

THE WORKER



Published by the Communist Party of Britain (Marxist - Leninist)

No 22 June 22nd 1978 5p

TORTURE UNDER BRITISH OCCUPATION



In THE WORKER of September 1969 the despatch of British troops to Ireland by the Labour Government was soundly condemned. "We must be absolutely clear about British Imperialism as operated by the Labour Government. We call for the smashing of the whole fascist apparatus of the Northern Ireland Government, but not in order for Northern Ireland to be brought under the direct control of Westminster. These British troops are simply the 1969 version of the Black and Tans. Out with them."

Immigrants struggle for full rights as citizens

A LARGE meeting of East Londoners condemned the GLC policy announced this week of creating Bangladeshi immigrant concentrations on certain housing estates there. The policy is hypocritical and sinister, and must be condemned by all workers, as it was at that meeting.

It will certainly provide no protection against attack upon the immigrants, but simply create bigger and better targets. Far more important, however, is its sinister aim, which is to achieve segregation, allowing capitalism to divide and rule workers, and prevent integration of the immigrant workers into the British working class, which is their only salvation.

Emigration is usually a kind of escapism which workers can ill afford. Far from banishing their struggle for a living against a rapacious

enemy, it renders that struggle more difficult. Since workers' only effective weapon is organisation and collective strength, the immigrant must quickly learn all about that and become a part of it so as not to be isolated and plucked off. He must integrate, despite all difficulties arising from language, custom and so forth, just to survive.

The immigrant gives up any right to appeal to his abandoned, against his adopted, country. Likewise the abandoned country loses any right to or over him. No Chinese government has the right to intervene on behalf of 'overseas Chinese' any more than French and Belgians to send troops to Zaire on the pretext of rescuing Europeans there. Otherwise national sovereignty has no meaning and the mighty can everywhere meddle and trample the small with impunity.

BRITISH Imperialism is again in the dock for coercing and torturing the people of Ireland. Beatings and the use of psychologically and physically exhausting procedures by the Royal Ulster Constabulary against political suspects in Northern Ireland between 1975 and 1977 were exposed by an Amnesty International report published on June 13.

On a visit to Northern Ireland between November 28 and December 6 last year, an Amnesty mission examined allegations of mistreatment of 78 people and found that often the charges were amply corroborated by medical evidence. Some had been beaten about the head, others made to stand at a wall for long periods, and the ill-treatment included wrist-bending, choking, sleep deprivation, hooding and one case of being burnt with a cigarette. Women complained of having their skirts lifted and other humiliating treatment. The Amnesty report

demands a public inquiry into these grave charges. The Secretary of State for Northern Ireland has flatly rejected this demand and has offered instead to set up a 'private independent committee of inquiry into police practice and procedure'. That means, of course, that the Government is not even going to look into the cases of torture and ill treatment and will let the 'private committee' sweep the whole thing under the carpet.

The National Council for Civil Liberties said: "Once again the United Kingdom Government has been found

responsible for serious ill treatment of suspects in Northern Ireland and to have laid itself open to further complaints to the European Human Rights Commission." Civil rights leaders in Northern Ireland have called for the repeal of the Prevention of Terrorism Act and the Emergency Provisions Act.

What all decent people must demand is the immediate withdrawal of British troops from Ireland where they have no right whatsoever to be. With the troops out there will be an end to hundreds of years of British imperialism's dominating interference; the divide and rule line between north and south will be rubbed out and the people of a united Ireland can solve their problems on their own.

The cretinism of a Parliament of warmongers

ON JUNE 5th there was a major debate in the House of Commons on Africa and the danger of world war arising out of imperialist conflicts there.

In the entire debate not one voice was raised in the whole House for letting the people of Africa solve their own problems, for ending the imperialist interference in Africa which has torn that Continent to shreds for over a hundred years. Not one voice was raised for peace not war.

The following week in an exchange on the economy not one voice was raised in the whole House recognising the

right of the organised working class to collective bargaining - even though the party of the Government calls itself Labour. Not one voice was raised in defence of the social services won by workers over years of struggle, nor for the preservation of Britain's industrial base.

