



## DESTROY THEM BEFORE THEY DESTROY US

KEITH Joseph, Industry Secretary, dropped the major government bombshell when he announced that there would be no more government subsidies for steel after March 1980, in line with the long term EEC plan for steel. The implications of this policy, if he were to get away with carrying it out, are immense; British Steel (albeit on cooked figures) claims to be losing £1 million per day. To remove a subsidy of anything like this by March next year would definitely mean the closure of Corby, Shotton and Consett, probably Scunthorpe and Llanwern as well; and the viability of even the new coastal plants using imported ore, such as Redcar, cannot be secure. The Economist repeatedly claims that neither British nor French nor Italian steel industries could survive at all without national subsidies. There are rumours already of a boardroom split between the accountants like Villiers and the steelmen like Scholey who know what this policy must mean in the long run.

### Fight for a whole community

In order to put this plan into action, the programme of closure planned by the BSC must be accelerated dramatically, and many fear that management will try to make a quick killing by offering large redundancy payments to workers at Corby who are prepared to go quickly - perhaps this summer. Villiers was called a murderer at the annual ISTC conference, and delegates said that "the fight for Corby begins now". This fight will be a test of the maturity and courage of the steel workers, fighting to preserve their industry against the deliberate run-down being perpetrated by Westminster and the EEC. They are also fighting, as we have said before, to save their communities. But most importantly, they are fighting for their dignity. There will be a demonstration outside Steel Headquarters on July 12th when BSC meets with the TUC Steel Committee. They must have the support of the entire working class.

## Loss of NHS jobs

A NEW wave of cuts, more vicious than ever before, is now sweeping the Health Service. They have not been announced with the fanfare of a White Paper on Public Expenditure, nor with grandiose claims to redistribute resources between 'privileged and 'unprivileged', as with the implementation of the proposals of the Resource Allocation Working Party (RAWP). They have been imposed by a government determined to wrest all it can from a recalcitrant working class in the interests of capital.

Kensington & Chelsea & Westminster Area Health Authority is due to consider proposals for cuts amounting to £2m at its meeting on 11th July. Such 'economy measures' are needed to solve the Area's financial problems. And the cause of these financial difficulties? Profligate spending on unnecessary health care? Not at all.

The North West District, one of three in the Area, estimates that its shortfall in the current financial year is £730,000. This is made up

of £50,000 needed to reinstate a part of the maintenance budget (which had been cut last year), £130,000 contribution to wage increases (won only after bitter struggles last winter but which the government refuses to fund fully), £250,000 shortfall on price increases (inflation is supposed to be only 8½ per cent), and an incredible £350,000 on the increased rate of VAT. So wards are to be closed and health services reduced to a level where, in the words of one consultant in the Area, there will be "a risk to patient mortality, increased morbidity and significant damage to the undergraduate medical and teaching programme". Increases in VAT will cost Redbridge and Waltham Forest's health service an estimated £500,000 this year, with inflation swallowing up the same amount because it is likely to be at least double the rate allowed for in the authority's budget. Jubilee Hospital, saved from the threat of closure last year only after a prolonged and united campaign, is again



WE HAVE drawn the analogy before in THE WORKER between Jarrow in the 1930's and CORBY in the 1970's and 1980's if the steel plant closes. This analogy was in the minds of the steel workers who marched 90 miles from Corby to London last week to protest their case. But whereas the Jarrow marches were to demonstrate about the hunger of those who had already lost their jobs, the Corby workers are determined to take preventive action to stop the closure of their steelworks, the loss of 7,000 jobs and the eventual closure of their town. In this they have the backing of the ISTC nationally and many other unions locally.

The marchers reached London on Thursday and were joined by 500 other steel workers and supporters, who together marched upon Westminster to present a petition and to lobby MP's about the threatened closure. The standard procedure was followed at Westminster. MP's were lobbied, they were either not available, or they came out briefly, expressed their support for a policy of closure (and diversification) at Corby, and disappeared again. The steel workers had fired on opening shot in a long battle, in which they are determined to force the government to listen to them.

under threat. And for what? So that capitalism's profits soar with rising prices. And the government spends ever increasing amounts of money on the armed forces and armaments.

