

# THE WORKER



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## THOUSANDS OF WORKERS TAKE UP FIREMEN'S BATON

THE firemen's nine weeks of struggle leaves the Labour Government policy on pay weakened and the firemen's union an example of the strength and discipline of British trade unionism.

Whatever the firemen were unable to win immediately, they have certainly gone back proud and united with their strength intact. The firemen have set a standard for the struggles that other workers will be conducting this year - thousands of workers will now take up the firemen's baton.

The gain made from any strike, even the most successful, is never the money involved, however necessary is the wage fight for survival under capitalism. The real gains are made when political understanding is advanced through class struggle. In this respect, the firemen return to work with much to discuss in their union branches.

They have accepted 10 per cent, another increase in November, and a "firm pledge" by the Government that their wages will be related to earnings of the top 25 per cent of skilled workers by November 1979; the working week will be reduced from 48 to 42 hours by autumn. Previously four enquiries in four years had recommended "a substantial increase", but to no avail. The strike, the longest one for years in the public sector, could well result in concrete advance but their battle will continue.

For the moment, the Government have got the firemen off their backs, but their treatment of the strike has been revealing. The halcyon days of armistice between the two classes, the period of 'social contract', have passed.

Already the next period suggests we could be without electricity or trains; a steel strike is possible following a derisory 6 per cent offer from the employer.

But we should not miss another lesson here, which springs from Government strategy, revealed by the firemen's strike. Namely, that the Government has dug its heels in against 'free collective bargaining'.

According to the Government, wage policy will continue indefinitely. Yet the Government allows no manoeuvre, even for its traditional supporters, supporters who have bent over backwards for it in a social contract. This carries a resounding lesson. If the party of gradualism and reform can, of necessity, no longer allow reform, then what alternative is the organised working class left with? Reform where possible, revolutionary development out of

necessity.

Let those who doubt this remember the Labour Government's use of the military during the firemen's strike; 20,000 servicemen were used as scabs. A possible power-workers' strike might well see a repeat performance. The Government is really now beginning to push its luck. Even the Daily Mirror, the Government's staunchest friend, has advised it similarly on this matter.

Doubtless, the Government

sees a victory over the firemen. If this is so, it is self-delusion; a pyrrhic victory, if that.

The firemen have made a very real impact; provisional figures estimate extra property loss during the strike at about £100m. There was generous popular support for their strike; Government's moral blackmail did not work. The firemen return convinced of the efficacy of the strike weapon they have used for the first time on a national scale.



Firemen's picket lines became a familiar sight during their 9-week strike.

### Knowing your friends, knowing your enemies

THE firemen's strike had as one of its consequences the forcing of the Government to reveal in advance its intention of maintaining a wages policy on a permanent basis in spite of the labour movement's decision to reject the social contract and return to collective bargaining. The offer of future pay rises to the firemen could only be made to seem attractive by describing them as exceptional to the Government's fixing of wages for years to come.

The firemen's strike also performed another service to the organised working class. When the TUC General Council voted on whether to support the FBU's challenge to the Government which was in line with the decision of the TUC Conference to return to collective bargaining,

only a tiny majority could be mustered in defence of the Labour Government's enforcement of guidelines. This close vote showed how organised workers taking industrial action against a Labour Government's attempts to impose wage restraints was changing the TUC from an organisation for rubber stamping Labour Government policy into a forum of trade unions serving the interests of their members.

Over the Christmas period Chancellor Healey stated unequivocally that the Government would maintain a strict pay policy on a permanent basis and quoted the West German practice on wage fixing as a model to follow. Prime Minister Callaghan supported this line, mentioning that the correct figure of wage limitation to follow the present one of 10 per cent

would be more like 5 per cent and hinted that there would be ways of seeing that the private sector abided by the same limits as those sectors of the economy under Government control.

The Chief Secretary to the Treasury and the Transport Secretary quickly weighed in with their own versions of permanent wage restraint saying that 'the time had come to stop thinking of incomes policy as a temporary expedient and to accept it as a necessary component of economic management and social planning.'

