



DOUBLE PAY FOR THEM ... WE GET THE DOLE

THE CALLOUSNESS and arrogant pomposity of this new Tory Government is summed up in a recent quote by the Prime Minister, "I believe it is far better for people to be faced with the consequences of their own wage claims than try to save them from it".

The gist of this statement is political rather than religious. It is in reality saying, "If you want a living wage, you can't, because we will sack you and close down the factory". That the factory will, in all probability, be shut down even if you don't ask for a rise is another matter.

The spectre and reality of unemployment has been used for hundreds of years by ruling classes as a weapon against workers. Today's unemployment, however, is different from that which has gone before. The Government says that it is a shake-out, an efficiency exercise, so that the economy can be put back on its feet again; this is a lie; these are jobs lost in basic industries, lost at the same time as the industries close down. How can the economy be put back on its 'feet' when they are being chopped off?

Similarly the new attack is on the public sector with thousands of jobs to be lost. The Government are being quite open in saying that they expect (and hope?) unemployment to get worse - some estimates mention 2 million out of work next year. How can that be efficient?

High unemployment is usually the precursor of war, and again today the baying of the hyenas of war gets louder as the unemployment figures rise. The call for war is usually for the 'future of civilisation', the same 'civilisation' that put you out of work beforehand. We must fight unemployment as our class has always done, but now we must be aware of what that really means, it means revolution, class war to save Britain and to prevent war.

EEC destruction- We pay the bill

THE CONSERVATIVE leadership gadding about Europe has near as doubled MP's pay to bring them in line with EEC standards, and at the same time has plunged Britain even deeper into the morass of the EEC.

Agriculture: Food prices will rise at least 3 per cent. The price rise was deliberately sought by the British government, which succeeded in devaluing the Green Pound by 5 per cent. This has given British capitalist farmers a 12 per cent rise in prices since March. The rise in food prices is also the product of the EEC farm deal itself, which puts up all farm prices by 1½ per cent. Rising prices will directly contribute to increasing the 'mountains' of food surpluses. And now the subsidy to give free school milk to children becomes the responsibility of the EEC, not the British government.

European Monetary System: One fifth of Britain's gold and currency reserves are now pledged to the EEC's 'exchange rate stabilisation fund'. Whatever that means to them, to us it means that Britain's economy is going to be tied to the whims of the capitalists of the EEC. At the same time, the BSC Chairman was trying, unsuccessfully, to get British steel workers to accept the cuts in production which the EEC demands.

Great publicity was given to the notion of reducing Britain's billion pound contribution to the EEC budget. Nothing has in fact been agreed, nor could be, while we remain in the system. All the closer links talked of by the Summit meeting in Strasbourg mean is that the EEC will get a larger slice of British oil, while we will go short. Meanwhile, more and more our taxes will be used to build the NATO war machine.



NGA printers from The Times and Sunday Times showing solidarity with the struggle to unionise the Evening Post on June 16 (see p4). Carrying the 'Times coffin' through the streets symbolises the demise of The Times as 600 NGA Times employees are advised to find new jobs. (Photo: The Worker)

Big Deal !

TO THE accompaniment of historic hugs the Strategic Arms Limitation Treaty (Part Two) was signed in Vienna last week. It has yet to be sealed, since it needs ratification by the US Senate. But even if it is delivered you won't notice any difference. There is bound to be a big hoo-ha in America, where some senators think the whole deal is a sell-out to the Soviet Union. And - who knows - some in the Kremlin might even think it's a sell-out to Washington. Win or lose, war preparations will go on. SALT 2 just makes them more orderly.

SALT certainly has not stopped the British Defence Secretary Pym accusing the Soviet Union of increasing arms expenditure at a faster rate than the US, so committing the NATO economies to a 3 per cent annual rise in defence expenditure in real terms.