Throughout the country the same applies. Overall, NHS funds have been slashed by 10 per cent or more. The proposed 'manpower economies' will cause the loss of around 39,000 jobs. Even the statutory procedures for formal consultation with Community Health Councils and other local bodies on proposed hospital and ward closures may be shelved. This was never real democracy, but even the semblance of it is to go. It is also likely that long standing

policies on no compulsory redundancy in the NHS will be discarded. Not that a job lost through so called natural wastage was any less real a loss, but it's clear that in the NHS, as in the rest of the public sector, job security will become a thing of the past.

They tell us that we must accept 'cash limits' and choose between increased wages or the service itself. We reject this totally. 'Cash limits' is their sacred cow, not ours, and the choice they offer is a sham, a choice between no wages and no service. There is no choice, and we must fight for both, for wages and for the service - the one is dependent on the other.

The government may hope to have a 'summer recess' but we must turn it into a summer of discontent to follow last winter. There are signs already that these cuts will not go through without determined opposition. In Kensington & Chelsea & Westminster action to oppose the proposed cuts, which include closing all acute wards at St Mary's, Harrow Road, is planned throughout the Area by unions representing all categories of staff. The same unity which developed between all sections of health service staff at the Elizabeth Garrett Anderson and which enabled them to win so many battles - though even there the struggle continues - is needed throughout the health service.

## The Week

NOT CONTENT with supporting China's genocidal invasion of Vietnam, the US-allied powers are now cutting off all aid and food to Vietnam, seeking to achieve by starvation what they could not achieve by napalm.

THE PETROL queues provoked in the US by the oil companies are doubly profitable. Firstly because of the rising prices, and secondly because fuel consumption as a result of the queues has risen by one per cent, or 100 million barrels a month. How right the American public is to blame the oil companies and their partners in crime, the OPEC capitalists, for profiteering from the shortage they have created. The US government is a laughing stock for its 'plans' for a Strategic Oil Reserve. This is a plan to pump 250 million barrels into disused salt mines off the Mexican gulf. Only 87 million are in place and all buying (under Pentagon control) has had to stop because of price rises. Perhaps that's just as well, as the oil was poured underground without any means of extracting it. One thing will delight Americans, however. The Iraqi Ambassador is complaining because OPEC diplomats (more like their domestics) are having to queue like everyone else at the petrol pumps, so keeping them from 'very important business'.

WEST GLAMORGAN County Council have refused unpaid leave of absence to one of their staff to go on a three week Rugby Tour of South Africa. As one councillor said of the club, Llanelli, it was sad that "with its radical tradition it should have a team going to this Nazi regime to play rugby".

THE TONNAGE of the UK owned and registered merchant fleet has fallen 20 per cent in the last three years to less than 40m deadweight tons. Ten years ago nearly half of UK trade was carried in UK registered ships. The figure is now 37 per cent. Measured in ton-miles the decline is even greater, falling from 35 to 29 per cent between 1977 and 1978.

CARTER'S wage limits are in shreds. The Rubber Workers won a settlement giving them over 30 per cent in three years, while the guidelines asked for 22 per cent. Also 117,000 General Electric Workers have done the same thing giving a helping hand to the United Auto Workers whose wage negotiations begin on July 16th.

THE NINE MONTH strike by workers at the Economist Bookshop for recognition of their union, the TGWU, has been won. The Board of Directors appointed by the owners conceded the demand after admitting that the bookshop was near bankruptcy as a result of picketing. Improvements, such as holidays were also won.

OVER A MILLION people - with their families nearly two and a half million - subscribe to private health schemes, an increase of 61,000 in the last year. But well over three quarters of these are accounted for by firms. So this is the 'massive public demand' for private enterprise health care, and the abolition of the National Health Service.

## Historic Notes Champion of Labour

ROBERT APPELGARTH was one of those who built British trade unions as we know them. Never scared of a fight, he bargained until nothing but a strike would settle the dispute. "I regard strikes in the social world as I do wars in the political world. Both are crimes unless justified by absolute necessity."

He was born at Hull in 1834. When he joined the Sheffield carpenters in 1857 he found a trade split among many local unions. But the great London building workers' strike of 1859 demonstrated the need for national unity, and in 1860 the Amalgamated Society of Carpenters and Joiners was formed, on the model of the Amalgamated Engineers.