All this talk about Government wage-fixing being an aspect of what the Healeys and Callaghans mean by 'socialism' brought Margaret Thatcher into the fray saying that a future Tory Government would 'restore to the trade unions their proper role by introducing free collective bargaining.' The reason she gave for this stand was the old Tory charge that the unions were becoming too strong and threatening 'democracy'. If the trade unions

### More join wages fight

THE trade union movement, having disposed of the social contract in 1977 enters the new year with growing confidence in implementing the decision to return to collective bargaining.

The reassertion of the fundamental purpose of trade unions - improvement of wages and conditions - is being pressed in the face of Government resistance. The struggles which are taking place around this issue are crucial for the future of the British working class - for the future of Britain.

Politically these struggles are in direct conflict with the whole philosophy of the Labour Government - social democracy. It is in learning to fight social democracy that our class will make its greatest gains, because this fight means learning to be self-reliant, learning to safeguard the autonomy of our unions.

Many workers have already set their own guidelines and are moving into action on them. The teachers are pressing for 12½ per cent all round. British Petroleum tanker drivers have rejected a productivity deal and, unperturbed by the fact that their employer is the state, expect to involve 10,000 drivers from all the big petrol companies in their action in support of a 30 per cent claim. There is already talk of flying in British army drivers as strike breakers.

The Confederation of Engineering and Shipbuilding workers at Yarrows have launched an overtime ban for a 50 per cent claim, though they have confused the issue somewhat by calling it a demand for parity with Govan and attempting to settle it through the Fair Wages Arbitration Committee.

The power workers will undoubtedly flex their industrial muscle over their claim for 30 per cent. Overall the trade union movement has learned that no distinction is to be made between Labour and Tory in their class war.

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# HISTORIC NOTES The Eight Hours Movement

THE 1880's were not easy years for workers. True, prices were falling because of the 'great depression' but the employers' attack was all the more vicious. Numbers out of work soared; trade union membership fell and those remaining found it difficult enough to resist rounds of wage cuts never mind fight for improvements. Bloody riots of unemployed workers which shook London in 1886 were not an expression of strength but of despair.

The gas workers' struggle for an eight hour day was one of those struggles which lifts the pall of demoralisation and inspires others to get organised. On the 31st March 1889 a dozen workers came off an 18 hour shift at the Beekton Gas Works, and met at a temperance bar, 144 Barking Road. They had had enough of their average 12 hour day. They decided to form a union and demand 8 hours instead. This was unthinkable! Not only were their demands totally 'unrealisable' but it was common knowledge that the unskilled, unorganised could do nothing in the face of the employer. Their bold call and their determination however were an inspiration.

In August, the newly-formed 'Gasworkers and General Labourers Union' (Now the GEMWU) put its demand for an 8 hour day to their employers... who caved in within a few days! The shock waves spread far and wide, not least to the equally disorganised and oppressed dockers, who that month struck as one man for their 'tanner'.

The success of the gas workers struggle did not come from a new whizz-kid organiser, clever

tactics or whatever - it came from the ideas that lay behind the demand. For the first time in a number of years the specific aim was that of improving the workers' lot, and not merely defending it. Gone was any hint of a defensive, cap-in-hand approach which sought to 'justify' itself in the employers' eye (like the cry today, just recently heard - 'but we need more money to get to work', how servile can you get!) It was a straightforward, honest demand for a better life - not for mere survival. 'to make ends meet' in a life of non-stop drudgery - but life, worth living.

As one pamphlet of the time put it, "The demand we, as workmen, now make is for LEISURE, NOT IDLENESS." With low wages and long hours it pointed out the workers "must vegetate like the plants. At times he yearns for concerts, theatres, for light-hearted joviality: would be delighted to be well dressed and have his wife and children well dressed, would even like a fortnight's holiday... ah! but he has no money and might as well wish himself Lord of Manor as wish to ever gratify his simple, legitimate tastes."

Perhaps those who fought then understood better than we do today that it is only capitalism that reduces all such issues - education, culture, music, even life itself - down to a question of 'economics', how much money? Equally, if we wish to attain such crucially important parts of a dignified, fulfilling life, we must pursue the basic economic struggle to the end. This basic message of the 8-hour-day movement was its source of strength - as it is in our struggle today.