IPCS calls its first strike

SIXTY THOUSAND scientists, architects, engineers, vets, Met men and other technologists, members of the Institution of Professional Civil Servants, took action against their employer, the Government, in pursuit of a pay claim last Friday. They have also decided to withdraw goodwill and ban overtime indefinitely. The scientists and technologists are planning their own campaign of selective strike action. Naval bases, nuclear installations and the Royal Mint may all be involved.

At mass meetings up and down the country attended by 20,000 IPCS members a tale has been unfolded of duplicity and doubledealing by the Civil Service Department, which acts as the Government's personnel manager. The National Executive Committee of the IPCS have accused the Government of launching "a deliberate and calculated

attack on the specialist grades in the Civil Service and hence on the IPCS". In response to this attack the NEC gave its first ever instruction to strike to its members.

It will not have been lost upon trade unionists in the Civil Service generally that those of their number who did not get the pay increase awarded to all other civil servants this year and are consequently having to fight for it now, belong to a union which wavered and created disunity in the Staff Side ranks when the struggle for this year's settlement was at its peak. Those who curry favour with an employer are never rewarded: it is seen as a sign of weakness and arouses contempt rather than gratitude. The nurses who promised earlier this year never to go on strike are now learning this bitter lesson, and the members of the IPCS must do so also.

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The Week

NATO countries have decided on a 3 per cent annual rise of arms expenditure in real terms. The Conservative government's commitment to this policy was underlined in a virulent statement by the new Defence Secretary, Pym. The pretext for their policy is the threat of the Soviet Union, which supposedly outstrips the USA in its defence spending. Yet the 1979 handbook of the Stockholm International Peace Research Institution (SIPRI), financed by the Swedish Government and committed to the cause of disarmament, shows that there is no evidence for this. On the contrary, NATO armament plans are based on "exaggerated estimates" of Soviet expenditure. The SIPRI figures show the USA and USSR neck and neck in arms expenditure. Yet, according to Pym, the USSR is spending 30 to 40 per cent more than the US! SIPRI figures show the international arms trade dominated by NATO - 47 per cent of supplies are from the US, 27 from the USSR, 11 per cent from France, 4 per cent from Britain and Italy.



Members of the Amalgamated Metal Workers and Shipwrights Union in Australia demonstrating in support of their pay claim.

Australian trades unite in action

A MILLION and a half workers came out on one day strike in protest at the arrest in Western Australia of two officials of the Amalgamated Metal Workers and Shipwrights for addressing a meeting of their striking members.

Under Western Australian law police permission is required in order to address three or more people at a public meeting! The officials had quite correctly not obtained this permission to address their members, but the police only moved in to arrest them after the meeting, of workers striking over a 40 per cent pay claim, had finished. The police were no doubt deterred by the strength of numbers in atten-

dance.

Immediately the workers were arrested the Seamen's Union called a ban on movement of all ships in Western Australia's waters for two days unless charges were dropped. By this stage charges had been made not only against the two officials, but also against 30 of the workers who had attended the meeting. The 150,000 members of the Metal Workers Union announced a 24 hour strike unless charges were dropped and other unions including building workers and seamen announced their intention to strike in protest. The demand has broadened out to include not only the dropping of the charges against those arrested but also

the repeal of the law itself. On Thursday the strike took place with a quarter of Australia's total workforce taking part.

The intention of the law is perfectly clear - to prevent workers from organising in defence of their wages and conditions thus giving employers carte blanche as far as the government is concerned to exploit workers. What has been made even clearer by its operation in this instance is the relationship between government and employers under capitalism, and this relationship is in essence the same anywhere in the world where capitalism prevails. The only aspect which differs or changes from situation to situation is how brutally it is operated:

Troops for Hong Kong

THATCHER, who made such a thing in her election campaign of tightening up immigration restrictions in Britain, has despatched 900 troops, equipped with hovercraft, helicopters and a fast patrol boat to prevent immigration into Hong Kong.