In 1862, Applegarth aged 28, was elected General Secretary. By the time of his resignation in 1871 he had built the union from 900 members in 38 branches to 10,000 members in 236 branches. In 1867 he introduced an 'open column' for members in the Society's magazine. Allan of the Engineers told him, "Ah, they will lash you". Applegarth replied, "If I cannot stand all the lashing they can give I'm not fit for my position."

In 1868 Applegarth got the Society, through the International to send £20 each to striking Geneva building workers and Rouen cotton spinners. He encouraged the union to become involved in political action, "against laws which keep the workman down, and to provide laws to lift him up." Applegarth did his best to encourage this kind of outlook and opposed any ideas that trade unions were non-political.

Applegarth believed education was the key to improving the position of the working class. In 1869 he became a founding member of the National Education League,

to secure free, compulsory and secular education for every child. He denounced the provisions of the 1870 Education Act for mean-tested grants; "the children of the poorest parents are to have paper tickets pinned upon their backs."

He thanked MPs like Mundella who supported the campaign, but insisted 'it is more important that the workers should take the question into their own hands.' Attending a strike meeting of Glasgow carpenters he won their support for the struggle of English and Welsh workers for education.



Robert Applegarth

He rejected the notion that craft had no right to speak for the unskilled on the matter of compulsory education. "No one knows better than the artisan that the poor are taxed to keep them poorer still; and they claim the right to demand that their taxes shall be expended on schools instead of on prisons and workhouses."

In the 1860s, as today, the bourgeoisie carried on a relentless propaganda against trade unions. Applegarth never allowed one hostile criticism in the press to go unanswered. Arguing that, "In

but few instances has an advantage been conceded without recourse to a strike," he proved statistically that in a single year, 1865, his members were £6 14s per man better off due to strike action. "My experience has taught me that combinations result in the increase of wages and decrease of hours." He had nothing but contempt for the bourgeois champions of 'free' (i.e. non unionised) labour, whose victims ended up in the workhouse.

When in 1867 the law decided that the Boilermakers' funds were not entitled to legal protection, Applegarth called a conference of Amalgamated Trades which played a big part in winning the Trade Union Act of 1871 which provided security for union funds. Applegarth was also at the centre of agitation to remove the old Master and Servants Act, successful in 1867. In the same year he was appointed by the Amalgamated unions as their representative to the Commission on trade unions set up as a result of the Sheffield 'Outrages'.

In his evidence to the Commission, Applegarth solidly defended the unions' right to make their policy by majority decision binding on all members, their right to enforce a closed shop, and to prevent the introduction of new machinery which threatened jobs. When the Commission's majority Report proposed that no union be given official registration unless it refused to assist another union in sympathetic action, Applegarth commented: "If this be the price trade unions have to pay for protection, then they will prefer to go unprotected till Doomsday." His fellow trade unionists had no doubt they had made a wise decision in choosing this 33 year old General Secretary to be their spokesman.

## Carte Blanche given to SAS in Ireland

IT IS hardly surprising to learn that the two members of the Special Air Service on trial in northern Ireland for the murder of an unarmed civilian have been acquitted. What is important, however, about the case is that the SAS, a force whose very presence in northern Ireland was for a long time denied, has now been given legal carte blanche to murder and terrorise at will. Although mistaken in their belief that their lives were endangered during the incident in which the boy died, the mere fact of this belief, according to the judge's ruling, allowed them to take whatever steps they thought necessary to protect themselves. As the murdered boy's father said: "It seems to me that all a soldier has to do, to justify being in danger, is to say he is in danger. If he then wants to shoot someone, he can just go ahead and do it."

The proceedings of the court were a farce from beginning to end. The suspected soldiers appeared in court flanked by fellow members of the SAS so that even the judge did not know who exactly was on trial. He was forced to admit that he had now seen it all in a court of law. It all seemed completely absurd even for northern Ireland where the figure of justice has been blind for so long. Little was made of the fact that this was no isolated incident but the culmination of a week which saw a man killed in a border gun battle in which only one shot was fired and five people, four armed bombers (no arms being recovered of course) and one innocent passer-by were killed in the SAS 'stake-out' of the Ballysillan electricity generator. Finally the state pathologist's evidence of the boy having been shot in the back was quietly dismissed.

