger for countries like Britain is not so much national wars as civil war.

Leyland workers reject management package

LONGBRIDGE shop stewards on behalf of 19,000 workers submitted their annual pay claim to the Leyland management to add £31 to the present basic pay of £65 a week. The claim was immediately attacked by the mass media as excessive and going beyond the Government guidelines which the workers say they do not recognise anyway.

The claim is submitted at a time when the Leyland management's attempt to streamline the pay negotiations procedures was rejected by a very large majority at a meeting of all Leyland's

shop stewards. Leyland had proposed a joint negotiating body which would cover every plant in Leyland. This attempt at the Americanisation of pay procedure was hoped to weaken the power of the shop stewards and the workers they represent by turning the struggle for wages into a once a year ceremony for which the employer can prepare in advance in terms of stocks, orders etc. No wonder the Government is prepared to bend its guidelines on wage restraint in order to have the scheme accepted by the workforce!

A royal message to Ireland

IT WAS inevitable that the Queen's Jubilee tour in Britain should end in a visit to the north of Ireland. This was the climax of the Jubilee year while everything else was just an empty farce. This outdated medieval symbol of the ruling class went to Ireland to announce the intention of British imperialism to retain that part of Ireland. More, it is a declaration to the world that Britain is and intends to remain a major colonial imperialist power.

It was imperative for British imperialism whose ambitions stretch deep into the five continents for world-wide exploitation to stage such a visit by its titular

head as a demonstration of its ability to retain its oldest colony.

The visit was stage managed to every last detail, including the children with the Union Jacks. It was characterised by increased oppression and harassment of the Irish people. Extra troops were drafted in with Belfast described as a city under siege. Boys were wounded and killed by trigger-happy nervous young soldiers prepared to shoot at anything that moved. Homes were broken into and searched with no apparent reason. That was the message of the Queen to the people of Northern Ireland on her silver jubilee.

PUBLIC MEETINGS

CAMBRIDGE
Tues, August 30th 8 p.m.

"What Future for Britain's Youth?"
Portland Arms, Cambridge

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