It is one of the contradictions of capitalist rule in Britain that on the one hand it wants to preserve the illusion of 'parliamentary democracy', of a sovereign body in which representatives of the people debate great issues of the day. Hence the broadcasting of Parliamentary sessions -

which has rather backfired in revealing the childish behaviour of these government pensioners. On the other hand, British capitalism in decline is forced to dispense with the House of Commons, more and more creating extra-parliamentary corporatist bodies like the NEB, the MSC, NEDC and others. The 'sovereignty of Parliament' is further showed up as a sham by Britain's entry into the Common Market with the acceptance of an overriding European Assembly accountable to no one. What's left will be still further diminished by the divisions of devolution.

Only an idiot could think that socialism could ever be achieved by passing a few laws in this politically bankrupt body. Indeed, so discredited is Parliament as a democratic forum that the Government has had to devise new forms of 'industrial democracy' to try and deceive workers - the phoney workers' participation schemes which are designed to make workers think that they are under-paying and sacking themselves!

But at the same time as these empty debates were taking place in the House of Commons there was a public meeting on 'The Bankruptcy of Parliament'

organised by the Communist Party of Britain (Marxist-Leninist). There it was said: "The fact is that 'democratic capitalism' is a contradiction in terms and the bourgeois state only exists because the conflict between workers and capitalists is irreconcilable. By turning our eyes and attention to Parliament we neglect the real force for socialism - the organisation and ideological strength of the working class, and the real cause of social evils - the continued exploitation of that class by capitalism. Only under socialism can there be real working class democracy."

HISTORIC NOTES

The Friendly Societies

A NINETEENTH Century writer, talking about the British working class, wrote that the strongest emotion among them was "... a universal determination to provide for themselves in sickness and in health, from the cradle to the grave and, at all costs, to keep out of the clutches of the hated Poor Law and to escape the ultimate brand of shame, resort to the workhouse in old age."

It was this desire for independence and self-respect that led workers early in the Nineteenth Century to establish Friendly Societies. These consisted of groups of men and women who clubbed together to pay weekly contributions into a fund, from which they received money if ill or unemployed, and which provided a level of support in old-age, finally paying the funeral expenses on death.

In the days before the Welfare State such funds were the only means by which the working class could escape the horrifying grip of total poverty. The Nineteenth Century saw terrible housing conditions, lack of cheap essentials, and appallingly long hours of work in bad conditions for low wages. These were the background for the radical working class movements of the time.

Friendly societies provided for

a need that went far beyond mere survival. They were the means by which the working class maintained their independence and pride. They were not thrust upon them by any other class but were an outgrowth of working class morality and social independence, a specific response to poverty and the indignities associated with it.

Their emphasis was on collective organisation in the face of poverty. They offered a way not only to overcome poverty, but also charity, a way in which they could achieve independence of the State, the Poor Law and the Workhouse.

With many principles in common with Trade Unions and with the same working class culture and collective identity, Friendly Societies provided the basic organisation from which many Trade Unions developed and in which many Trade Union leaders were trained. Their aims were often directly in opposition to the bourgeois state.

Throughout the Nineteenth Century Friendly Societies provided for workers a form of insurance, and organisation. This enabled us in the Twentieth Century to fight for better welfare provision. This, however, is rapidly being destroyed and the choice that we are now faced with is, either a future like our past; or revolutionary change.

Disarmament

RECENT speeches by Albanian leaders stress the sham of disarmament:

"When they have to do with the preservation of the nuclear monopoly or their superiority in other kinds of armaments and to deceive and intimidate the peoples, the USA and the Soviet Union find their common language and announce the talks on disarmament and detente are going well. When they need to justify the increase of their war arsenals, they do not hesitate to accuse each other of 'sabotaging the

process of disarmament' and each one of them loudly proclaims that it will never allow its interests to be impaired and the balance of arms to be infringed to its detriment."

And Enver Hoxha has stated:

"When you are determined to live free and stand ready to fight, then the blackmail is knocked back, strength is revived, the people's courage mounts, and it is difficult for the aggressor to attack. The peoples should not fall into fatalism, become passive observers and be caught unawares. They must be prepared for the worst and fight to prevent it from occurring."