### Shoot on sight

It is obvious that the SAS intended to kill anyone who showed up. As the judge said, "The soldiers must have seen the youth take up the rifle from the cache, but strangely did nothing while this was going on. If they had inspected the rifle they would have found it posed no threat in its unloaded state." Arriving on the scene after the shots had been fired, the boy's father and brother were forced to lie on the ground for two and a half hours in full view of the body while no medical aid was forthcoming. So intent were the army to absolve themselves of any responsibility for the incident that the RUC, hardly the most unbiased of commentators, described their initial statement in which the boy was described as a known member of the IRA as a "tissue of lies".

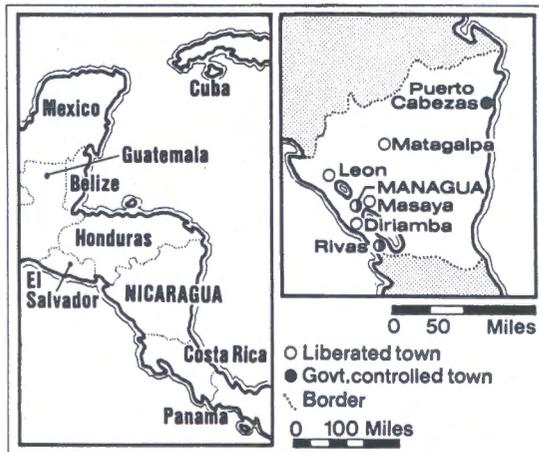
The SAS are not a 'special case' in northern Ireland. They are simply carrying on the job of murder and mass terror that the more orthodox regiments of the British Army have long been engaged in. It is obvious that they are not there to protect anyone or anything but the interests of British Imperialism. The response of our trade unions must be immediate - BRITISH TROOPS OUT OF IRELAND NOW.

## Nicaraguans remove a tyrant

THE DAYS of GENERAL Anastasio Somoza, dictator of Nicaragua are numbered. His family, which owns over half of the country, was installed in power by Franklin Roosevelt in 1933. Today he has a few problems. The Nicaraguan people want to get rid of him. As one old man said: "There is no difference between living like this and dying".

Apparently victory was impossible because Somoza's National Guard was a superior fighting force, much better equipped than the FSLN (Sandinista National Liberation Front) and the rest of the Nicaraguan people. The US troops in Vietnam were supposed to be superior too, but we all know what happened to them. For all that, they have Sherman tanks and Sikorsky helicopters from the US and still the National Guardsmen are losing.

Somoza's news blackout has only served to conceal just how desperate a situation he is in. In the cities he has ordered indiscriminate bombing of all occupied areas Managua, Leon, Estel, Masaya, Matagalpa, all are being destroyed by Somoza. The determination of Nicaraguans to rid themselves of this tyrant can be judged by the growth of the Sandinista's main army; from 400 in September 1978 to over 5000 now. The National Guard has lost control of large areas of the country - as the town of Diriamba in the south illustrates. Journalists were unaware of any fighting there until an unexpected



Sandinista road block provided them with the information. Fighting lasted two weeks before the National Guard surrendered.

Backing for Somoza has come in the form of a \$66m loan from the IMF when the British representative refused to use his power of veto. The US Government is finding the situation very embarrassing. They expect us to believe that they really condemn Somoza by using the murder of an American newsmen (Nicaraguans are not important after all) to push their claims for intervention. The truth is that they have learnt something at least from the Iranian experience when they continued to back the Shah. In Nicaragua, Carter realises Somoza must go. But

only to be replaced by a government of US choosing.

The first idea, put to the Organisation of American States was an OAS 'peace-keeping' force. This was not too popular with the other Latin American countries; 'It seemed to them a case of 'today Nicaragua, tomorrow us'. Never mind, the US insisted that they were quite happy that 'inhuman conduct' had been condemned. The latest threat is to send in US troops if US interests (profits) are threatened. US imperialism stood isolated. Direct US intervention remains a possibility but it has not succeeded in intimidating the people of Nicaragua who are joining the mass uprising in their thousands.

## Editorial

THE Secretary for Industry, Mr Laissez-faire Joseph himself, has come up with his answer for what's wrong with the Post Office: end the state monopoly and let private enterprise take over in the name of efficiency. This was tried once before when a previous Tory Government allowed private mail operators to act as strike-breakers in 1971. The result was a ludicrous rip-off with one of the main operators pocketing the high charges for delivery and simply putting the letters through the box once the strike ended.