# Class war continues in the Middle East conflict

CLASS struggle will not disappear as a result of a hug and a kiss between Egyptian President, Sadat, and Israeli Prime Minister, Begin. The conflict in the Middle East is not and never has been between one state and another, one man and another. Class divisions in the world have for historic reasons manifested themselves in their most acute and manifold way in that most strategic and very wealthy part of the world.

Israel established on a Zionist racist ideology was created by imperialism, mainly British imperialism, as a base to control that region.

## Zionism - racism

Zionism is a particular counter-revolutionary current that emerged as a reaction to the process of assimilation of Jews in their respective nations which began to take place on a large scale in Europe and America during the late 19th Century. In general assimilation meant that Jews began to take full part in the revolutionary struggle of the masses of people. In order to drive the Jews away from the struggle of the masses in their respective countries and to secure for the Jewish bourgeoisie the exclusive exploitation of the Jewish masses, Zionism attempted to revive and revitalise Judaism, recreate and

strengthen Jewish sectarianism and called for a National Home for the Jews. The whole ideology of Zionism was thus based on racism.

Zionism made use of the persecution of Jews in Russia and Eastern Europe in the second half of the 19th Century as a proof that Jews cannot coexist with other races. Zionists never attempted to fight anti-semitism. On the contrary they welcomed it as "a movement useful to the Jewish character" (Herzl). Zionists and anti-semites share one important thing in common: both regard the Jews as peculiar - the first as superior, the second as inferior. But both consider them as unmixable with other races. In fact some of the main support that Zionism received in the early stages was from anti-semites. Herzl for instance used to write in the notorious anti-semitic magazine Parole Libre with full editorial support.

Realising that they could not succeed in their schemes by themselves, the Zionists attempted to get the sponsorship of the imperialist powers dominating the Middle East. First it was the Ottoman Empire, then during the First World War and after, Britain and France. All along, the Zionists made it very clear that their Jewish state in Palestine would be a foothold of imperialist aggression and domination of the

# People of Western Sahara resist French imperialism

WHILE Carter and Giscard d'Estaing were standing on a Normandy beach assuring each other that nobody would ever be allowed to challenge West European democracy, French aircraft were carrying out attacks against the Polisario liberation movement in the western Sahara.

The French Government tried to argue that any military intervention in the area was solely in connection with the protection of their own nationals, that well-known old plea of gun-boat diplomacy; but in fact the Polisario independence forces had already released the eight Frenchmen they had been holding as hostages before the air strikes against Polisario forces by French fighter planes began.

Polisario is the name for the guerrilla liberation force which has been fighting for some two years now to realise the independence of the people of the western Sahara which was granted on paper at the Agadir Summit in 1973 when Algeria, Morocco and Mauritania agreed to self-determination for that part of northern

Africa.

Morocco has set itself up as the great protector of Western capitalist interests in the area, including US bases, and has agreed with Mauritania on partitioning the area between them. Algeria has tried to keep to the spirit of the Agadir agreement by giving limited support to the Polisario movement.

The Polisario liberation movement has gained considerable success and has even carried out actions deep inside Morocco and Mauritania - sometimes with the help of the Moroccan and Mauritanian people themselves. On February 28th 1976 a provisional government was set up by the western Saharan people and some months later a constitution was adopted.

It is the success of the Polisario liberation movement which is attracting the attention of the French imperialists who, in addition to 'protecting their nationals', can claim that they are 'honouring their pledges' to the reactionary governments of Morocco and Mauritania.

# US deindustrialisation

THOSE old industrialised states of America are now following Britain and are being turned into industrial deserts. The capitalists are moving the factories down to the Southern States where labour is unorganised and cheaper, rents and rates are lower.

Massachusetts, perhaps the oldest industrialised state of America, is fast losing all of its

long-established skilled industries. An estimated 1000 jobs have been lost from the area this year and future prospects look bleak. But the working class is fighting back as many instances of strike action show. They are not prepared to see the rundown and destruction of their skills and communities while the capitalists make unprecedented profits.