These troops will help the British colony keep out refugees from Vietnam and the much more numerous refugees from mainland China. The refugees from Vietnam can be said to be running away from socialism, but that can no longer be said of the refugees from China.

Indeed the Chinese authorities do not say that about the more than 100,000 'illegal immigrants' who have settled in the colony this year. In discussions on the problem with the Hong Kong authorities the Chinese have suggested that the best solution might be for the British to build factories and start businesses in China itself near the frontier with Hong Kong. Then the Chinese people could enjoy the opportunities of a thriving foreign capitalist community in China and not have to emigrate!

So now we know what 'modernisation' really means - turning China back into a colony of the western imperialists.

We're not dying for capitalism. Bread and roses, jobs and pay

NOBODY who presently works can be sure they will still be working two or three years from now. Now the budget announces destruction.

It is to be death by a thousand cuts. Cutting back of health workers, schoolteachers, librarians, steelworkers, research workers, civil servants, construction workers, railwaymen, postal workers and many more. To destroy jobs on this scale is a wanton act.

As the Tory council leader of West Yorkshire said at the meeting of the Association of Metropolitan Authorities, "There is nothing that concentrates the mind like a bit of poverty."

On the same day it was announced that the Shell Esso contract for a multi-function service vessel had gone to Finland. The Energy Minister said the Government realised valuable work would have come to UK shipyards, "but it was considered the degree of subsidy required could not be justified." Does this mean the impoverishment of Glasgow and Newcastle can be justified?

The headline on the last issue of THE WORKER was "Tory plan for war on workers". For those

who need a second opinion, the President of ASLEF echoed this in saying at the union's annual conference that the Tories had declared war on the majority of the British people, that we must maintain unity in fighting to keep the independence of our trade unions.

For example, the Welsh TUC estimates the Budget's effect in Wales will be to threaten 60 per cent of jobs in the nationalised industries like coal and steel plus workers in the civil service and local government. By this time next year, unemployment will be up from 80,000 to 120,000. But a meeting is sought with the Government to impress on it the serious effects its policy will have on Wales, as if the Government hadn't planned it that way. Surely few Welsh workers believe this Cabinet of lawyers, merchant bankers and ex-Guards officers to be the League of Gentlemen? Certainly the 200 striking railwaymen at the Treherbert and Rhymney Valley depots don't have any such illusions. By their swift action they have forced British Rail to drop plans for line closures in South Wales.

Rail workers all over the country can learn from those two depots.

Who are the patriots?

More work goes abroad

PLESSEY, Liverpool, have announced that they will not even tender for a £58 million contract with the international Trunk Switching Centre at Keybridge House. This is similar to the contract at Mondial House worth £30 million in 1975 which was also not tendered for and went to a Swedish firm.

The Divisional Council of the Association of Scientific, Technical and Managerial Staffs has condemned "the destruction of British industry that has caused the shortage of skills in the manufacturing industry". It calls for support in insisting that Post Office management should not allow the ITSC contract to go outside Britain.

The Divisional Council also calls on other unions to demand of their employers the necessary recruitment and training of workers to overcome the shortage of skills and prevent the loss of future contracts.

BUS crews and shunters working for Merseyside Passenger Transport Executive have just concluded a successful struggle over pay. For several weeks lightning one day stoppages have been held, with drivers selecting different days to the shunters whose negotiations were parallel but separate. The settlement was 11.9 per cent - a considerable improvement over the original single figure offer short of 9 per cent.

CRAFTSMEN in the water industry, after 8 months, pushed up the employers offer last week by threatening a gradual shutdown.

The latest offer represents an increase of about £17 a week, raising the basic rate from £48.70 (+£6.00) to £63.88. It also includes £5.00 attendance money and an increase of London Weighting to nearly £8.00 a week.

