



TORY PLAN FOR WAR ON WORKERS

NOBODY HAS any right to be shocked or surprised by the Tory Government's first budget. It is a savage and vicious attack on the standard of living and quality of life of the working class, coupled with a massive boost to the incomes of the idle employers and coupon-clippers who batten on the labour of others. It is open class warfare.

The promised tax cuts have come. A worker on the average industrial wage will receive less than £150 a year in cut tax. The "average" employer will receive in excess of ten times that. The unemployed will receive no tax cuts, for they have no wages; and on top of this comes 15 per cent Value Added Tax - a more "European" method of squeezing workers.

The employers tell us VAT is levied on non-essentials. Just what the employers consider non-essential is staggering; clothes are not essential, a telephone, electric fires, means of private transport, entertainment of any kind - none of these are essential. The working class is having its necessary level of subsistence defined for it.

No one needs an electronic calculator to work out that this switch from direct to indirect taxation means less money not more. But this is only half the attack. The rest is typified by the 125 per cent rise in National Health prescription charges (we are now to be penalised for being ill).

Public services bear the brunt of this attack on our quality of life. £440 million is to be cut from housing while mortgages and house prices go through the roof. £55 million is to be lopped from the education budget while classes are overflowing. Children must buy their own textbooks and tens of thousands more teachers are to be made unemployed. £170 million comes off job schemes never much more than a disguised attack on skill, they are now being cut as a declaration of intent to increase unemployment. All this amounts to two things: a drastic depression of the level of public services, and massive unemployment in the public sector.

But defence remains. Spending on the army and armaments is to go up by £100 million. Capitalism's only growth industry, in its

decline, is war.

The clamp-down on "scroungers" is next. First people are kicked out of work, then it is declared a crime to be unemployed. Those on the dole or on social security - a miserable pittance at the best of times - are to be interrogated and forced to work in sweatshops at the lowest wages. And there will be thousands, possibly millions more unemployed than there are now, for this "budget of opportunity" is about only oppression and unemployment.

But who expected anything else? We do not have this vicious government as a result of a coup d'etat, there was no sudden and illegal seizure of the reins of power. Those who gave the Tories this licence to destroy in the election will find that it is not easy to undo in struggle what was done at the polling booths. As the waves of struggle grow, we must not forget just how much we have strengthened the class enemy in the past few weeks by participating in the election.

The way ahead is clear. We fight, we fight for our jobs, for our industries, for our health and education, we fight for our standards of living, for our necessities. It is for us to decide what is a decent standard of living. These are rights we will never surrender. But in the months ahead we must remember that we are in a situation of our own making. Capitalism stands over us only to the extent which we permit, and we have permitted it for far too long.



Miners on the march at their annual Gala in Cardiff on June 9th. Their concern for saving their industry from destruction is firmly linked with their fights for wages and skills. Photo: The Worker.

Engineering workers prepare for action

THE NATIONAL Committee of the Amalgamated Union of Engineering Workers instructed the negotiators to go back to the Engineering Employers Federation and demand the current claim in full. So far the EEF have offered £68 in response to the full claim of £80. The National Committee instructed the Executive

council to prepare a national overtime ban and one day strikes if the EEF do not cough up.

In another part of the claim the National Committee instructed the negotiators to secure a shorter working week - one hour this year and further reductions to achieve 35 hours by 1982.

This week the Confederation of Shipbuilding and Engineering Unions meets to consider the attitude of other unions to the lead taken by the AUEW. They will do well to follow it.

Now it is up to the members to make the employers feel the urgency of settling this claim.

Fight for jobs and for wages

THIS WEEK the Government announced a review of staffing levels in the Civil Service which may result in the axe for 150,000 jobs. Similar reviews are expected in local government and for the National Health Service.

We have often said in THE WORKER that the capitalist class and its governments have been pursuing a 'burnt earth' policy in Britain. Nowhere is this more evident than with this attack on public sector employment. Under the guises of 'less government' and 'efficiency' the Government has plans to destroy the public services; jobs which serve the community both at national and local

levels.

We must not be diverted by attempts to involve us in rationalisation programmes or debates on the 'usefulness' or otherwise of some of these jobs. These are issues for discussion when we decide what shall be, under socialism. At present the loss of any job is a loss for our class.