We know what's wrong with the Post Office. Wage restraint has kept pay so low that it has been impossible to recruit or keep staff and the postal service is short of 10,000 postmen. It is exactly what health workers, for example, were saying to us during their strike for higher wages: low pay for us means a bad health service for you, and if we don't stop government destruction carried out through its pay policy, there'll be no health service at all.

Just as British capitalism has decided that it can dispense with a health service and an educational system, so it can quite happily do without a cheap efficient postal service for the public. All this reflects a change brought about by the absolute decline of capitalism which is most noticeable in Britain, the first capitalist country. Whereas a healthy, educated working class was more exploitable in terms of the surplus value that could be got from it, now that British industry is relatively unprofitable the working class has, on the whole, become a dangerous embarrassment. British capitalism wants to dispense with this working class and the destruction of an industry in which that working class is rooted and which does not put large enough profits in the capitalists' pockets seems to them the best way to get rid of us. So, among so much else, a good, cheap postal service is disappearing in the home of the Penny Post.

It is all the easier for British capitalism to take this decision because as has often been pointed out in *The Worker*, the big monopoly concerns have their own telecommunications systems which are not even maintained by the Post Office any more. In order to facilitate the destruction of a public postal service Joseph also proposes to split the Post Office into the unprofitable post handling side which can then be finished off and the still profitable telecommunications side which can then be thrown to the wolves of free enterprise - and, as the article in this issue on telecommunications shows, these can just as well be foreign as British wolves.

The Thatcher-Joseph claim that it is possible to put the clock back to a time of free competition when capitalism was healthy and thriving is as fraudulent as the Heath claim that capitalism had an acceptable face which was different from the face we saw in the newspapers in connection with slush funds, bribery and general corruption. From our working class point of view there never was a golden age of free-enterprise capitalism and capitalism has never worn an acceptable face. British capitalism has moved from merely exploiting us to the maximum extent possible, to trying to destroy us by the destruction of British industry which is no longer a main source of profit. British capitalism is cutting its own throat in the process but we cannot wait for it to bleed to death before we act. We must say to our British capitalists: All right, you find other places more profitable for investment. Then follow it yourselves and here's a good kick in the pants to speed you on your way. We'll develop Britain ourselves on a non-profit, socialist basis for the good of our people and expose all the myths you made up about the impossibility of an independent, self-reliant Britain.

And, incidentally, we'll be able to keep in touch with each other by means of a free popular post while we're doing it!

## Fleet St. embarrassed by new technology

TIMES print workers seem to have succeeded in resisting management attempts to impose new technology through a near eight-month lock-out. A return to work on union terms is now likely. Anyway, the huge losses experienced by the Mirror newspapers as a result of new technology has forced Times Newspapers to think twice.

In their attempt to destroy one of the most powerful unions in the industry, the press barons of Fleet St have encountered one problem - they need the NGA compositors' skill. These men, responsible for the setting up and layout of the pages, have developed skills over several centuries which capitalism is hard put to replace. The dream of all newspaper owners is direct input of articles by journalists, with no human interference until it is printed. Unfortunately, the skills of computer programming, though fast developing, have not yet reached the required sophistication to translate compositors' skills into sets of rules and instructions

that the machine can obey.

Recent failures at the Daily Mirror have helped to undermine the lockout of printers at The Times. The Mirror management were unwilling to wait for the limited development of IPC's research and development team, and bought equipment from the USA which would eliminate the old Linotypes altogether. They were too greedy, and have ended up employing more men, not less. Page composition teams had to be increased from two to four, and two separate systems operated side by side, although at an increased wage rate agreed as the price for introducing the new system.

It was not easy to instruct a computer where to hyphenate English words. There was no way to display a whole page on a screen at such a magnification that individual words could be adequately read, and photographs also proved difficult. At one point, the equipment was altered to display letters as blobs and photographs blank -

hardly a basis for the sub-editor to judge the effectiveness of his page. Even large headlines needed to be produced in the traditional way. Whole pages could disappear for hours at a time. The operators of terminals could not see what they had just typed.

Thus, a system which would prepare a telephone directory efficiently could not produce a national daily. One of the Mirror's papers, the daily *Sporting Life*, had to convert back permanently to the old system. As at the Mirror, the new system has been cut back to simple typesetting, followed by 'cut and paste' work, since it became obvious that the paper was heading for financial disaster. The Mirror group has lost £5m in the last year because of the new system.