Fascism attempts to return in Portugal

COMRADES in Portugal have sent us news of the re-emergence of fascism after the populist upsurge four years ago. Lacking a socialist base politically or economically, the left-wing has been fighting the old enemy which was never annihilated but merely shifted to the wings.

The flabby social democratic government of Soares makes Callaghan look quite progressive. While it goes begging for foreign invest-

ments, it permits the police to give aid and encouragement to fascists. A few days back two young men were killed during an anti-fascist demonstration by fascist hoodlums. One was a member of the youth-wing of the Communist Party of Portugal (R) and the other belonged to a progressive broad front, the UDP.

Instead of arresting the murderers the police, quite illegally, entered the UDP premises and arres-

China - Vietnam relations

THE Chinese minority in Vietnam, called the Hwa people, have lived in peace and amity with their Vietnamese brethren for generations. Many are descendants of Chinese people who fled Manchu persecution two hundred years ago while others are more recent refugees from Kuomintang and Japanese persecution. Indeed, during the second war and after, people living on both sides of the Sino-Vietnam border often joined forces against common oppressors and provided sanctuary for each other.

After the establishment of a socialist government in the northern part of Vietnam an agreement was reached in 1955 between the communist parties of both countries, that the Hwa people should be integrated politically as much as socially by becoming Vietnamese citizens. By 1961 the Chinese Embassy in Hanoi had stopped issuing passports to members of the Chinese minority who had become Vietnamese nationals. Then as now they were freely allowed to visit their families in China and returned to their own homes. So liberal has been the Vietnamese treatment of the Hwa people that in the north they were allowed to retain their petty businesses. During the bitter war of freedom against US imperialism many Hwa people fought and died for Vietnam. Today there are Hwa people in all spheres of the party, government and armed forces. Their position has not caused any problems nationally or internationally.

There were always more Hwa people living in the southern part of the country though in actual numbers they are a mere 2 per cent of the population. Among the Chinese minority of the south were several comprador bourgeois elements whose class allegiance, like that of their Vietnamese confreres, was hundred per cent with the US imperialists. They looted and killed along with their masters until the day of reckoning. When in 1975 the liberation forces won and the Americans and their

puppets took to their heels the Chinese compradors should have been the first victims of mob frenzy had the Vietnamese been, as they are now alleged to be, communalists and chauvinists. Yet surprisingly scarcely any vendetta or vengeance was expressed against the Chinese compradors who were subjected to the same treatment as the Vietnamese reactionaries. Those who could be were rehabilitated while the others were punished according to their crimes.

The building of socialism in war-devastated Vietnam has been developing despite a multitude of obstacles not the least of which, inevitably, have been created by the defeated bourgeoisie. Today when after three years since victory and a great deal of patient re-education and change, the government is poised to expand socialism in the south, it has to confiscate and expropriate the business ventures and ill-gotten gains of blackmarketeers, speculators, and the like. Such a fundamental socialist task for any socialist government has been described as a harassment of the Chinese minority by the Chinese Government!

What then has prompted so many Hwa people to leave Vietnam over the last few months? As it is not ill-treatment or harassment, except in the eyes of the bourgeoisie, one must see it as the result of a deliberate policy of rumour and scare-mongering. Ever since China's support for Kampuchea (Cambodia) in its border dispute with Vietnam, those who do not want socialism to succeed in Vietnam have been trying to frighten Hwa people into believing their lives will be at risk once war breaks out. Others have been led to believe that because of their economic dependence on Chinese compradors through debt and a chain of involvement, they will be left destitute once socialist collectivisation gathers momentum.

Relations between socialist countries were once based on proletarian fraternalism where neither size nor self-interest conditioned aid and support. Today when China terminates aid to a socialist neighbour while lavishing help on an imperialist puppet like Mobutu and when it insists on despatching its navy to bring back members of the Chinese minority one is reminded less of Lenin and more of Palmerston and others who have exploited the alleged plight of their nationals for reasons of state.

Says Marx ...

We have every right to ask: "Why is it that the capitalist system seems to have become incapable of producing the goods people need? How is it that all the economic experts seem unable to get things right?"