Middle East and the whole of Asia. Britain officially incorporated the Zionist schemes within its imperialist policy on November 2, 1917, when the Balfour Declaration promised the Zionists a Jewish state in Palestine. This was the lease of life for Zionist colonisation of Palestine. Britain saw in Jewish immigration and Zionist settlement in Palestine a protection against the nationalist movement in Palestine and the Arab world as a whole.

## Israeli imperialism

The main objective of the Zionists, that of driving the Palestinian people out of their homes and off their land, was greatly encouraged by Britain, the mandatory government of Palestine.

The 1947-48 war and the creation of Israel were the result of a crude conspiracy hatched up by British and US imperialism. Britain was unable to contain the rising tide of the Arab people's struggle for liberation, and especially the Palestinian people's.

Not only was the creation of Israel a British-US plan, but Israel also is heavily subsidised by imperialism, especially US imperialism.

"The Near and Middle East remains of strategic significance to the United States because the area is a political, military and economic crossroads, and because the flow of Middle East oil is vital to the West. We, accordingly, have a large stake in the area's stability and steady development." (Robert McNamara, US Defence Secretary, 1967).

Palestine, the promised land has become a land of 'peace missions' - specially so since

# THE WEEK

THE Worker has been told of recent events in Iran.

In mid-November demonstrations erupted in support of the courageous stand of 56 prominent intellectuals and lawyers for the following four points: 1) the dismantling of SAVAK, the infamous secret police, 2) the dissolution of the present fake parliament (everyone must join the Shah's party or face imprisonment and torture), 3) the holding of free elections, and 4) the release of all political prisoners.

In Teheran alone, in response, 47 people were murdered on these demonstration, 16 of whom were students. Many more have gone missing, and it is estimated that up to 800 people have been arrested since November 15th.

One day the brave and brutally oppressed Iranian people will teach US President Carter and the Shah a thing or two about human rights.

THE firemen, faced by an intransigent Government, are having to wind up their strike for more money. Which only goes to show how 'free' is a period of free collective bargaining.

BY the end of the year transcendental meditators intend to have taught one per cent of the population of Hackney to meditate. This is supposedly the solution to Hackney's problems. "Poverty is not the prime cause of decay,"

A course of six lessons costs £60, with possible reductions.



Palestinian refugees driven from their homes on the west bank

no limit to the 'peace' missions and plans for the Middle East. There were the 'four power talks', UN resolutions, the Jarring mission, the Rogers proposals, the Kissinger shuttle and the Geneva conference to mention but the most prominent in the last ten years.

Though accepted by Arab and Israeli rulers, these 'peace' schemes came to nothing for they were rejected by the people.

Peace will come to the Middle East, not at the hands of gargantuan-politicians, bourgeois rulers and imperialists all competing and colluding in acts of aggression. Peace will come by revolution.

# Editorial

WHEN we see British troops being flown to Belize or Bermuda in an up-to-date version of gun-boat diplomacy, when the British Government's response to a request from the Irish Prime Minister to consider the eventual withdrawal of British troops from Ireland is to order "outsiders to keep out of British affairs", it is obvious that British imperialism is still a force in the world, still capable of exploiting and oppressing working people abroad as well as at home.

Capitalism by its very nature develops into imperialism; and imperialism can never cease from being expansively aggressive. It may enter into new combinations, as when British imperialism joins forces with French and German imperialism to support each other in the exploitation of respective parts of the globe inherited from the past, (like German penetration of countries in South America). It may keep up old alliances, as when British imperialism joins with US imperialism to seek political solutions in southern Africa, as mutually beneficial to themselves as they are alien to the interests of the people. It tries to substitute wherever possible indirect, neo-colonial exploitation for direct colonial exploitation, as is the case throughout the Indian sub-continent where Callaghan's patronising tribute to Indian culture is a small price to pay for the enormous returns from British investments in that area.