FIVE Million pounds is to be cut from university research council funds, and a further £8m from recurrent grants. "These will inevitably increase unemployment among scientists at a time when the country most needs their skills" said the Association of University Teachers. Those worst hit will be staff on short-term contracts, a condition of whose employment is to forfeit even redundancy pay. There are 2500 academic staff registered unemployed (a fraction of the real figure). Projects likely to suffer are cancer research at the Christie and Hope Hospital Centres, Manchester, kidney research at University College Hospital, London, and Heart research in the London Medical schools.

AFTER weeks of killing of men, women and children in Nicaragua by Somoza's National Guard, it took the killing of an American newsmen to bring Carter to condemn the Somoza regime. Thus the US has tried to organise an international invasion to depose Somoza and instal a regime of "national conciliation", all the while denouncing "Cuban intervention"! The guerrilla movement which has shaken the dictatorship to its foundations rightly demands that Nicaraguans be left in peace to decide their own future.

Indeed we can all learn. Parents in Islington, North London, are adamant that schools will not close. Smaller classes give the children a better chance to learn, so keep small classes. "If its good enough for Eton, its good enough for our kids." Similarly the UCATT workers are fighting to keep direct labour organisation in Wandsworth, South London. The council is using high court injunctions to stop picketing at three sites. The UCATT regional organiser remarked, "if they are going to the courts they're in a tighter corner than I thought". The union has warned it will stop all Turiff, Bovis and Croudace sites in London.

Such battles as these point the way. With near 20 per cent inflation by the end of 1979 and registered unemployed at 2 million, we will have to fight. Thatcher intends to use unemployment to keep us under control as regards wages and salaries. With Government-inspired price inflation going through the roof we cannot go soft on pay increases. Paupers can't live on hope. Anyway if those ponces in Parliament can demand enormous pay increases what should cause us to be so shy?

Editorial

IT DID NOT require a 'leak' from the former British ambassador to France who has become the ambassador to the US to alert us to the economic decline of Britain relative to France and Germany. We have often pointed out that in Britain as the oldest capitalist country, the overall trend of capitalist decline has gone further than elsewhere. The same report noted that "the British trade unions despite their readiness to strike had failed to match working conditions in France and Germany", as though the trade unions were actually responsible for the economic decline instead of merely striving to defend workers from its consequences.

There has been a lot of pie in the sky talk by politicians about how things were tough now but if everybody, everybody who worked that is, would just tighten their belts a little bit more they would get better soon. North Sea oil was going to solve the balance of payments problem for ever.

What has happened? North Sea oil is making the oil companies rich but has so adversely effected the balance of other trade that the estimated benefit this year of £3 billion will be more than off-set by the deterioration of the balance overall of more than £4 billion. Already Britain has run up a balance of trade deficit over the last five months of over £1 billion.

As part of this gloomy picture, instead of imports running at about 20 per cent as would be normal there are many industries where the figure is closer to 50 per cent, as in motor cars, and many others which are threatened with total replacement-like motor cycle manufacture.

Poverty grows, plus cuts

The key figure as far as the capitalist planning of the Government is concerned is profit. In spite of all the cuts in public expenditure which represents a reduction of the working class's standard of living in the interest of profits, profits have fallen sharply in the first three months of this year. Trading profits of industrial and commercial companies fell by 13½ per cent. We can take it as absolutely certain that cuts in our standard of living will go on and on until profits are restored, no matter how many of us starve in the process.

The sacrifices demanded of us in the name of declining profit are already terrible. According to the Royal Commission on the Distribution of Income and Wealth more people have been living below the poverty line over the past few years than at any time in the post-war period. Between 1974 and 1976 the number of workers living around or below the poverty line rose from 11.8 million to 14.9 million. That means nearly 15 million British people living below the level of a barely decent life.