The answer to these two questions was given definitively by Marx: "The direct aim of capitalist production is not the production of goods, but the production of surplus product for capital."

If, because of the falling rate of profit and the increased bargaining power of the organised working class production ceases to be sufficiently profitable to suit the capitalist they have only one answer: destroy it - and the producers with it. Because, Marx adds, "the labourers themselves figure in this conception as what they actually are in capitalist production - only means of production: not an aim in themselves and not the aim of production."

THE WEEK

EGA STAYS OK. Such has been the pressure from the public and the trade union movement, that the decision to close it has been indefinitely postponed. Of course Ennals and the DHSS will continue to try to close it - the fight is far from over. Meanwhile Ennals' speech to the Royal College of Nursing - read out for him, as he did not personally attend - had such a bad reception, that he had to apologise for having it delivered.

AS HOSPITAL maintenance workers prepare to take action over a modest pay claim the Government is declaring that its approach will be no less callous than it was during the firemen's strike. The Social Services Secretary, Ennals, warned that the walkout would be 'catastrophic' and hinted that the Army could be called in again. Let the whole working class roar. "So why not pay a decent wage?"

ANYONE who thinks that the decline of capitalism does not affect them, and by not being militant they will keep their jobs, witness the closure of Sayers of Hull, a Haulage and Plant Hire firm.

The workers there did not resist a gradual rundown and loss of jobs thinking their own would be safe. But final closure came this month with the loss of the remaining 20 jobs.

BRITISH Petroleum is planning a £430 million invasion of European industry on the back of the wealth it has created from giant oil discoveries in the North Sea.

The Company - 51 per cent owned by the Government - simultaneously announced a series of take over deals which will extend its oil, gas, coal and chemicals interests through Europe.

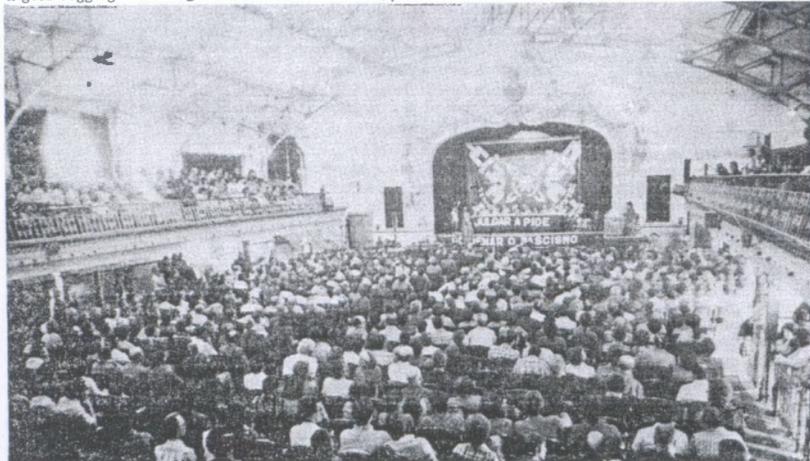
Combined they constitute the biggest acquisition move ever undertaken by a British company. British capitalism is still a major exploitative force in the world. BP itself is the eighth biggest company in the world league.

WHATEVER the eventual outcome of the 1978 World Cup it will not change Argentina and the political oppression of its people. Even should Argentina win, this will provide nothing but a diversion from their problems. The Argentinian people have a reputation for having a great capacity to enjoy themselves, yet today they are exhausted, silent and morose in the main. They have suffered much in the past, particularly so in the last two years of reactionary government, under General Videla.

TANZANIA's President Nyerere has denounced the Western-initiated Pan-African security force proposed by France. In an evident reference to the Mobutu regime he said: "We must reject the principle that external powers have the right to maintain in power African governments that are universally recognised to be corrupt or incompetent, or a bunch of murderers, when their people try to make a change."

HUNDREDS of people have been arrested in Soweto and other black townships in South Africa as part of police 'anti-crime' operations. This week saw the anniversary of the day large scale unrest erupted in black townships and eventually 618 lives were lost over a period of six months.

There is no future for the apartheid regime.



Mass meeting of Portuguese anti-fascists protest against crimes of the secret police.

