

THE WORKER



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1977 YEAR OF STRUGGLE YEAR OF ADVANCE

1977 will be recorded in the history of the British working class as a turning point and a year of advance. The start of the year saw workers in crisis, at a crossroads. Whether the class? Towards an independent sovereign future, self-determined, or towards subjection to the rulers' plans for the destruction of the country?

To take the former path demanded rejection of the social contract and its philosophy of aid to capitalism in crisis. As the year draws to its close the ruling class stand inept and more isolated than ever before, with almost every section of workers engaged in struggle against its servant, the Labour Government.

In February, the WORKER headline (Issue 3) read "Counter-revolution thrives if workers keep the social contract". The message of THE WORKER was: destroy capitalism before it destroys us.

Contract rejected

By March, judging from motions to various union annual conferences, it was becoming increasingly clear that to reject the contract was exactly what the members intended to do. Workers were again turning to their unions to make them perform their most elementary role: to struggle for wages with the employer.

It was also becoming clear that even if the contract was to be rejected the effects were to be with us for a long time. The social contract was more than an attack on living standards - its acceptance was a denial of the trade union's basic task, its reason for being. If the Government was to determine wages what point was there in having a union? Many workers had now to face up to the fact that neglect of their union machinery had resulted in a one-sided 'deal' which meant erosion of differentials for skill. Some, instead of remedying the situation through their union, compounded the problem by trying a short cut, parallelism, a break-

away body to represent a 'special' section.

Such was the case with some Leyland toolmakers, and would have been with the Heathrow maintenance engineers had it not been for the lead of Reg Birch, executive councilman of the AUEW. THE WORKER (April 25th) said, "What has been demonstrated by the maintenance engineers at Leyland, is that there is no substitute for straight-forward rejection of the social contract as an attack on trade unionism and hostile to the interests of our class. Any attempt by skilled workers to avoid the consequences of the social contract for themselves while not opposing the social contract itself on behalf of the whole organised working class can only end in confusion and frustration."

The Communist Party of Britain (Marxist-Leninist) raised the burgeoning rejection of the contract to a higher level. The headline of THE WORKER reporting on May Day declared, "A barbaric system which has

outlasted its time. Capitalism must go." The message for May Day was not only the need to halt the advance towards fascism in Britain but a warning too that since the decline of capitalism is a world crisis this too would be resolved through world oppression, against workers - a world war. The Party chairman in his May Day speech said, "Our Party does not subscribe to the view that world war necessarily brings revolution. I would prefer to put it the other way: revolution brings world war." He concluded "Capitalism is barbaric. It has outlasted its time. It must go. That is the task of our Party. It is your job too, all of you, wherever you are, to struggle for the emancipation of the working class in this land."

Employed fight for unemployed

1977 saw a sharpening in many areas of the struggle to save the health and education service and industry from Government attack. This was linked in almost

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End collaboration! TUC must back firemen

THE GENERAL secretary of the Society of Civil and Public Servants was speaking for the whole working class when he wrote to the general secretary of the TUC pointing out that the decision of the Finance and General Purposes Committee not to support the firemen's strike was "contrary to explicit TUC policy and appears to condone Government attempts to impose an arbitrary and discriminatory incomes policy in the public sector".

The letter will be brought to the attention of the TUC General Council at its meeting on December 21 when it will have to decide whether to endorse the "inner cabinet's" decision not to attack the Government's 10 per cent pay limit on the grounds that the Labour Government is determined to uphold its incomes

policy! This is like saying: we'll go all out for collective bargaining if the employers, including the Government, don't speak crossly to us and tell us we shouldn't.

But of course the best support the SCPS can give the firemen and the best rebuff it can give the TUC's Finance and General Purposes Committee is the pay claim of at least 20 per cent to be submitted in the new year which must be backed by industrial action. And that goes for other unions as well. If we allow the Government to take us on section by section, there is nothing the TUC could do to save us even if it wanted to: if we attack on a broader front bringing many more unions into the fray, the TUC will perform become, as was intended, a committee of unions involved in class struggle.