And that is what the decline of British capitalism has brought about in spite of the best organised working class in the world. Nothing could show more clearly that desperately necessary to us as is our united fight for wages it is not enough. We have to go over from the fight within the system to the fight against the system. Our very lives depend on it. For a long time the excuse of social democracy has been: "we'll have to come to revolution in time, but not yet." Brothers, the time has come

Worker Interview

THE FOLLOWING is an interview with a meter reader/collector employed by the South Eastern Electricity Board, who together with 96,000 others employed throughout the supply industry have been balloted a second time on their proposed pay deal after a massive rejection in the first ballot.

Question: I understand you are to be balloted on a pay deal said to be worth 16 per cent in total. Do you think it is a good deal?

Answer: Everybody talks about averages and percentages. I can't see where they get the 16 per cent from anyway. They are including in the deal £3.60 we got last year as a self-financing productivity payment, now to be consolidated into the rate. The original offer we turned down was said to be worth 14 per cent but it can't be. Look, my gross pay is £69.50, despite what Sir Geoffrey Howe says about an average wage of £100. I was offered a £5 pay increase, and I reckon that 14 per cent works out more like £10. The new offer offers me no improvement now, (well 15p more), only another £2.50 in October, and the deal was meant to be all sown up last March. I hope your paper prints this because all the other papers make it look as if we are turning down vast amounts.

Q: Sir Geoffrey Howe has said we should limit out pay demands because of the tax cuts. Do you think this is a fair point?

A: No that's rubbish, it was a rich man's budget, 23 per cent for the top and 3 per cent for us, and 3 per cent of what? Anything we get will be more than taken back in VAT and we will have to pay for all these cuts too. They have a funny idea of being fair. The budget has had the opposite effect, I am more determined than ever to get a decent pay award.

Q: According to the negotiating committee this is the final offer, if it is rejected there will have to be industrial action. If this is the case are you prepared for it?

A: Absolutely, I will definitely reject the offer, I only know of two people in the depot who have said they are going to vote for it. I will support any industrial action that is needed to win a decent pay award.

Nursery education-an ugly duckling

NEXT month sees the start of a nationwide campaign by the National Union of Teachers in association with the National Campaign for Nursery Education to increase the number of nursery schools and classes, and, in conjunction with the TUC, are calling for this area of our education service to be made compulsory.

From the early 30's to the present day, it has remained an accepted principle that play is the starting point for formal learning and comprehension. Once, a street presented itself as the area for play and social interaction, but today's traffic has put pay to that. Mothers were able to be at home to a far greater extent than they are now. However, there is, in embryo, a suitable substitute - the nursery school.

In such a school, children are brought together and learn to deal with each other, they are introduced to basic skills and, in addition, come to regard learning

as a pleasure. This forms the cornerstone of future learning.

Yet in Britain, this voluntary stage of children's education is a luxury available only to a chosen few. There are over two and a half million children of nursery school age in Britain, but only 900,000 attend any form of state registered day care: only 250,000 of these go to nursery school. Even France, Belgium and West Germany send more than 50 per cent of their children to nursery school.

Whenever there are cuts to be made by a government, and when there are no cuts to be made, what area is one of the hardest hit: the non-mandatory sections of our much depleted education service - the nursery school at one end and further education at the other.

During the last war, it was a different matter, as far as nursery education was concerned. The politicians and educationalists were all in favour of increasing these facilities to free more

mothers for work in the 'war effort'.

Yet, more recently, as this country has faced greater and greater unemployment, so nursery education has become an ugly duckling: "It's too costly" or "It's counter-productive."

Now we find our education service is £55 million 'too costly'. Without a doubt, the nursery sector will have to shoulder its share of this cut-back. Increasingly, local authorities will dramatically economise by not going through with proposed building of new schools, will never open those schools already built but unstaffed, and indeed, will close many more of the all too few schools which are now in existence.

In this International Year of the Child it is somewhat more than ironic that this vicious government sees no use in giving our children the invaluable thing in the world of learning and play, but instead has inaugurated a new slaughter of the innocents.