EDITORIAL

MARX wrote in 1870 -

"Since 1793 the English government has taken advantage of any pretext to suspend the Habeas Corpus Act (which guarantees the liberty of the individual) regularly and periodically, in fact all laws, except that of brute force. In this way thousands of people have been arrested in Ireland on being suspected of Fenianism without ever having been tried, brought before a judge or court, or even charged. Not content with depriving them of their liberty, the English Government has had them tortured in the most savage way imaginable. . . . "Over a century later the situation has changed little.

The British Government was found guilty by the International Court of Human Rights of 'inhuman and degrading treatment' to Irish prisoners. The response at the time was that this over-zealous behaviour by the occupation forces had ceased. Now we have the Amnesty International report on torture. This report makes clear what has been obvious to people of the occupied six counties for some time, that torture is an integral part of British Imperialism's policy of coercion and terror in Ireland.

True to form the Government has acted to prevent the report being covered by the media. This is wholly consistent with the censorship that has been applied over recent years to cover up its criminal activities in Ireland. Can anyone claim to be shocked or surprised? Quite apart from the history of British rule in Ireland, this latest disclosure is just the most recent in a long catalogue of the British Governments' "overseas activities". The peoples of Cyprus, Malaya, Kenya and Aden, among others, experienced similar attention by the British Army.

Can anyone still deceive themselves into believing that British troops are acting in a "peace keeping" role in Northern Ireland? The British Army is not present to stand between two warring communities. It is there to exacerbate existing tensions and to promote greater sectarian strife, again consistent with its policy for other colonies. The greatest single factor contributing to the division in the six counties is the British Army. The greatest single contribution that can be made to peace is to withdraw that army.

In recent years the British Government has taken a number of "political initiatives" in regard to Northern Ireland, the conferences at Darlington and Sunningdale, the promotion of the "Peace movement" (remember that?) are among them. What has been glaringly obvious is that the only solution can be an Irish one. Again the precondition must be the withdrawal of the troops.

The British working class must not remain silent on this issue. To quote Marx again when speaking of our class - "for them the national emancipation of Ireland is no question of abstract justice or humanitarian sentiment, but the first condition of their own social emancipation". Our failure to take up this question does us no credit. Voices must be raised in the Trade Union movement condemning the torture, denouncing the Government and demanding the complete withdrawal of British troops. To do other is cowardice, to do nothing is complicity in the crimes of British Imperialism.

TECHNICIANS' LETTER

Dear Editor,

I have been reading your recent articles on the destruction of education with interest.

The situation facing university technicians is a case in point. We provide the technical know-how and expertise essential to university teaching and research. The drastic erosion of our salaries over recent years is being used to destroy our service.

In spite of high unemployment, skilled staff are steadily lost. Great difficulty is often experienced in recruiting suitably qualified staff because of the miserable salaries offered. Frequently vacant posts are 'absorbed' through redeployment. Jobs are lost, technical standards decline.

This is what 'natural wastage' means.

That this policy is to continue is revealed by the secretary for Education and Science speaking on the recurrent grant for next academic year: "The grant is calculated on the assumption that pay increases for all university staff are expected to rise between 6 to 10 per cent."

NALGO Conference: a step backwards

NALGO's annual conference in Brighton has voted for a further stage of pay policy. The conference accepted a White Paper which called for a "new approach" to wage bargaining.

The Presidential address congratulated NALGO on maintaining a Labour Government in power

Often colleagues complain we have no industrial muscle. This is wrong. Take the 1971 settlement, which is still used as a standard for our present claims. This was won after national industrial action.

On our own doorstep we have the recently threatened fight of the Association of University Teachers who succeeded in forcing the Government to honour a wage agreement.

What has held us back is a lack of confidence in our own abilities as trade unionists.

A big stride forward would be taken if we attended to our trade union responsibilities with but a fraction of the effort and skill which we put into our daily work.

Our negotiating committee at the recent ASTMS annual conference said: "The moment our members are willing to fight, the NEC will take up the challenge."

We should tell our NEC that we are ready for a fight.

Yours fraternally,
University technician,
Bradford.

and argued that free collective bargaining is incompatible with "modern economic management." Although the conference engaged in some sabre-rattling on the need to obtain a full ten per cent wage increase this year, NALGO showed that for the present, its seaboard is empty.