Firemen firm

Meanwhile the firmness of the firemen in their claim, and their determination not to call off strike action while the Government persists in its illegal operation of a rigid pay curb at the cost to us of lives and property, has strengthened the hand of the Fire Brigades Union's representatives in their negotiations with the local authorities. A meeting took place on Monday December 19th and more will follow in the attempt to arrive at an offer worth reconvening the general conference of FBU members which alone is competent to end the industrial action.

We must find ways of making it clear to this Government which dares call itself 'Labour' that its efforts to smash the firemen in their just demands can and will be met only by our determination to smash it!



Ford workers, shown here listening to an appeal from workers in another industry, rejected the social contract by winning a pay settlement without reference to Government "guidelines". (Press Association)

Geneva .. neocolonialism and the UNCTAD rigmarole

YET once more we have to witness imperialism being dressed up as something different but emerging as the old beast itself greedy for profits and markets, and for the investments and power to control them.

For some time now those who fear and hate revolution have been making desperate attempts to shore up the semi-colonial, semi-feudal countries of the world by all kinds of international agencies and conferences which at best can tinker with this or that detail while leaving the imperialist system intact. The UNCTAD conferences, four of which have so far taken place, are a case in point. The last one held in Nairobi last year dreamt of a great Common Fund for helping primary producing nations whose sole commodity, be it copper or tin, coffee or sugar, is forever at the mercy

of imperialist marketing forces. The idea was that one new common fund would be better than individual commodity organisations which the imperialist camp wants.

For a month they debated and wrangled at Geneva but early this month it all came to a sorry end as the imperialist bloc, headed by the USA, refused to budge on its minimum essentials, such as no funding of a 'second window', that is, permitting the colonials to diversify their economies and even go in for a bit of industrialisation. Also when it came to the crunch they were not going to sit passively and let control of the new Common Fund pass out of their grasp into that of the Group of 77 which speaks for the 'developing' nations, a euphemism for the semi-colonial, semi-feudal states.

The impasse is being built up into a major confrontation but it is really no more than the typical social democratic way out of the capitalist tangle. Instead of revolution which alone can destroy the cancer which keeps these countries backward and their people hungry, the ruling class that controls these countries knows that its only hope of survival is some deal or other with the imperialist world, be that western imperialism or Russian imperialism.

Even as the forces of socialism grow and wars of liberation develop in strength, the imperialist world desires to camouflage itself and masquerade in North-South dialogues. Brandt, a veteran in such charades, heads a new International Committee of experts spawned by the World Bank to bridge the gap between the 'developed' and the 'developing' world. It is incredible that those who purport to represent Marxism-Leninism should accept such UN negotiations and bargain as the way forward for a 'new international economic order' and the liberation of the colonial world. It is like expecting the TUC to destroy capitalism.

Middle East THE WEEK

PRESIDENT Carter's denunciation of the Palestine Liberation Organisation and US approval of the proposals Begin will make at Cairo, put the final touches on the substitution of a Jerusalem-Cairo-Washington axis for the Geneva Conference on the Middle East.

Sadat's initiative of embarking on bilateral negotiations with Israel in this way is a good example of the 'third world' approach to international affairs. The Egyptian people have apparently supported their own bourgeoisie in joining with the US against the 'more dangerous' Soviet Union because Sadat needs US economic 'aid' to bolster up his own position.

The result will probably be Israeli agreement to clear out of the Sinai while continuing their control of the West Bank in however disguised a form. This can only be considered a step towards peace if it is thought that peace could or should be based on the denial of a homeland for the Palestinian people and a consolidation of US power in the Middle East.

A FIREMAN reflects on Christmas: "I've been in the service for eight years and have never had both Xmas and Boxing Day off. On my schedule I wouldn't have it until 1980.

This year let the soldiers have a good Christmas!"

SINCE the Prevention of Terrorism Act came into force, 3,107 people have been detained and 599 of them for the full period of seven days.