As imperialism spreads outwards like a banyan tree, the industrial root in the soil from which it originally sprung begins to rot away. For a considerable time it can go on looking like a healthy capitalist growth - just as the huge profits of the City, the banks and certain multi-national corporations might conceal the canker at the heart of British industry. But the imperialist tree, no matter how deformed and tortuous its development, will never die away of its own accord. We have to take an axe to it.

It is the working class of Britain potentially armed with that axe which makes British capitalism turn against the British nation itself. The integrity and strength of the nation is the working people and to weaken and disarm the people, British capitalism seeks to merge the nation in imperialist combines like the EEC or to dismember the nation by devolution. Capitalism in its imperialist phase is not so much international as antinational - both at home and abroad.

While socialism is a very stable and progressive system that can develop self-reliantly within a nation's natural boundaries, capitalism is a highly unstable system that must constantly expand, taking in new areas and peoples for exploitation and threatening any possibility of world peace. Imperialism can be defeated and destroyed but it can never be tamed. That is why Mao Tseung described it as "ferocious", meaning that "its nature will never change, that the imperialists will never lay down their butchers' knives, that they will never become Buddhas, till their doom."

The so-called "three worlds" theory is simply the latest attempt of opportunists to "prettify" imperialism for their own selfish ends.

In attacking British capitalism the working class of Britain strikes at one of the main trunks of that tangled, stifling, poisonous growth of world capitalism and helps to clear an area which will be part of the socialist world where people not profits thrive.

## Pay to borrow?

CUTS in public library services, so long starved of funds, have reduced them to a mere skeleton in many areas. Empty shelves and locked doors have become a familiar feature of the already decaying Carnegie buildings.

The cuts are part of the attack on our class also manifest in the cuts to education, health and welfare services. By its creation of the public libraries the British working class led the world in establishing the right of workers to have access to knowledge and the fruits of civilisation. That right and that victory was sealed by an excellent piece of legislation, the 1964 Public Libraries and Museums Act which made the provision of a comprehensive library service, free to all, compulsory upon all authorities.

But the Act has never been adequately implemented due to lack of funds. Now there is talk about bringing in charges, which would undermine the very first principle of a public library. Already a number of authorities have taken advantage of a loophole in the Act to introduce charges for the loan of sound recordings. Public Lending Right, supported by both Labour and Tory parties, is becoming another stick with which to beat the public library, which alone among libraries is singled out to pay the authors (albeit central government in the first instance would provide

the funds). If brought in, this could signal the return to private and subscription libraries.

Who is going to take up the struggle to defend the public libraries? Certainly librarians, who stand to lose their jobs, must play a part - as they have already begun to do, for example, in opposing the cuts imposed in Buckinghamshire. But in the end it is only the class who created them that can save them.

## Dockers subdued

LAST August the Queen opened the Royal Portbury Dock near Bristol. Since then no ship has entered it. Even the huge crane specially built for it had to be landed at Avonmouth and transported by road at vast expense to the new dock. Dockers at Avonmouth have banned all work at the new site until pay is settled.

Pressure on the Docks Board with their new super-dock standing idle was increased in the autumn with a 5-week series of disputes.

The claim was for more than 100 per cent to bring Avonmouth up to the national average for dockworkers. However, this week the 1200 dockers accepted a 10 per cent increase on the basic rate and the principle of a 'self-financing productivity deal'.

The productivity deal is a way of reducing manning levels and increasing flexibility which not only means destroying skills but also, inevitably, unemployment.



Albanian children like these are provided with care and education at all ages.

## Pay to play

THE TUC will publish a report on the educational resources for children under the age of five. It concentrates both on facilities for the sadly-lacking public service and also on the privately run playgroups. Its findings are a damning indictment of the capitalist attitude to pre-school education.

In the early 1960's, as more and more mothers were forced to find jobs to supplement the family income, the state nursery schools became more and more squeezed - and with this pressure on the system being totally ignored by the state, private pre-school playgroups grew from 500 to a massive 13,600

within 10 years.

ILEA today is the most 'fortunate' area in the country with 28 per cent of its under-fives having to attend private playgroups, whilst 44 per cent are in state nurseries or primary education. Outside London, this figure is even less favourable. In Essex, for example, the reverse is the case, with only 14.7 per cent in state schools and 35 per cent in playgroups.