A recent official circular in the Civil Service was quite blatant in saying that the wages increases recently won by civil servants necessitated consequent staffing cuts, initially to be in the form of a ban on recruitment and a freeze on promotions so as to maintain the existing cash limits. The civil service unions have responded with an overtime ban, but that is only the first step. They are still discussing a co-ordinated plan of action to fight the present and likely future attacks.

In a similar vein NALGO's Conference in Blackpool last week showed a new resolve to protect public services and jobs. The Conference agreed overwhelmingly to give support to branches taking industrial action to protect jobs and to fight attacks on public services.

NALGO has also effectively abandoned its support of wage restraint in favour of free collective bargaining. This was achieved by all motions on pay being withdrawn from the agenda rather than by a principled decision.

The fight for jobs must be seen together with the fight for wages. The Government wishes us to trade wages for jobs, the ultimate productivity deal! We must not allow the fight for one to exclude, or be to the detriment of, the other. They are the same fight, for survival!

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The Week

WILKINSON SWORD at Cramlington have announced 200 redundancies, due to market slump! The redundancies will be followed by "reorganisation and restructuring" to "improve cost effectiveness."

THE DERELICTION of Battersea increased early this month when a dawn blitz demolished the Battersea wall (a 4000 square foot, 180-foot-long mural along the site of the closed-down Morgan Crucible factory painted by a community artist with 60 local volunteers). It depicted Battersea community life and its fight against those attempting to destroy it.

The wall was laid waste secretly and illegally at night by the Morgan Crucible Company as support for defending the threatened wall was growing rapidly. It was a local landmark that brightened up a corrugated-iron wasteland. Its destruction stunned local people. Passing motorists stopped in amazement. Workers at the bus garage opposite were upset, one commenting: "We all thought it was a beautiful picture. Now it's a complete eyesore."

A lady whose dull bus journey to work had been enlivened by the mural, remarked sadly: "How can such irresponsible destruction be allowed?"

The wall has now been replaced by a wire fence, while security men with dogs patrol the derelict factory behind to protect the rotting site. Who are the real vandals?

THE ASSOCIATION of First Division Civil Servants, who recently took the unprecedented step of joining in the one-day civil service stoppage, has instructed the Executive at their annual conference to call for such further industrial action as they think may be necessary. This is in order to reach settlement on the outstanding cases of senior principles and assistant secretaries. A move to restrict the Executives right to call for action was defeated by the conference.

THE CHANCELLOR'S assurances of no further cuts in the health service are entirely false. The health district that serves part of Bristol, Weston-Super-Mare, estimates that the rise in the rate of Value Added Tax will add up to £400,000 to its VAT bill this year. The money will have to come from existing funds as there will be no extra finance from the Government to cover the increased expenditure.

THE TORY Government has proved our contention that wages do not cause inflation, but that inflation is a weapon used against the working class's standard of living. The Government has announced, as part of their anti-working class economic policy, that they intend for inflation to go up to 17½ per cent by November, and have taken the right budgetary steps to see that it happens.

ROTHMANS, who have set themselves up in part of the closed Courtauld's textiles factory in Spennymoor, Co Durham, have advertised for staff to fill 700-800 jobs. More than 6000 applications were received. 4-5000 from the Durham area! The factory did employ 1600.



The standard of health care in Vietnam is very high. Children are given regular health care. They are given the opportunity to grow up healthy and happy in a socialist country. Rather than have their children grow up in this way the 'boat people' subject their children to the appalling hazards of the open seas.

Tube workers postpone strike but still prepared to fight on

THE FORTHCOMING total stoppage of the London Underground has been postponed for one week. This is to facilitate further negotiations with the employer under the auspices of an ad hoc wages committee proposed by ACAS.

This course of action has been agreed by the major union involved, the NUR, following indications that ASLEF and TSSA favoured such talks. The agreement was reached on the unions' terms, namely that the negotiations began before the strike was due to take place and that the findings are

produced by June 21st. Although only the three rail unions are involved in the negotiations, the outcome will affect all other unions on the underground system who have joined with the NUR claim. At a mass meeting of the Allied Craft Unions a motion to give full support to the strike of the running side was overwhelmingly carried. The general feeling at the meeting was not that two or three pounds would be the answer to all problems but that it would be unprincipled and impermissible to allow other workers to fight for the wages of those present.