The Home Secretary is endeavoring to undermine opposition by holding an 'inquiry into the efficiency of the Act and the effects on civil liberties.'

IT IS fashionable these days to harp on about Britain's impoverished capacity for military defence. Defence, or war against workers?

The sending of troops to Bermuda this December is a grim reminder of their role.

THE WESTMINSTER corridors of power are still seething in the wake of the 'shock' vote on elections to the European Assembly. The Government nearly fell, the Lab-Lab pact lay momentarily in ruins. Would civilisation survive and what is the issue?

How best to betray the sovereignty and independence of Britain.

"THE PROBLEM of war everywhere is mainly psychological. It comes from fear, mistrust, suspicion," says the Nobel peace prizewinner.

That doesn't provide much prospect for peace. Imperialism causes war and when we clear the earth of imperialism then war will be ended.

problems, the peasants will wield their carrying poles, the workers will demonstrate in the streets and the students will create disturbances. Whenever such things happen, they must in the first place be taken as good things, and that is how I look at the matter.

"Several years ago an airfield was to be built somewhere in Honan Province, but no proper arrangements were made beforehand for the peasants living there nor any adequate explanations offered them when they were compelled to move out. The peasants of the village affected said, even the birds will make a few squawks if you go poking with your pole at their nests in a tree to try to bring it down. Teng Hsiao-ping you, too, have a nest, and if I destroyed it, wouldn't you make a few squawks?"

When students wanted to come to Peking to present a petition but were stopped, Mao Tse-tung wrote of the incident: 'It is my opinion and Premier Chou's too that the students should have been allowed to come to Peking and call on the departments concerned. The workers should be allowed to go on strike and the masses to hold demonstrations... In the future when the Constitution is revised, I suggest that the freedom to strike be added.'

Continuing our two-part feature on health in Albania

Health for the people

IT IS worth looking at just two examples of how the Albanian health service operates for two groups of the population - expectant mothers and industrial workers.

As soon as she suspects that she is pregnant a woman can call at the local mother and child consultation centre. Once the pregnancy is confirmed the woman is placed under the supervision of a midwife and attends for regular checkups and is prepared for labour and child birth by the doctor or midwife. She also attends a health education course to learn about caring for her baby. While she continues to work, care is taken that the work is not too strenuous and she may be given lighter work as the pregnancy advances. Both before and after the birth she receives paid leave and on returning to work she is able to put her child in a creche. If she is breast feeding she can leave work every three hours to feed the child. Women are now able to make their contribution to the building of socialism and at the same time enjoy their children. It is hard to convey the change that has taken place in just three decades but perhaps one set of figures gives an indication. Before liberation there was one fifteen-bed maternity ward; in 1975 there were 638 wards and maternity homes.



Turning to the second example, concern for the health of industrial workers at their workplace is shown in several ways. Clinics are found at most factories and other industrial projects and regular check-ups are given to all workers especially those in 'high-risk' jobs. Public health legislation lays down that every work place should provide protective clothing and equipment for the work force; proper ventilation and the removal of any substances harmful to the environment both within and outside the works are stressed; all new workers must have a medical examination before starting work. These pieces of legislation were not designed to lie idly in the statute book but are the responsibility of all the work force to

bring into reality. The key question that remains to be answered is how can such a small country as Albania afford the sort of health service outlined above? The answer does not lie in taxation or insurance payments. No such deductions are made from worker's wage packets. The answer does lie with the increasing rate of economic development both in industry and agriculture. This has contributed to a steadily increasing national income which by 1974 had risen 10.8 times as compared to a population growth of 2.3 times. National income is divided between a fund of accumulation and a fund of consumption, the latter divided again between individual (wages) and social consumption. From the social consumption fund the state

finances areas such as education, pensions and the health service. Thus this fund in effect operates to provide the social wage of the people. The health service budget is drawn up from the base rather than imposed from above. Each individual health institution draws up its own budget for the coming year. This is forwarded to the health section of the district People's Council for approval. It then goes to the Ministry of Health and the Council of Ministers and once the Government has approved the overall budget for health provision the necessary funds are made available.