The Times management must be embarrassed by this white elephant down the road, and other newspaper owners will be less anxious, for a while, to 'revolutionise' the industry and castigate the printers as enemies of progress.

## Immigration a weapon in propaganda war

THREE teenage children from Gillingham, Kent, are to be taken by the Home Office from their mother and sent back to India where no one can look after them. One of the children is so upset by this threat that he attempted to take his own life.

The children have been given in custody to their mother after her divorce. She has been working in Britain as a station porter in order to support them. Naturally, she wanted them to be with her, so when she returned from a visit to India in January this year, she brought them with her.

The Government have taken a tough line on the 1976 Immigration Act and have insisted that the

children, who have no legal permits, must return to India, where their grandparents are too old to care for them, and wait till they can get the permits. This could be a matter of years. Petitions by neighbours seem to have fallen on deaf ears at the Home Office.

What a pity for these children that they have not come in a leaky boat from Vietnam! If only they could come and spread propaganda in the West about the "horrors" of socialism (which after all is merely insisting that all its citizens should be treated with equal fairness and without privilege) entry to Britain would be far easier. The

Government is hoping, by allowing these Vietnamese into Britain, they will back up all the Government's lies about socialism in its present Cold War campaign - just as they did with the Hungarians in 1956.

Let our new Vietnamese citizens reflect, as they settle their children into state schools and register with local GPs, that the existence of our education and health service is due to the collective efforts of the working class through their Trade Union movement. Meanwhile the three Indian teenagers, who can serve no useful propaganda function and make no international headlines, await deportation.



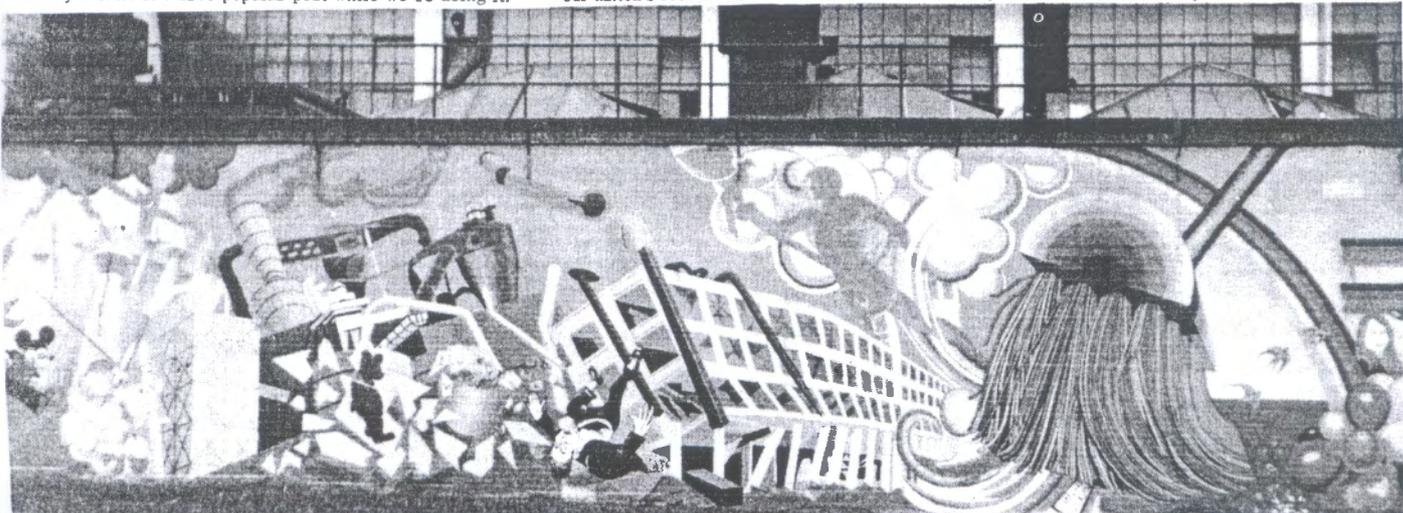
FROM THE TUC General Council

"...on the Chancellor's own figures, there will as a result of the Budget now be an absolute decline in economic activity, and therefore employment and living standards, in the coming year: this is an indefensible waste of our nation's resources.

## Tory Budget-extracts from TUC reply

"Trade unionists among others will find it impossible to believe the Chancellor's claim that this Budget will 'squeeze inflation out of the system'. A Government Minister has now quoted the figure of 17½ per cent as the inflation forecast for November 1979, over double the rate a year earlier...