Profits on flour soar

ONE of the first principled decisions of the new government was to give the go-ahead for 2p on our daily bread; because the bakeries "aren't making any profit". A little white lie to go with our little white bread?

To understand the pretended lack of profits in the baking industry is not difficult. The big two, Rank-Hovis-McDougall and Associated

ceased by RHM, ABF and Spillers French (who were bought up last year). In 1969 ABF employed 38,000 people. By 1969 this was down to 29, 239. Similarly in the four years between 1971 and 1975, RHM reduced their labour force from 39, 312 to 33, 826.

Meanwhile, their return on capital soared, as the table shows:

Return on capital employed (per cent) over three years 1972-74.

	Flour Milling	Bread Baking
ABF	40.0	1.0
RHM	21.4	7.6
SF	17.3	LOSS

British Foods (who control over 60 per cent of the British bread market) do not intend to make their money this way. They make their money from their stranglehold on the milling and flour industries.

By 1921 the milling industry was so far advanced in Britain that our flour was being processed by only 300 mills. By 1975 there were 96 left, 80 per cent of our flour was being pro-

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Vietnam slandered

THE BRITISH Government, in collaboration with the governments of the US and China, is guilty of spreading lies about Vietnam in connection with the exodus of the 'boat people'. All stories about the Vietnamese authorities expelling the Hoa people, the people mainly of Chinese descent who have been living in Vietnam all their lives, by 'racist coercion' or, worse, of profiting from the export of human beings are bare-faced slanders.

The real source of the flight of these people must be found in the US's aggressive war against Vietnam. During the American occupation of the southern part of the country many members of the Hoa community, mostly small shop keepers and merchants, were involved in making easy money catering for demoralised US soldiers. These people have not been able to adapt to the hard but fair conditions of a liberated Vietnam building a new society after the ravages of thirty years of war. Such is their hatred of socialism that they put the lives of their own children at risk in taking to the sea in leaky boats; not to go to China to rejoin relatives or seek a familiar environment but to go to the US or to France or Britain or, if that is not possible, to Hong Kong or Malaya, or anywhere else where there is the freedom of the fast buck.

The problem has been exacerbated by a China which is very different from the China which once gave all support to the struggle of the Vietnamese people against imperialism. This China does everything it can to provoke

flight among these people to create trouble for Vietnam, and then spreads lies about it. China does not want to receive these people itself and sends most of those who cross the frontier off to Hong Kong; though, of course, some of these who had lived all their lives along the northern border areas of Vietnam were useful as guides and spies when China invaded Vietnam.

The Vietnamese Foreign Ministry has again explained its position in a note on June 14 to the British Foreign and Commonwealth Office. The Socialist Republic of Vietnam is cooperating fully with the United Nations High Commission for refugees in finding a solution to the problem and expresses its sympathy with other Southeast-Asian countries in which Vietnamese refugees have illegally landed. The Government of Vietnam has declared its willingness to allow these people who wish to leave the country to re-unite with their families, or to earn their living in some other country, to do so.

The note of the Vietnamese Foreign Ministry draws attention to the fabrications, distortions and slanders of the British authorities in London and Hong Kong in refusing to acknowledge the humane policy of the Government of Vietnam in respect of those people who want to leave Vietnam. Lies about Vietnam are no new departure for the British Government. They were a staple part of the propaganda diet throughout the whole period of the US war against the Vietnamese, a war which the British Government fully supported.

Such a decision must have come as a shock to an employer who has rarely been faced with such a united work force.

If the employers should have the idea that support for the strike will wain after a week's delay they had better think again. As a result of their recent reduction of the bonus that accounts for nearly a third of earnings, their refusal to pay holiday money for already booked holidays, their withdrawal

of free travel which is a condition of employment of those striking, and of the bottlenecks in production which have arisen as a result of their failure to attract skilled labour, they have not earned themselves any sympathy.

The strike is still definitely on. If we can win our claim without loss of earnings we will, but if "being up the tracks" is the tactics that must be used, it will be.