Mothers are increasingly pressed to go back to work and have no choice but to place their children where they can - and this is generally not in the state system. To be forced to pay up to 40p per session to a group which makes no pretence at offering any teaching in the basic skills but are only as their

name suggests - 'playgroups' is nothing less than criminal.

As the NUT said in its recent report on the under-fives, 'the right educational start will not be achieved by second best or stop gap measures'. These playgroups are filling an important gap which should be filled by a properly regulated and professionally equipped state service.

Will this system ever stop cutting back on those areas which are of paramount importance to the working class of this country? No - until capitalism is completely destroyed and we who truly care about human life are in control, we all must suffer second or third best from the moment of our birth to the moment of our death.

immediate financial gain to avoid embarrassment to a Labour Government? The money will most certainly not increase as the employers set the targets for productivity even higher as time passes and public interest has waned - that will mean men working even harder for the same extra money per week, what then? Another national ballot, another farce, another step back for the miners who will have lost much and gained nothing. However attractive the local schemes seem at present, they go against the very spirit of the miners themselves. Small examples so far have shown how divisive these schemes are - it should not be necessary for more lives to be lost (the death rate has fallen dramatically since the NPLA in 1971) before the miners of Britain realise the consequences of their own actions.

The main question is one of class struggle - our class must never be divided when it can unite - our unity is our revolutionary strength. As a class, we will deal with wrongs within our class through our own organisation - the trade union movement - and through this determine our future. The working class will never obtain justice in a bourgeois court and the judges in Britain should never be given the opportunity to interpret our union rule books - we are the only true custodians of justice in Britain.

The miners in Britain must return to the machinery of the union and use it; stick to policies, democratically decided, which uphold this unity so proudly fought for in the past.

## Autonomy not 'productivity'

WHAT is to be the future for the NUM? This is the fundamental question now facing all miners in this country and the answer to the confusion and crisis of authority within its ranks lies with the members themselves.

Amidst this confusion, the employers are thriving. The miners are now being asked to 'save' the industry as they have been asked to do so before.

Between 1965 and 1971, 229 pits were closed down. The miners accepted the case, however reluctantly, that the old methods had to go; that unproductive pits had to close. Many miners were made redundant from more than one pit within a short period of time. The miners also accepted automation into their shrinking industry which took away jobs. Power loaders which both cut and load the coal are at work at most faces now; armoured conveyors carry the coal to the shaft; hydraulic supports which advance as the face advances replace the old system of pit props. From being a skilled manual worker the miner is now a skilled technician.

The cooperation to 'save' the industry went even further - in 1966 the NUM agreed to operate the National Power Loading Agreement (NPLA) which replaced district bargaining with a national award - something the miners had long wanted and fought for - but which meant some men had to accept a cut in pay. It also brought a levelling out of wages between

the face workers and the other men in the pits. At that time feeling was such that the miners who lost pay recognised the justice of fairer sharing, but it did not alter the fact that when the NPLA was fully implemented at the end of 1971 some men had to go home with slimmer wage packets. All these changes had the full cooperation of the workers and at the same time productivity figures had soared. Getting rid of the divisive local productivity schemes had brought about tremendous unity and strength to the NUM which manifested itself in their fight for a rise in their basic wage in 1974. No one could accuse the British miner of not playing his part to try and 'save' the industry.

It must be realised that under capitalism such efforts will never be rewarded and we as a class must learn that there is no future for any industry under anything other than socialism. The incentive schemes are a political device for deflecting the fight for wages. The miners must now show, through resolutions and through actions, that conference decisions are sovereign and that their refusal to accept productivity schemes was a principled decision. At their conference the miners overwhelmingly passed a resolution demanding £135 per week for face workers. Is it now adequate for these same workers to work that much harder in more hazardous conditions for small

## End of BBC suspensions

AT a mass meeting on 13th January, members of the Association of Broadcasting Staff, while rejecting the proposal for an immediate one day strike, voted to support whatever industrial action the executive might call in answer to the suspension of BBC television engineering staff by BBC management.