Cholera danger

SEWAGE could flow through the streets unless more money is spent on replacing outdated sewers. That was the warning given by Dennis Clark, President of the Institution of Municipal Engineers at their Annual Conference this week.

His speech was made against the background of cuts of £55 million (or 11 per cent) in the nine English Water Authorities' capital allocations for 1979/80. These enormous cuts were announced, as a direct result of the recent Tory budget, by the Department of the Environment.

A spokesman for the North West Water Authority said, "We need to spend more money to deal with the underground deterioration problem." In that Authority is Manchester, a major trouble spot, now nicknamed the Holy City after seven major collapses recently.

It is in the hands of water workers throughout Britain to fight to preserve the life-saving services they provide. Only capi-

talism could think of throwing us back into medieval sanitary conditions. We should never entertain the question, "Where is it best to have the cuts?" As if it is possible to choose whether we want no drains and sewage on the streets, or no reservoirs and water shortage!

We must demand: no cuts anywhere, and be prepared to draw up the tactics needed to secure success.

IN BRIEF/ Civil Liberties

IN THE trial of two Special Air Service soldiers in connection with the killing of a sixteen year old boy, it was alleged by the prosecution that "the two accused shot intending to kill and self-defence did not arise... They opened fire on him and he was shot three times, once in the back of the head and twice in the shoulder area." The verdict had not been reached at the time of writing.

North West London hospital closure

THE RUN-DOWN of St Mary's Hospital, Harrow Road, West London, and the loss of 500 jobs is the plan being opposed by hospital workers and their local supporters, the audience was told by speakers at a recent meeting in Paddington school. As one attack has been lifted in the face of opposition, another has been made, with the Area Health Authority (AHA) desperate to make the cuts imposed on it by Labour and Tory Governments (this year they amount to £800,000).

First in July 1978 came the 'consultation document' proposing closure of the St Mary's, Harrow Road site, Paddington Green Children's Hospital, Hereford Lodge and the children's unit at St Charles'. In response a joint union committee was set up within St Mary's, which called a public meeting in October 1978. Local Hospital Campaigns were set up, pressurising the Community Health Council into rejecting the plan in December 1978.

Meanwhile, the District

Management Team, as a result of budget restrictions, tried to close Hereford Lodge Convalescent Hospital, but gave it a temporary reprieve in the face of opposition in February 1979 - only to go on instead to 'temporary closure' of St Columba's, a 27 bedded terminal care unit on Hampstead Heath, one of only seven such hospitals in England, along with a ward at Harrow Road and the Paddington Psychiatric Day Care Centre.

In response, the St Mary's Defence Committee held a 'Health Day' which was attended by 400 local people and rejected all proposals for cuts. But in April came the crunch. The 'consultation period' ended and the AHA decided to go ahead with the cuts. Even so, after an occupation, St Columba's was re-opened, temporarily. A staff meeting at St Mary's, attended by 300, resolved on total opposition to the cuts.

The campaign goes on, with further public meetings being organised, a monthly stall outside St Mary's, distribution of

publicity and a petition, while the unions inside the hospital are trying to stop surreptitious piecemeal rundown. Examples of this are the decision to advertise vacancies only once a month, and the refusing of essential maintenance requests.

The struggle in Paddington is an example to workers in many other areas where health cuts are taking place. The fight seems to be never-ending. Even if there were no cuts in Paddington this year, the District pharmaceutical bill is a quarter of a million pounds overspent from last year, and will have to be met out of this year's budget, because of cash limits.

But where do these limits come from? The Government itself, of course. As one speaker at the meeting pointed out, all governments this century have spoken of the need to spend less on public services and give back more for profit, alleging that private industry might invest more in the country. Only exactly the opposite happens, and we see our services and dignity destroyed.

Stop juggernauts!

SAVE LONDON! Ban the juggernauts - the slogan sounds like something out of a science fiction novel. But who would blame anyone in London if they viewed the mechanical monsters which ravage our streets day and night in this fashion? Save London is right. Save our streets so that they are safe to walk in, save our air so that it won't kill us when we breathe, save our ears from the incessant noise.