Air safety short cut

AROUND 500 people have been killed by McDonnell Douglas DC-10 airliner crashes, many at Paris two years ago, 272 in the recent Chicago disaster. It is difficult to believe, in this age of sophisticated technology, that an engine simply fell off to cause the crash. Yet so it did.

Like the Boeing 727 before it, this is a case of a plane being rushed into service without adequate prototype testing. In the interests of quick development and cornering the market, prototype testing was replaced with simulation testing by computer.

In beating the rival Lockheed Tristar off the production lines, McDonnell Douglas has sold 277 DC-10s to 41 airlines, with 100 more on order for delivery by 1982, and already accounts for one fifth of the world's total airline capacity. But it is the only major jet air-

liner to lose its FAA certificate of airworthiness in recent times. To make a profit 400 of these planes must be sold, they say. Hence their reluctance to admit the possibility that the aircraft was unsafe after the Paris crash, and even now after the recent tragedy.

And so the pattern of aircraft crashes goes on repeating itself. A few days later, NATO's latest warplane, the Tornado, crashed into the Irish Sea, with the loss of its crew of two. This was only one week after the ceremonial inauguration of the plane. A joint development of the British, German and Italian war establishments, each plane costs £5 million, for which you could build two or three schools, not to speak of the huge development costs. Are we to consider ourselves lucky that the crash of this low-flying aircraft did not occur, as so often, over land and buildings?

Editorial

The Tory budget confirms, if confirmation were needed, that we now have one of the most vicious, trade union-bashing, anti-working class governments this country has seen for many decades. It makes no effort to conceal its intention of making Britain a land fit for rich capitalists - and no one else. Furthermore it blatantly arms itself against resistance by strengthening the police and ancillary forces at home, and by welding Britain more tightly into NATO, monopoly-capitalism's iron bastion.

Do we, then, in the words of one would-be spokesman for the Labour movement, "even though critical of Labour's performance in office, fight for the return of a Labour government as soon as possible?" We do not. We fight this Tory government, yes - tooth and nail. It has declared war on us, the working class, and as we have had to do so many times in our history, we take up the shield of class unity and the weapon of industrial might to fight for survival and for a country our children can find a place in.

But by no means do we seek the return of a Labour government. The reason a Tory government can do the savage things to us it is doing is because we tolerate the capitalist system that breeds such creatures and sets them over us. Seeking the return of a Labour government is simply another way of tolerating that system. One of the main architects of the Tory victory was the last Labour Government. To seek its return is also to seek the return of the Tory government to come after that.

Same mistakes

Nothing suits capitalism better than an endless succession of Labour and Tory governments administering the system in their respective ways. That is what happens if we are so politically backward as to be alienated from a Labour government without being alienated from the capitalist system it represents. Then, having had our noses thoroughly rubbed in our mistake by a Tory government, we prepare to make the same mistake all over again by seeking the return of yet another Labour government.

Some of you may ask, since your Party was the only one urging workers not to vote in the Parliamentary elections, were you not, in fact, calling for a Tory victory yourselves? By no means! We also urged workers not to vote in the elections to a European Assembly and millions of them did not, thus showing that it was not a question of whether they were represented in the EEC by Labour or Tory but of getting out of the EEC altogether. So in Parliamentary elections it is not a question of being represented in Westminster by Labour or Tory but of getting out of capitalism altogether.

No confidence in EEC

The ludicrously low vote in the European Assembly elections was a vote of no confidence in the EEC and has to be followed by our class's fight to take us right out of a political cartel that serves no interests but those of our class enemy. A ludicrously low vote in a Parliamentary election would be a vote of no confidence in capitalism and would have to be backed up by the fight to take Britain right out of capitalism and into socialism.

The police, which the Tory government is strengthening, serve a Labour government as faithfully. The danger of war from having NATO bases on British soil is as real whether a Labour government is simply letting those bases proliferate or a Tory government is openly encouraging them to. The top people, capitalism's most faithful servitors, whom this budget favours in the most flagrant way, are not all Tories. The Marshes, the Roben's, the George Browns may have started Labour and turned Tory, just as others have started Tory and turned Labour. It does not matter.

'To hell with the lot of them!' Let's get rid of capitalism and sweep all its rubbish into history's ash bin.