This determination by ABS members to resist intimidation by the management has resulted in the withdrawing of suspension notices for 500 ABS members.

The dispute grew out of a demand by engineering staff for recognition in terms of pay for working a new television studio involving additional technological responsibilities. Receiving no satisfaction from management, the engineering staff refused to work extra hours according to a local agreement going back to 1970. Management retaliated by suspending 21 staff members. The ABS executive then instructed mem-

bers not to complete their shifts and this meant the cancellation of a number of live programmes over and above the late-night programmes which had been blanked out by the refusal to work extra hours.

The background to the dispute is the rigid adherence of BBC management to the Government's incomes policy which has resulted in anomalies and injustices in the pay structure both internally and in comparison with similar outside bodies like commercial television. It is not possible to rectify these injustices while keeping within the Government's guidelines. The Government is also using the power of fixing the licence fees on a hand to mouth basis to exert control over public service broadcasting. As long as BBC management acts as a stooge of Government policy, like the local authorities dealing with the firemen, it will increasingly alienate BBC staff.

## Safari Park workers to tame management

THE owners of the Windsor Safari Park continue to use the law of the jungle against their own workforce.

The keepers and trainers had joined the T & GWU in order to improve their working conditions which involve long hours, low pay and tied accommodation. After revealing details of their situation to the local press several members of the Dolphinarium staff were declared redundant - they just happened to be the Union organisers, of course. When these members were threatened with eviction the T & GWU sought a court order and took the matter before a Tribunal. As the legal proceedings were dragged out, the number of union members was whittled down by pressure from the employers.

As befits a company that deals with animals the accommodation offered to workers is hardly fit for human habitation, with whole families sharing toilets, washing and cooking facilities. The conditions were so disgusting that when the local press were being shown round, one jour-

## Wages fight

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she said "were denied the right to bargain for their members, they would seek to be involved in political decisions." In truth, of course, trade unions which cease to bargain for their members cease to have any power at all.

But however silly her reason for supporting collective bargaining, it led to an exchange in the House which exposed the Labour Government's bad faith over this issue. Michael Foot, Lord President of the Council, who has often expressed his opposition to a statutory pay policy was challenged by a 'left wing' Labour MP to admit that he must be on Margaret Thatcher's side rather than Healey's or Callaghan's. Foot took refuge in

analogue was sick on the spot. As the ultimate owners of the Safari Park just happen to be Trident Television the workers have received no coverage from the so-called Independent Television News.

During the lock-out the Dolphinarium staff were offered contracts to work in the Arabian Gulf yet in a fine example to all who would uproot themselves to work for the highest bidder, they rejected the offer. This proletarian morality was of course matched by the opposite from the employers who had proposed to give the animals less food during the winter because fewer people visited the park and profits were lower.

The locked-out workers have concentrated their efforts on the most effective time, with pickets being mounted on Sundays and an extra special effort made on Boxing Day with support from fellow workers alerted by the Reading Trades Council. They have learned to rely on their own strength and on the solidarity of the class.

the Government's dishonest position of having an incomes policy which it was prepared to enforce by fair means or foul but not making it statutory. Foot could thus reiterate his opposition to a legal wages policy while asserting his loyalty to the Government.

The lesson of all this for us is not, of course, that we look to Foot and the Labour 'left' to champion us against rigid wage restraint and we certainly cannot look to Margaret Thatcher and a return of Tory 'freedom'. They are all our enemies and seek only in this way or that to deliver us bound hand and foot to the merciless exploitation of capitalists. Under capitalism the state can never be other than the enemy of workers. Our only friends are ourselves, organised in our respective unions.

## Taylor out : skill in!

THE Taylor Report on the government of schools is a serious threat to skill and to education.

The report recommends that every school should have a governing body with control over its aims, curriculum, finance, discipline, in practice over all aspects of the school's life. This governing body would have numerically equal representation from four groups: the local education authority, the parents (possibly including a pupil representative), the school

staff (including non-teaching staff) and local interests.