Delegates at the Annual Conference of the National Association of Teachers in Further and Higher Education vote in support of an interim claim for the merger of lecturing grades I and II. In support of the claim the National Executive has called for a campaign of action including one day strikes to go hand in hand with the negotiations.

NO FUTURE FOR MUSIC COLLEGES UNDER GOVERNMENT CONTROL

NO PLACE of work is left untouched by capitalism. Music is no exception.

Throughout Britain there are only 13 music colleges, 11 being in England, with Scotland and Wales having one each (both are half drama colleges). The five London colleges have produced the greatest number of musicians and, until recently, had a fair amount of independence.

All were founded in the last century, the Royal College of Music being 150 years old. The other institutions outside London are mergers of one form or another with other colleges.

The independence of the London colleges from state interference has cost them dearly over the years, with conditions nowhere near the standard they should be for such a demanding skill. For instance, Trinity College of Music has only about 40 practice rooms for nearly 400 students. It hasn't even a large hall for concerts, so that

choral and orchestral activities have to be held in outside venues.

Since 1975, Government tactics have changed. Three of the London Colleges (Royal Academy, Royal College and Trinity) have secured a grant from the DES. The other two colleges are still privately financed, the Guildhall School of Music and Drama by the City Corporation and London College (the smallest) by students' fees.

One proposed attack is the recent report "Training Musicians", from the Gulbenkian Foundation, Lisbon. Their first attack, entitled "Making Musicians" (1965) suggested merging the London colleges into one institution, with great reductions in teachers and students. This second report has tried not to appear so blatantly reactionary after the lack of support for the 1965 one, and is trying to portray cutbacks and the undermining of musical standards as the natural way of life. The committee of enquiry had only one professional

musician on it, with no music teachers at all.

The whole idea of the report is to "make a net saving wherever possible". This is a surefire way of lowering the standards and finally destroying this most creative of arts. The report also wants to control the whole music profession, firstly by deciding who goes into the colleges and then by who goes out of the colleges into the profession. This type of elitism has been fostered for too long.

Gordon Oakes, Minister of State at the DES, considers it an "excellent report" and says its recommendations will be "a feature of discussions with local education authorities, colleges and others for some time to come." When a statement like this is issued, it is time for workers involved in all aspects of the music profession to be on their guard and fight against any implementation of the proposals. The future of music in Britain is at risk.

Leyland - example not to follow

LEYLAND TOOLMAKERS last year stood for the AUEW's commitment to wage restraint. Yet they themselves, they said, had every right to demand a wage increase which by their stance they had denied their mates.

This year some of them take their splitist action to its logical conclusion. They are such an elite, such a special case, that they are too good for the AUEW. They threaten to resign from a union which, they say, will not

fight for them.

This refusal to act within the rules of one's union, for the collective good, has done nothing but harm. It is as if we are ourselves infected by the selfishness and egotism which is the ethos of capitalism in decline.

Why do some miners squabble over bonuses instead of demanding a decent wage for all? Why the petty sectional dispute merely for more money at the TIMES or the OBSERVER?

A true trade union dispute is never purely about money, about one's own welfare, but a fight for the collective good. It is above all against the united voice of the employing class, the Labour Government.

The Leyland toolmakers who want differentials just for themselves divert from this real struggle. Their action, if such it be, is the very antithesis to the unity and unselfishness of true trade union struggle.

UCATT Conference looks to future

THE 1978 conference of UCATT, the construction workers' main union, started with a report from the executive on the '78 wage claim. The management had offered £60 for craftsmen and £54 for labourers. But conference felt that now was not the time to strike as many unions had settled for 10 per cent.

A resolution on a claim for £2 an hour for craftsmen and £1 an hour for labourers, to be backed by industrial action, was passed.

For the first time a woman delegate spoke at the conference. She spoke on the question of equal pay. In the woodworking establishments that she spoke of women did not get the craft rate. She received a standing ovation and the resolution was passed unanimously.

The mood of the conference was quite different from that of '76 bi-annual conference. In '76 the delegates and the executive failed to agree on many issues, including

the social contract. This time conference backed a resolution for an end to wage restraint, with only a handful of dissenters.