But there is more to it than even those very basic aspects of life in the capital, because in saving London from the juggernauts we will also be saving jobs, saving skills and maybe even bring to a halt the destruction of the finest rail transport system in the world. The destruction has already begun, it started some time ago - thousands of miles of rail ripped up, rail which could and did carry the goods needed by London and the rest of the country with a speed and efficiency that cannot be matched. We have to act fast though because if we don't there will be very little left to save. London has a river, a natural system for transport now unused.

Look at the juggernauts as they thunder past your house, look at their number plates, look at their destinations. Don't be surprised if you discover that a lorry has come from Rotterdam via Wales through London in order to get to Ireland! What

madness! Such is the price we pay for membership of the EEC. Do not be surprised either if the next ruling to come from the common market is a directive that all rail in Britain is to be run down in the name of progress and the deutschmark because that's what it's all about - profit. How goods are transported in Britain has nothing to do with what people need or how much it inconveniences the population.

In London over the past few weeks, people have been protesting at the ravaging of our city, they have demonstrated that they do not want the city destroyed, they have shown their concern at the deliberate destruction of our railways.

In the Borough of Kensington and Chelsea, when local people staged a protest in the form of continually crossing a pedestrian crossing allowing a few trucks to go through and then walking back again, police were called in to prevent them from doing this. When a protester asked the police how it was that they were able to bring in enough men to prevent people from legally walking across the road but claimed that they were not able to enforce a night ban on juggernaut traffic in the area, they had no reply. Postscript: As a result of the 'fuel crisis' the juggernaut lobby is pushing to increase the tonnage of juggernauts by 50 per cent!



PRINTERS and journalists from all over the country went to Nottingham on Saturday June 16th to march and demonstrate their outrage at the sacking of 28 journalists earlier this year by the anti-union Nottingham Evening Post. The demonstration was followed by a picket of the newspaper's works, at which several pickets were arrested. Two were charged under the notorious Public Order Act of 1936, a measure ostensibly brought in against Mosley's blackshirt fascists but which is increasingly being applied against trade unionists. An estimated 1200 workers went on the march, and were joined by off-duty busmen from the bus depot close to the Post's works. The General Secretaries of the National Union of Journalists and the Graphical Association addressed a rally outside the Post, pledging that action would continue until the Post recognised trade unions. The newspaper is currently being produced by non-union labour operating the kind of new technology which the employers at The Times would like to introduce. (Photo THE WORKER)

The year of the child?

TUESDAY 3rd July will be a Day of Action for Nursery Education, organised by the National Union of Teachers and the National Campaign for Nursery Education. Activities will begin at 12.00 noon with a picnic in St. James's Park, London. This will be followed at 1.30 by a rally in Central Hall, Westminster, and then a lobby of Members of Parliament and, from 7.00 to 9.00 there will be a Symposium at Central Hall.

Parents, teachers, trade unions and any other interested parties have been urged to participate. The aim of this Day of Action is to demand that the Government introduce legislation laying

a statutory duty on LEA's to provide free nursery education for all children whose parents want it.

The bitter experience of nurseries education over the years has been that, although it has received many ritual encouraging pats on the head, these gestures have never been translated into money terms. We have seen the 1944 Education Act come and go, the heady promises of the Plowden Report in 1967 fail to materialise, the Urban Aid Programme of 1969 and the irony of Mrs. Thatcher's own words as Education Secretary in 1972 - "The Plowden Council estimated that provision for 90 per cent of

4 year olds and 50 per cent of 3 year olds would be adequate ... the government proposes to give effect to these recommendations within 10 years." One of the first acts of Mrs. Thatcher's new government is to cut the education budget by £55½ million. The implication is that the under-fives must go to the back of the queue - again.