The Government has deliberately increased prices at a stroke, in particular but not only by the swingeing increase in VAT. This can only feed inflation in a disastrous way, and the Government must take full responsibility for its actions and their inevitable consequences.



THE PHOTOGRAPH above was taken by *The Worker* shortly before the 'Battersea Wall', a 180 foot mural painted on the side of the derelict Morgan crucible factory in South London, was demolished despite local protests.

The mural, painted by scores of people over many months, was intended as a permanent reminder of struggles waged by local people against property speculators, bad housing and unpopular local councillors. The Wandsworth Tories,

who have cut back so many local amenities and social services, regarded the mural as an affront, particularly as several were easily recognisable in the mural, being swept by an enormous broom, into the "dustbin of history" as

Mao would say. Although 'US hands off Vietnam' and 'British Troops out of Ireland' adorn many walls and bridges round Britain, the 'Battersea Wall' was obviously in a league of its own. Little surprise then

that the demolition was accompanied by arrests and hundreds of local people having to be restrained by the police. Locals are enraged by the destructiveness of the council; the broom will be in use again, and it won't just be on a wall

# Craftsmen demand more from Gasboard

GAS CRAFTSMEN of the North Thames Region have adopted a resolution calling for a national strike if their current claim is not satisfactorily met.

The craftsmen, members of the CSEU, organised a one-day strike and held a meeting at Conway Hall on July 5th.

The meeting was addressed by a delegate from the AEUW National Committee, who pointed to the importance of the resolution on gas industry wages that was adopted by the National Committee in May and now stood as union policy. This decision would give great strength to the craftsmen in their struggle for a decent basic wage. It was an example of the need of the members

to use the machinery of their unions and ensure that this machinery was strengthened.

A report on the current 7 month delay in the wages negotiations was given by a shop steward who described the latest offer from British Gas as the lowest increase he has heard about this year. And this from one of the most profitable companies in Britain. He said that British Gas were so embarrassed by the money they were making, over £700 million, that great efforts were being made to reduce them by new accounting techniques. And yet they were offering craftsmen in this industry a basic wage of £54. Craftsmen should insist on

payment for skill and this is a question of organisation and not of numbers.

Further reports to the meeting dealt with the attitude of North Thames Region to CSEU members. This was an attitude that would only be changed by the members asserting their rights through action, since the management, regionally and nationally, considered them, the CSEU, to be an irrelevant minority. The members had to continue to reject management's attempts to decide who would represent us.

The resolution calling for a national strike was discussed by the meeting and passed by a very large majority.

BRITAIN'S DEFENCE workers like little tin soldiers. A Vice-Admiral decided that he was no longer prepared to tolerate "action aimed at approaching a situation not far removed from anarchy". But members of the Institute of Professional Civil Servants at Devonport, working to rule on their claim, refused to obey his orders to sign that they would work normally.

"The statement by this Victorian Admiral will lead to a very significant escalation of the dispute, which will certainly put in jeopardy the country's defence. If this is the attitude of the services and they want a fight, we shall oblige them. We intend to win this fight.

"It is quite clear that this lock-out is an attempt to bankrupt our union. But we are too sensible to be caught by his stupidity. We shall not respond by pulling out all our people, but just a small number. This will hit the Ministry of Defence much more". These were the words of the IPCS General Secretary.

Now a mere 30 tug and engineering officers at Devonport

are on strike, but this is enough to prevent most of the Royal Navy ships at Devonport going out to sea. The Polaris submarine being refitted at Rosyth dockyard had all work stopped on it by a series of lightning strikes. The major Polaris nuclear base at Faslane on the Clyde faces virtual closure under the threat of action from 12 key civil servants controlling the maintenance and loading of nuclear warheads. Servicemen will not be allowed to be brought in to break the strike, as they do not have the skills required.

Industrial action is being stepped up at the Royal Mint at Llantrisant, maintenance services at the Houses of Parliament, computer centres at Hastings and Cumbernauld, the Ministry of Defence communications centre at Whitehall, as well as naval dockyards. It is an impressive demonstration of the power of guerrilla action.

The claim is for increases of 36 to 47 per cent for 40,000 technicians, 10,000 related staff, and 20,000 scientists. The government is offering barely half that.