See Exhibition advert on page 4

Book review .. Mao vol.5

THE authorised English version of the fifth volume of the Selected Works of Mao Tse-tung was published by the Peoples' Publishing House, Peking, in April 1977, and covers the most important writings of the period of the socialist revolution and socialist construction from September 1949 to 1957. Certain of the works contained in this volume, like 'On the Correct Handling of Contradictions among the People',

have already appeared and are well known. A work which many of us will not have seen is 'Speech of the Second Plenary Session of the Eighth Central Committee of the Communist Party of China (Nov 1956)'

In this interesting work Mao Tse-tung points out how what is now called Euro-communism was originally endorsed by the Soviet revisionists. 'Khrushchev's report at the Twentieth Congress

of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union says it is possible to seize state power by the parliamentary road, that is to say, it is no longer necessary for all countries to learn from the October Revolution. Once this gate is opened, by and large Leninism is thrown away."

Mao Tse-tung makes the distinction between the 'parliamentary democracy' the revisionists fancy and what he calls 'great democracy under the leadership of the proletariat'. "The great democracy set in motion by the proletariat is directed against

class enemies. Enemies of the nation (who are none other than the imperialists and the foreign monopolist capitalists) are class enemies also. Great democracy can be directed against bureaucrats too... If some people grow tired of life and so become bureaucratic, if, when meeting the masses, they have not a single word for them but only take them to task, and if they don't bother to solve any of the problems the masses may have, they are destined to be overthrown... If you alienate yourself from the masses and fail to solve their

Editorial

IN THIS last issue of THE WORKER for 1977 we count our revolutionary blessings and look forward to a new year of working class struggle toward the goal of a socialist Britain in which there is no exploitation.

What gain did 1977 see in the fulfilment of our Party's task of helping the working class in Britain to keep that socialist goal in sight and to link current struggles to the revolutionary strategy of establishing a dictatorship of the proletariat?

The way forward

One of the greatest gains possible for us is to achieve clarity on the class struggle, here in Britain and in the world context - not so that we can enjoy superior feelings because we "got it right when others didn't", but so that we can share with the working class that perspective of the way forward to victory. This clarity cannot be achieved, as has been suggested from one quarter, by remaining quiescent for a period of "regrouping and accumulating strength". Clarity comes in so far as we are involved in class struggle to the maximum extent and are applying to that struggle the systematically-developed lessons of other workers in struggle, which is what Marxism-Leninism is about.

Internationalism

During the year we gained a clearer appreciation of the relationship of our struggle here with the world situation which was reflected in our Party's pamphlet "Britain in the World 1977". We quote Lenin's definition of proletarian internationalism: "There is one and only one kind of internationalism: working whole heartedly for the development of the revolutionary movement and the revolutionary struggle in one's own country, and supporting (by propaganda, sympathy and material aid) such and only such a struggle in every other country without exception."

It is necessary to restate this and to draw out afresh its implications for us in Britain because each new wave of revisionism is an attempt to tamper with that fundamental thesis and substitute something else for that revolutionary struggle in one's own country - whether it's playing the parliamentary game by the enemy's rules, allying with capitalist political parties hostile to working class interests or combining forces with the bourgeois class enemy to fight some 'super' enemy in capitalism's cause.

As the case for defending capitalism or social democracy, which is simply capitalism with a sugar-coating of phoney 'worker participation', gets weaker and as Marxism, the ideology of the working class, grows in influence, servants of the bourgeoisie try to disguise capitalism as some new brand of Marxism. In exposing the latest infringement of a political "trades description act" in the interest of our class's not being fobbed off with quack remedies, we refine and freshen and strengthen the pure draught of Marxism-Leninism. We are not therefore dismayed that the enemy like a tired old magician running out of tricks keeps offering us in new bottles the same old opiates to dull our revolutionary zeal.

Oppose world war

Let us consider some quotations from that pamphlet as political milestones set up in 1977 to guide us through 1978 and subsequent years:

"Communists oppose war; it is a crime against humanity. Our duty is to achieve revolution to prevent war. We must not march in a crusade for capitalism. We must, if imperialist war be forced on us, turn it into civil war.