The executive are committed to a programme of action against any further wage restraint and it is now up to the membership to respond. Feelings are now running high on this question. Construction workers are, increasingly, being disillusioned with the Labour Government and its restraint.

WORKER INTERVIEWS SOGAT defeat the Bank

VICTORY after a 5 week strike and a return to work on Monday at 9(the company paying from 8) - this was the decision of 500 SOGAT members in a mood of sunny confidence on June 16th.

The Bank has withdrawn dismissal notices, will co-operate fully with the Union and rescind penalties imposed on the strikers.

The strike has won important concessions, not over the closed shop as such, but over the Bank's attempts to hinder union organisation. "Now, we can go back and carry on building up inside." As a NATSOPA bystander commented, "They won a better deal than we have and we're a hundred per cent organised."

The unity and the spirit of real Trade Unionism in action was shown the day before when the WORKER interviewed pickets singing in the rain(literally) under their umbrellas outside the gates.

Question: Why is SOGAT in dispute?

Answer: Because Union members have been taken off certain jobs and non-union labour put in. This preference of non-union over union seems to be the Bank's policy.

Q: What are the issues?

A: It's the principle! Two years ago the Bank asked us all to join SOGAT. Even up to last week they were asking people to join. And then they sacked them two days later - along with 500 or so of us.

Q: Why are they doing this?

A: Because we joined the union. They thought if we joined we would just be card holders, not real union members. Now they don't like what they've got. Effectively, by dismissing us when we went out, they are attacking the right to strike itself, as well as the union.

Q: What are they doing?

A: They've tried to break our spirit. They've sacked us. By means which we're not clear about, money has been stopped to strikers from social security, as well as other entitlements such as tax rebates. For example the company still has our cards. People with mortgages with the Bank have been put under pressure. Anything to make life difficult.

Q: What will you do?

A: We're going to carry on fighting for the union and its principles. There are 500 of us, mostly women, out for 5 weeks for the first time. You don't get a thing like this for nothing.

Meeting outside the Bank of England printing works, Debden.



Hospital Electricians

A CONFERENCE of the London area EEPTU hospital electricians recently decided to strike in reply to the DHSS's refusal to pay the 1978 wage settlement due to them under a 1973 agreement. This guaranteed NHS electricians' parity with those outside. Latest news is that last minute talks with the Employment Secretary has led to postponing the strike, but a work-to-rule is to go ahead until the Executive Council can meet and decide on the new offer.

The following interview with the EEPTU district convenor for five S. London hospitals took place:

Q. What about claims that patients will suffer?

A. Since 1948 we've only once taken industrial action. We've always had very good relations with our hospital and district management. Our dispute is with the Ministry, and theirs is the responsibility. We've long resisted attempts by certain sections to get us to take unofficial action, and we've shown a lot of restraint.

Q. What do you hope to achieve by this action?

A. This is our trade and our union, where else do we go for a living? If we don't follow our union's instructions, how can we hold our head up? We will keep going till we win a satisfactory agreement.

Doctors and nurses in the South-East take action over cuts and unemployment

Dartford - is your bed gone?

BEARING this and other slogans, 100 nurses and other Dartford hospital workers, members of COHSE, marched through the town centre to alert the general public to health service cuts. The march marks a new stage in struggle for these workers who have tired of passing complaints through the official channels only to be ignored.

COHSE officials spoke at an open-air meeting, of wards being closed through a "shortage of nurses", a problem which could easily be solved, given that so many nurses are unemployed. They announced that understaffing was so serious in mental hospitals

that 4 nurses have been killed by patients in recent years. A sister in Greenwich, trying to stop a patient running away, had been injured and was now in hospital herself.

They hailed the example of their colleagues at Brookwood, who had taken over the hospital - a form of militant union action which avoided abandoning patients. The union is fighting the case of 8 workers suspended for continuing to refer patients to the Elizabeth Garrett Anderson hospital in defiance of their employers' instructions.

The 'redistribution' of funds

from London to other areas was condemned: London hospitals were losing, but 'underfunded' areas were not gaining a penny.