Armchair theories no substitute Action the best answer to cuts

ANY INDUSTRY you choose to look at will be hit to some extent by cutback, rundown, or closure. On Merseyside, we see these events perhaps more frequently than elsewhere. There is of course the danger of regarding Merseyside as a special case, whereas it is our whole class that is a special case, if anything. A strange breed of chauvinism takes root with some workers using the 'hard hit' picture of Merseyside to make out that they are in some way better than workers elsewhere, because they are being battered more by their bosses!

A theory has been put forward that Merseyside is used as an example, because if bosses get away with closures in a traditionally militant area, they will have an easy ride elsewhere.

Whether or not there is a grain of truth in such a theory, the point is that this becomes yet another attempt to explain what is happening without doing much about curing the cause.

That Dunlop workers had a go gives some encouragement. They have lost nothing by trying, but gained experience and managed to salvage something, albeit for only six months. Sections of Plessey workers struggled, and their job loss was reduced. That there is no substitute for struggle is the message we must carry to any armchair socialists who would just observe, and console, and invent phoney theories to excuse what must be done! The more our bosses turn the screw, the more urgent our need to get rid of them - to survive.

Hackney to cut health

THE LONDON Borough of Hackney is dying. If current proposals are implemented there will be only one acute and general hospital serving the entire borough and that, the Hackney Hospital, has suffered awful cutbacks.

The Area Health Authority has heard that this will be the effect of the restriction in public spending and the result of the cash limits imposed by the rules laid down by the Resources Allocation Working Party.

The problem runs beyond current funding problems, however. Hackney, once alive with the cabinet making and boot and shoe trades, a centre for light manufacturing, is now an industrial desert.

As investment went abroad, factories closed and local unemployment rose. Very quickly, the proportion of older people in the borough grew and with it, the pressing need for facilities for geriatric care. The campaigns to prevent the closure of hospitals in the area and the conversion of acute beds to long stay recognised the need but also the fact that closures and changes would never be reversed. Regeneration of the borough could never happen because the necessary services had gone. Besides that, caring for the elderly in buildings that were not intended for that purpose is not acceptable.

That fear has become fact. Now

there are plans to close six secondary schools in Hackney. The names of the schools are so much a part of the life of the borough - Brooke House, Woodberry Down, South Hackney, Edith Cavell - that residents are hard put to think what, if anything, will be left of the borough's education.

Some could be tempted to join those that have been forced out of the area to find work, simply to give up. Most will stay on and fight. Everyone, from parent and child, through teacher, nurse and doctor, to members of the Area Health Authority, is preparing for that fight, knowing that no one can secure health and education in the borough on their behalf.

Pig farming attacked

ANOTHER SECTION of British agriculture is under attack from the EEC Common Agricultural Policy. Since joining the EEC the pig industry has declined 16 per cent while imports of bacon have increased from 10,000 tonnes in 1974 to 50,000 tonnes this year.

The closure of three large bacon factories, Lawsons of Dye and two of the Fatstock Marketing Corporation's factories, Harris of Calne and Brierly Hill, which are mainly owned by the National Farmers Union, point to the future. The closure of the Stirling factory, with 3 or 4 of the remaining 10 FMC factories sharing the same fate, is on the cards. FMC slaughters, processes

and distributes over a quarter of the British bacon market.

The monetary compensatory system compensates the exporting country to the detriment of the importer's agriculture, acting in such a way as ultimately to reduce the productive capacity of the importer. Its own agricultural prices are undercut, resulting in closure and lost productive capacity.

Since Britain's entry into the EEC, our agricultural industry (once the most productive in Europe) is gradually dropping back. All this at the expense of the British and European working class. The EEC really is a disaster for all workers.

DAVID SIBEKO, member of the Central Committee and the Presidential Council of the Pan Africanist Congress, was assassinated in Dar es Salaam on June 12th, presumably by agents of South Africa's apartheid regime who had threatened his life before.

David Sibeko was PAC Director of Foreign Affairs and the permanent representative at the UN. After escaping from South Africa where he was arrested and accused of wanting to overthrow the state by violent means, David Sibeko became well known in many parts of the world as a campaigner for Azanian liberation. He is survived by four children and his wife.