MINERS in action against the Heath Government. They have now decided for further action at their Conference in Jersey, when they voted unanimously for a wage rise of between 30 and 65 per cent. They also refused to allow Deep Duffryn Pit to be closed.

## Midland workers on strike as banks make enormous profits

SINCE MONDAY, bank workers employed at the Midland have been involved in strike action. 'Striking takes the waiting out of wanting' as the advert might have said. The Banking, Insurance and Finance Union (BIFU) have claimed pay increases of 20 per cent plus 5 per cent consolidation. ASTMS members are also involved.

Although action has begun at the Midland, the pay claim has been presented on behalf of workers at all four major clearing banks, employing 200,000 people. First to be hit were five computer centres where 600 workers proved that the machinery cannot be worked without co-operative humans.

The computers stopped work in sympathy at all the centres hit by strikes; the London computer centre at Brent, Coopers Row and Gracechurch Street in the City of London, Pudsey in West Yorkshire and Bootle, Lancashire. There have also been 24 hour strikes at Heathrow airport, London. In addition, 8,000 union members in high street branches of all the banks are

being balloted for strike action in support of the pay claim.

Despite Tory utterances that pay claims should be seen in the context of productivity and company profits, the banks can hardly plead poverty. Their profits are phenomenal.

The June 1979 issue of LABOUR RESEARCH carries an interesting report on the financial fortunes of the banks that 'cannot afford to pay' workers beyond the 12 per cent plus arbitration which they have offered. What is there to arbitrate about? The figures speak for themselves.

The pre-tax profits of the four banks last year were well over £1,000 million, 21 per cent up on 1977 and 55 per cent up on 1976.

Average pay for a worker at the National Westminster is £4247 per year. The 33 directors, on the other hand, put aside £770,000 for themselves last year, an average of £23,333. Over the Midland, the highest paid director got £1,322 every week. The chairman of Lloyds got £55,485 in 1978. Price increases will not bother them.

## Schools back to 1930's

50,000 TEACHERS are to lose their jobs. This figure is put forward as a scare. But it is in fact uncomfortably close to what may happen.

The National Union of Teachers is launching a major campaign. The TUC is sending notices of total opposition to all 112 affiliated unions. "School standards are more seriously at risk than at any time since the 1930's as expenditure on books, equipment and materials is already at a dangerously low level."

Hampshire County Council intends shedding 470 teaching posts - and this was before the Budget. Dinner staff are to be reduced by 220. Staffordshire has announced a moratorium on any development pending further cuts.

In Clwyd, the Director of education is to propose cuts of £1.6 million this year and £3.2 million next year. They will totally close down all nursery education. The remedial service will be cut back almost completely.

The Budget proposals of cuts of £55.5 million are only a beginning. The state education service is on the verge of destruction - unless we prevent it.

## Workers demand to be skilled

PLESSEY Telecommunications Ltd., in Liverpool, recently refused to tender for a £58 million contract. They said they did not have enough skilled workers to do the job. They could only meet the completion date by switching labour from their major development contract, for computerised exchanges, System X. System X, with newer technology, requiring less labour and therefore making bigger profits.

We do not stand simply for a buy British campaign, rather a campaign to save our industry and our skills. That the Post Office will look overseas to meet this contract is despicable, because they should not have to.

To the workers, this shortage of skills comes as no surprise. In the last 3 to 4 years 3,000 jobs have been axed by Plessey in Liverpool alone. GEC, STC and Pye(TMC), have been wielding the same axe.

In 1975, the Post Office placed an order with L. M. ERICSON of Sweden, for a £30 million job at Stag Lane, involving virtually identical equipment. Workers from the telecomms manufacturing industry marched through London and Blackpool, insisting that they were capable of doing the work, and that it should be done in Britain. Such a demand led the Post Office to guarantee that future work would be put out to tender to British manufacturers as well, since they had given the job to L. C. ERICSON without even inviting tenders. Now that the British industry has the opportunity to tender, we find our bosses have destroyed it so much that it is incapable of meeting the requirements.

Workers in Plessey are calling for other workers in the industry to support their demand for training and recruitment of the necessary labour, so that the industry can survive.

### Public Meeting

July 12th. "What future for youth?".  
8.00pm. Cowley Community Centre, Oxford.

### 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 Market Place  
Hull Bookstall Old Town Market, Saturdays  
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