COHSE have already had some initial success in the Dartford hospitals, by planning a work-to-rule on staffing levels; the Health Authority was forced to hold a recruitment drive for nurses, with many applicants. The understanding must be fostered that health workers, like teachers, must set down their own standards of staffing and stick to them, in the face of government indifference to the standards of hospital care.

Greenwich strike against dilutees

THE FIRST strike by nurses at the Greenwich Hospital in South London began on June 10th, over the sacking of Miss, Jo Mills, a nurse with over thirty years experience. She had been sacked for refusing to train new theatre orderlies intended to replace fully trained nurses, for the eight operating theatres she has responsibility for.

There are many unemployed nurses who could be taken on at Greenwich, before resorting to dilutees for this life-

and-death work. The Labour Government's programme of expenditure cuts has brought about this situation, not only at Greenwich. Granada TV's recent 'World in Action' programme filmed for five days at Kings College Hospital, London, showed overworked nursing staff having to close the hospital to in-coming patients. There were questions in the House (aren't there always?) but it is answers, not questions, that are needed here.

Greenwich is a 700-bed 'showpiece' hospital and in keeping with the spirit of this, the entire theatre staff have added an unplanned act to the show. Thirty-two nurses are on strike from all the operating theatres, while the hospital staff as a whole have backed them, including a senior surgeon, who also intends to join the strike. The fightback against government sponsored decline in health standards is well under way and deserves support.

Common Market attempt to police Africa

THE NATURE of the EEC and the part that British imperialism plays within it is clearly revealed in recent events. The foreign ministers of the Nine have been meeting

Organisation of farm workers

WORKERS at Efford Experimental Horticultural Station in Hampshire, have staged a one day strike. This is to protest against the government imposing a 10 per cent limit on the 12-16 per cent rise negotiated by the National Union of Agricultural and Allied Workers. An overtime ban is also being considered. Farmworkers at Pershore College of Horticulture in Worcestershire are threatening to strike to highlight their grievances over pay and conditions which have been badly affected by the education cuts imposed on this small but important college.

Such action is a pointer to other farmworkers when pursuing their bold new pay policy, which demands £80 by 1979 and £100 by 1980. In the words of Bert Hazell, outgoing President of the NUAAW, "the constant use of slogans and exhortations from leaders of the Unions, while having to play a part, will not of themselves achieve the hoped for rewards. Only a high state of organisation can achieve these. . . . It is strength of membership within the industry which really counts."

to determine a policy on Africa.

A 'Code of Conduct' for European firms operating in Africa has been drawn up, supposedly designed to persuade South Africa to give up its racist policies. This has been conveniently postponed because South African support may be required to solve the 'problem' of Namibia. The kind of support the South African regime could provide shows the nature of the 'constitutional' settlement.

'Constitutional' means anything which leaves capital intact and strong. It is based on South African massacres of Africans both in South Africa and outside.

On the question of Zaire, Owen felt that the economic aid given to

Zaire should be 'monitorable'. He also suggested that the EEC should supply weapons and military training, to prop up a system which suits the interests of the EEC.

The French Government wants a European-backed force in Zaire to defend imperialist interests. The British foreign minister wants the African governments to do it for them: others say the UN.

No protest is made over South African presence and massacres in Namibia and Angola.

Whatever the supposed differences in policy, they have met to decide on a common line. We are still meant to believe that NATO and EEC have nothing to do with each other. What nonsense!

Bookshops

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- Main Trend Books, 17 Midland Road, St. Philips, Bristol
- Brighton Workers Bookshop, 37 Gloucester Road, Brighton
- Northern Star Bookshop, 18A Leighton Street, Leeds
- Basildon bookstall Tues Fri Sat Marketplace
- Liverpool bookstall - every Saturday at Paddies Market, Great Homer Street, Liverpool

You are invited to come to public meetings organised by the Communist Party of Britain (Marxist-Leninist). All meetings will be held at 7.30pm on Friday evenings at The Bellman Bookshop, June 23 "The Neutron Bomb - For Use in Europe?"

PUBLIC MEETING IN LIVERPOOL
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To be held at the AUEW, Mount Pleasant, Liverpool

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