The present situation is that many local authorities, rather than taking up their allocation of funds for nursery education are relying on playgroups and childminders to fill the void that should rightly be filled by an organised and maintained system of education for under-fives.

Today the Armistice...

BY AN overwhelming majority the National Union of Teachers Special Salaries Conference voted to accept the provisional salary agreement, on June 16th.

The agreement provides for increases of 9 per cent plus £6 a month and a reference of the full claim to the Standing Commission on Pay Comparability.

There were few illusions in delegates' minds that the Union could now sit back and hope for salaries justice. The Executive speaking for the settlement were applauded when they spoke of the necessity of further campaigning in the new school year. In the light of inflation and the Tory budget the Union is revising its claim upwards from the present 36 per cent. The award of the Comparability Commission will not be binding on the Union and will have to be rejected in negotiation if insufficient.

The Union has never abandoned in negotiation the principle that salaries must return to the 1975 level. The Labour Government first attempted to renege on this principle, the incoming Tory Government's first act was to do likewise. So far they have failed.

They failed because Union members pursued their action unremittingly throughout the election. Action has been called off now before the summer holidays, to be taken up again more strongly in the new term. It is a fine demon-

stration of guerrilla struggle Today the armistice, tomorrow the war.

Delegates and speakers showed a realistic appraisal of both strategy and tactics. As the General Secretary said, the present Government sets a higher priority on men of violence, the police and armed forces, than on teachers. Our battle is no less than to shift this Government, strong in the support it has received from the electorate, away from its destructive policy. Delegates saw with great clarity that this cannot be achieved except by a protracted struggle. All who have struggled and are willing to continue will need to do so even more strenuously next term.

IN BRIEF/ Home News

DELEGATES representing 100,000 steel workers of the Iron and Steel Trades Confederation overwhelmingly passed a resolution opposing any further closure in the industry. This is in direct opposition to the plans of British Steel, whose Chairman, Charles Villiers, outlined plans to close not only Corby, but also Shotton, and concentrate steelmaking in a few centres. All this because the EEC says we make too much steel! British steel workers will fight against the plans as the French workers have done. As one delegate said, "If Corby is closed, my town will be murdered. We hold Sir Charles Villiers responsible. The fight to save Corby starts now."

London engineers press for pay battle

LONDON engineers have issued a call for a national battle on the current pay claim. They want the Confederation of Shipbuilding and Engineering Unions (CSEU) to back up the decision taken recently by the National Committee of the AUEW to involve the entire membership in a full-blooded campaign.

The call came at a meeting last week of the No. 8 District of the CSEU, held in Conway Hall, Holborn. Shop stewards, chairmen and secretaries had come to discuss the national claim, and the mood was clearly militant. After reports from the District Secretary and from delegates to the National Committee, shop stewards spoke of the importance of the AUEW decision to pursue the £80 minimum, 35-hour week claim in full.

Nobody was under any illusion that £80 was a large sum - indeed many factories already have rates way in excess of the national minimum. But it was clearly understood that the national minimum played a crucial part in the fight for better wages for all.

Stewards pointed out how the national minimum set the standard for the payment of skill in other industries and

that it was also the basis from which all semi-skilled workers started in their fights for improved wages. If skilled workers did not fight for a decent wage, skill itself would be destroyed: the fight for payment for skill is inseparable from the fight to preserve jobs and save industry from destruction.

No one knows better than engineering stewards in London about the consequences of continued rundown and closure. Getting the wages battle under way, it was said, would be part of the urgently needed fight for the future. And in

this the fight for a shorter working week played a highly important part.

What was needed, it was said, was a national wages fight using guerrilla tactics. Above all, it meant getting back to the basis of our trade unions, getting to branch meetings and sending off resolutions, organising lobbies when negotiations are taking place, and organising meetings at work.

The full CSEU meets in Llandudno on June 25th. It is to be hoped that London will not stand alone in its call for action.

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