To argue only about the size of the teachers' representation, disgracefully low as it is, would be to miss the point. It is not enough for teachers to "take part" in the body that runs the schools. The teachers are the only people skilled and experienced enough to do the job - to run the schools, organise the curriculum, carry out the discipline. Teachers wouldn't tell the school cook how to cook the dinner, or the secretary how to type. They don't go into the local factory or hospital and tell the workers there what to do. Likewise teachers must defend their right to practise their profession without interference by

unskilled lay bodies.

There are those who welcome Taylor with the defeatist argument: "I have no power anyway, the head has all the power, at least Taylor recommends that the head shall be required to consult with the staff." This argument is naive and dangerous. Teachers in this country have considerable freedom of methods, attitude, curriculum, within the confines imposed. As for those who cannot appreciate these freedoms so dear to most teachers, they must fight not to relinquish power into the hands of external bodies, but to keep it at least within the schools.

As for local interests, we hear enough that industry has the right to expect schools to produce the goods, seldom that children coming out of school, having achieved an education, have a right to expect a job. The appropriateness of any other "local interest" interfering in school affairs is very dubious.

Certainly parental interests are not best served by this report for their concern is what best serves their child.

Taylor aims to take education out of the hands of those who are alone able to provide it, and who are best able to defend it, a sinister aim considering the state's massive economic and propaganda attacks on education today. The National Union of Teachers has opposed it; it is up to all teachers to fight against its implementation.



Britain's teachers have traditionally defended their freedom in the classroom. (Picture from Mansell)

## IN BRIEF

THE House of Commons is shocked by the "revelation" that MP's have no opportunity to debate (never mind control) any of the 125 items on the budget. Mr. Edward du Cann, Chairman of the 'Public Accounts Committee' says: "This is the way the Executive treat this British Parliament. That is the contempt they show for us. It is shocking that here we have an administration system not subject to national parliamentary procedure of any kind... Taxpayers and Members of Parliament should control the Executive. This we don't have in this House. Parties have far too much power to allow us to do that. We have an all powerful Executive - an elected dictatorship."

It's taken them a long time to click hasn't it?

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ECHO from the past: "... in a free nation, where slaves are not allowed of, the surest wealth consists in a multitude of laborious poor; for besides, that they are the never failing nursery of fleets and armies, without them there could be no enjoyment, and no product of any country could be valuable. We make society happy and people easier under the meanest of circumstances, it is requisite that great numbers of them should be ignorant as well as poor; knowledge both enlarges and multiplies our desires, and the fewer things a man wishes for, the more easily his necessities may be supplied."

That was written in 1728, but it aptly describes the Labour Government of the 1970's.

"MY personal preference is that permanent peace can best be maintained if there is not a fairly radical new independent nation in the heart of the Middle Eastern Area." - President Carter in the arrogant manner, reminiscent of the colonial powers of the 19th century.

NALGO's national negotiators have submitted a claim for a substantial increase in the London allowance. Details of the claim are a rise of £153 to £588 (35 per cent increase) for the inner allowance and a rise of £78 to £297 (19 per cent) for the outer allowance, payable from 1st July 1977.

## Books, pamphlets

Bellman Bookshop, 155 Fortess Road, London NW 5

## PUBLIC MEETINGS

WORKER readers are invited to the CPB(ML)'s new series of London meetings, listed below. The meetings will take place on Friday evenings at 7:30 pm at Bellman Bookshop, 155 Fortess Road, Tufnell Park, London NW5.

Friday, January 20	The Spirit of Stalingrad
Friday, January 27	The Worst Employer in Britain
Friday, February 3	Morality in Politics
Friday, February 10	organised by the New Albania Society
Friday, February 17	EEC & Devolution: Two-pronged Attack on Britain
Friday, February 24	What is a Marxist-Leninist Party?
Friday, March 3	Down with Phase Four
Friday, March 10	The Politics of Economic Struggle
Friday, March 17	James Connolly, the First British Marxist

NEW ALBANIA SOCIETY EXHIBITION

"ALBANIA TODAY"

Town Gate Theatre, Basildon,  
Saturday 28 January 1978 - Saturday 11th February 1978  
10.30 am to 8 pm

Organised by Basildon Branch of New Albania Society.

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