"It is a betrayal if the working class does not turn an imperialist war into a civil war. 'European unity' as a bulwark against attack is an invitation to a European working class plus their 'parties' to ally themselves with their own bourgeoisie in economic and military blocs.

"Now we see the demand for direct election from Britain to the EEC, the elected being answerable to no one at home, not even bourgeois democratic Parliament. These are the reasons why the British working class must not only get out of the Common Market but in aid of their brethren in Europe, seek to destroy it.

"It is the duty of all workers, especially European who bear a heavy burden of guilt, to give assistance to the African peoples to stop a modern version of bought chieftains and warring imperialists.

"All exploited are potentially progressive, potentially revolutionary, and capitalism exploits all. It is a question of class, of class relationships alone. Otherwise there is the danger of racialism, 'black against white', 'east against west', 'north against south', old weapons of imperialism.

"Our duty here in Britain is clear. We think that since we, the Party, have no separate interest from our own working class, nor has the British working class a special or vested interest separate from the European working class, or that of the USSR proletariat or that of the USA proletariat, or of all the workers and peasants in the world, we should not kill each other for the masters; we are not to act at their behest. We must unite for revolution and peace, put down the warmonger, the predatory imperialists in the USA, USSR, in Britain, in France and elsewhere.

"A great clarity of mind and purpose of Marxist-Leninist direction and purity is beginning. There must be no turning away now, no casualties in the war for Revolution for Peace for world working class unity, the establishment of Socialism in Britain, for closer unity with all forces of workers throughout the world. Then we shall at last achieve our great and historic purpose endowed to us through the great master Marx."

Conciliation sham exposed by Law Lords

THE DECISION of the House of Lords on 14th December to invalidate the ballot conducted by the Advisory Conciliation and Arbitration Service (ACAS) among Grunwick workers should come as no surprise to trade unionists. One of the many unique aspects of "democracy" in Britain is that the aristocracy is the final interpreter of laws passed by the House of Commons, the bourgeoisie's last legal line of defence.

It is often said that lawyers are the only people to profit from litigation. This is quite untrue: the ruling class wins every time. At the slightest twitching of the legal nose television programmes are halted, mail must be delivered to South Africa, union

constitutions are interfered with.

The Law is becoming increasingly bold in its anti-trade union ways. But by exposing ACAS as the toothless meddler it always was, the Law Lords are coming dangerously close to besmirching the hallowed concept of 'participation'. If the ruling class wish to enmesh us in the spider's web of conciliation and collaboration, they should at least hold out some small hope of minor success.

We have always said that there can be no conciliation between classes: one or the other must dominate. In the case of ACAS where the officers are appointed by the Government this should be glaringly obvious.

For ACAS it must now be back to square one. They will have to work hard now to convince anyone, even the most cringing, that there is any point approaching them. As for the Grunwick strikers and their union, APEX, they must now decide whether to continue to play in a legal game of snakes and ladders where the dice are loaded against them and a snake dangles from the final square.

Pits: law won't help

WHILE sympathising with the anger of miners and their executive for countenancing and even encouraging local productivity deals when the NUM membership has rejected productivity deals so firmly and democratically, we can only deplore as stupid and venal the High Court application by Yorkshire, Kent and South Wales miners for a temporary injunction against local incentive schemes. Stupid, because, as shown by Mr Justice Jupp's dismissal, workers will never get justice from a capitalist legal system; venal because even if the courts ever did, exceptionally, find in our favour, we must never invite them to interfere in internal union business. Betrayals by our union leaders, or selfish greedy acts by sections of our membership can only be handled by mobilising the democratic strength of all to impose our own working class discipline.

FROM THE WORKERS TO THE WORKERS

THE BEST Christmas gifts for workers are the seasonal donations fellow workers make to their strike funds



Liverpool TGWU dustmen and Plessey's GMWU donated £50 to the firemen.