Machines threat to postal workers

COMMUNICATION workers are facing immense changes, not only here in Britain but throughout the world. Already Japanese, Canadian and US postal workers are feeling the effects of greater mechanisation.

Japanese postal workers are struggling to maintain jobs in the face of the introduction of new machinery. Recently a four man team from the British Post Office, headed by the Managing Director (Posts), made a tour of Japan, Canada and the USA with the object of examining letter sorting mechanisation generally, and optical character recognition (postal codes) in particular.

Their report presents to British postal workers a view of the changes facing them in the near future. Many new techniques in postal mechanisation have already been introduced into Britain, for example coding machinery, segregators, and automatic letter sorting and franking. What the industry now faces is machinery that can process up to 20 times the present work load of existing equipment, along with new machinery to handle sorting, facing and cancelling vastly superior to anything in use at present.

A central factor in the movement towards mechanisation is

that existing equipment is used more efficiently, and, in particular, that coding is used more effectively. The Post Office will shortly be mounting a campaign in the Press and TV in an attempt to educate the public and in particular the business world (80 per cent of postal business) to use postal codes. Standardisation of letter sizes may follow.

What does mechanisation mean to the workers in the industry? Quite simply it means fewer people to handle the work. We should, however, insist that its introduction means better working conditions, a more varied working day, shorter hours and more wages.



Postal workers demonstrating during their wage fight in 1972.



Photo: John Sturrock (Report)

SEVERAL THOUSAND members of the National Union of Teachers and other trade unionists paid tribute on Wednesday 13th June to Blair Peach, killed while peacefully demonstrating against the National Front at Southall in April.

The marchers went from Phoenix School, where Blair Peach taught, to the East London Cemetery.

In recognition of the iniquity of this killing, and following the request of the Inner London Teachers' (NUT), the Inner London Education Authority took the unprecedented step of giving paid leave of absence for one teacher from each of its schools to attend the funeral. Many other NUT Associations sent representatives.

The National Union of Teachers in successive Conferences has decided to campaign actively against racism, and Blair Peach, a past President of the East London NUT, was closely associated with the Union's activity in this direction.

The Executive of the NUT, along with the TUC, has called for a full public enquiry into the circumstances of Peach's death. All trade unionists should lend their voice to this demand. The pathologist's report that a lead-weighted rubber cosh or a hosepipe filled with lead caused the fatal injury to Blair Peach leads irresistibly to the conclusion that this death was not accidental. It is also reported that a member of the Special Patrol Group has been held in custody. But no one can be certain about the degree of police responsibility until there is a public enquiry as the TUC has demanded.

The life and tragic death of Blair Peach, a campaigner for the ideals of the trade union movement, will not be forgotten. Neither will we forget the attacks by the police on workers peacefully protesting on the streets of our country.

IN BRIEF/Home News

THE DUKE of Edinburgh, aristocratic spokesman of capitalism, recently said that he thinks comprehensive education is partly to blame for the declining behaviour of some children. He had been told that "some classes become jungles".

Did he reach his conclusion

after consultation with some of the teachers of these children, who could tell him otherwise? Of course not!

He came out with this rubbish after lunch at Claridges, one of London's poshest hotels. What better example could there be of the divide between those who work in our schools and those who merely talk about them?

Negative Bingo at the PO

"PHONE NOW - pay later... much later". That is the slogan of SCPS (Society of Civil and Public Servants) members working for the Post Office. A Labour MP recently described the Post Office as conducting a "novel experiment in industrial relations". The workers-on-the-board scheme has had such a remarkable effect in improving conditions that the Post Office has been in dispute with six unions this year.

To add insult to injury a massive profit of between £360 and £370 million has been announced for 1978-79. Last year £360 million was declared but the real figure was estimated by union researchers at up to £1000 million. The name of the game for the Post Office is profits first - its workers come nowhere.

The wage offer to unions still in dispute is 9 per cent plus 3½ per cent for some as part of a grade restructuring scheme, another amount

being offered for restructuring in July 1980. Any offer for next July must be regarded as almost meaningless, since another year is certain to bring another attempt to cut wages.

This year's offer is a wage cut for SCPS, POEU, CPSA, and POMSA members given the projected rate of inflation. A similar settlement has been imposed on senior staff. (When it pleases the Post Office to talk of "status" these grades are "senior" - when it comes to paying money they turn out to be ordinary wage-workers after all).

SCPS and CPSA (Civil and Public Servants Association) members have been taking action since April. Their last April settlement date arrived with no offer from Post Office negotiators - it seems they had forgotten that any claim had been lodged for this year. A strike of about 450 members of the two unions has paralysed telephone billing and disrupted

other projects. The strategy has been to cause most damage at least cost; while strikers' wages are paid through a levy and strike fund, the Post Office is losing up to £100 million a week in 'phone revenue.

The outcome of the clerical section's dispute will be important to the POEU (Post Office Engineers Union) which is itself threatening action for July. Meanwhile POMSA (the Post Office Management Staffs Association) staged a one-day strike on June 14th with more action to come. 18,700 members shut down 75 per cent of Post Office counters and 45 per cent of sorting offices. Once again the management's offer falls more than 10 per cent short of the claim. Are management playing negative bingo - the final result an empty house?

A breakthrough on any front now will be a significant gain for all. A start has been made with so many saying no to another year of wage cuts.

Customising the airports

BRITISH AIRWAYS is planning to increase "productivity" and "throughput", i.e. profits, by doing away with ground hostesses, baggage handlers, ticket clerks and other airport ancillary workers, and introducing self-service.

BA's commercial operations director said recently at the World Airports conference in London that airports should develop "the cheapest source of labour available to them - their customers."

Plans are in hand to implement "radical solutions" to the problem of declining profits due to increased fuel costs and increasing numbers of low-fare passengers. The radical solution is to do away with wages. Airline passengers are to become slaves, working for nothing. Machines will accept bookings, take money, issue tickets and check luggage on and off planes.

Full-fare businessmen

will still be able to get personalised service but others are to help themselves. A case of "you pays your money and you gets no choice".

Airport workers will no doubt be on their mettle to defend this logical extension of less money for more work no money and all the work - and to protect their jobs. All areas of industry are threatened by automation; all areas must fight for its acceptance on our terms and no other.

COHSE conference to grasp the nettle

IT IS CLEAR from some of the resolutions on the agenda of the Confederation of Health Service Employees 1979

Conference that this winter's struggle has brought much to the surface. On the positive side several motions recognise that there can be no contract or "concordat" with the government, and that the Tories will do their utmost to handcuff us, restricting our right to strike. It is clear also that there will be no respite from struggle. The much-lauded comparability studies are not a guarantee of a decent wage, only our efforts win that for us. This government will be as determined as any other to attack the living standards of healthworkers. It was our action that helped to achieve a successful pay claim and Conference must recognise the advance this represents. The joining together of the four unions in cooperation, COHSE, NUPE, TGWU and GMWU, brought problems but these were outweighed by the strength and unity created.

In looking to the future there are many blind alleys for COHSE to beware of, for example the question of private medicine. It is not "pay beds", which cause

much annoyance, that are the main danger, but the direct attacks on the funding of the NHS. Private medicine is a corollary of a weak and disintegrating NHS, and we should unleash our anger at the government that destroys it. We have not yet grasped that it is our Health Service, and the health of our class that we must defend. The struggle for wages is not apart from, or extraneous to, the defence of the NHS. The struggle this winter has given a boost to the morale of all healthworkers.

Many hospitals have closed, the Elizabeth Garret Anderson Hospital is yet again under attack, and wards or services are everywhere running down. What of these? How do we fight for more staff and more funds? Conference must address itself to this problem.

At each place it is a question of what tactics to use, but COHSE must concern itself with the whole problem. Governments may come and go, but our Health Service will not be safe whilst the ruling class remains.

Bookshops

Bellman Bookshop 155 Fortess Road, London NW5
Brighton Workers Bookshop 37 Gloucester Road, Brighton
Main Trend Books 17 Midland Road, St. Philips, Bristol
Northern Star Bookshop 18A Leighton Street, Leeds
Basildon Bookstall Tues, Fri, Sat Marketplace
Hull Bookstall Old Town Market, Saturdays
Liverpool Bookstall every Thursday Liverpool University

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