The EEUPTU Conference made a substantial contribution to the firemen's strike fund.

Liverpool Plessey Telecomms ASTMS, also raised a donation for firemen.

Mount Pleasant UPW donating £200 a week to the firemen.

ASTMS City 694 donated £190 to firemen and also invited firemen to their Xmas social. "Invite strikers to your Xmas parties", say the ASTMS members.

Engineers on THE TIMES are each giving £1 a week to the firemen.

For each £1 collected by engineers of THE DAILY EXPLORER, 50p is sent to the firemen and 50p is sent to the strikers at Rolls Royce in Willesden.

The women at Trico have contributed generously to the Rolls Royce strike fund.

NUJ at Macdonald Educational have sent a donation to the firemen. NUJ book branch have pledged continued support to the fight to keep open the Elizabeth Garret Anderson Hospital.

Haringey Association of the NUT have collected in schools for donations to the firemen's local picket lines.

Industrial front

Hull lorry drivers

HULL lorry drivers, members of TGWU, last week rejected the local employer's offer of a miserable £51 basic wage.

The idea that the offer plus overtime was acceptable was overwhelmingly opposed on the principle that the basic wage must be improved.

Leylands

WORKERS at British Leyland's No 2 Plant at Speke, Liverpool, have increased their determination to continue their strike (reported in THE WORKER Issue 27) Workers at the plant walked out on October 31st when management imposed new manning levels and working practices.

A meeting of electricians and fitters on December 12th voted by a large majority to back the stand of the rest of the plant. This resolve put paid to management's hopes of division and has strengthened the negotiators' hand.

Kent teachers reject transfer

TEACHERS in Kent recently took a great step forward in their defence of education, by becoming one of the first County Divisions of the NUT to totally reject the possibility of reaching an agreement with the employers on compulsory transfer of teachers.

The following motion was passed without opposition:-

"This Division expresses its complete opposition to the compulsory transfer of teachers, as this can only cause a reduction in the number of teaching posts available and a deterioration in conditions of service for the teachers involved. It rejects any agreement with the Kent County Council which in any way binds the Union to accept compulsory transfer; recognising that such an agreement would be used by the Authority to further restrict the rights of teachers and to reduce standards of educational provision in the County.

"Furthermore it considers that the best defence against compulsory transfer is a strong Union, united and determined to defend at every level the rights and interests of its members, thus reaffirming Union Policy on class size and teacher employment."

The lengths to which the employers will go to secure such an agreement are shown by the case of Leicestershire, where the Authority has offered to withdraw cuts totalling £1½ million, if the County NUT will agree to compulsory transfer. Kent teachers have now shown the way to deal with such blackmail: reject it out of hand from the very start!

And as proof that they meant what they said about class size and teacher employment, the Kent NUT passed a second motion giving local Associations the go-ahead to apply the new more stringent criteria for action as from January, and to continue with it till there are 'substantial reductions in class size' in Kent schools.

1977

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every case with a growing responsibility felt by the employed for the unemployed. Plessey workers on Merseyside occupied the Kirby factory in protest at redundancies, compulsory or voluntary, and worked in. In Newcastle in June 6000 workers from the Parsons group of factories demonstrated against redundancy. The idea that voluntary redundancy was the denial of a job to a school or college leaver was becoming accepted. At Hounslow Hospital staff occupied to save jobs and against closure. Their brave stand prompted the Area Health Authority to close the hospital by force, exposing Government plans for what they were, the wrecking of the health service.

No guidelines but ours

In May the AUEW National Committee set the pace for the entire working class by declaring for "free collective bargaining". THE WORKER commented, "A great



Firemen in occupation at North Fleet station, Kent.

Interview with firemen at Chatham Station

"BEFORE the strike we firemen were too naïve - we looked upon our job as something special. We thought of ourselves as professionals while the Government saw us as nobodies who worked a 48 hour week, no overtime, worked Sundays, Bank Holidays, Christmas. Anyone could do our job, we were told, and take home around £47 a week (as some of us married men with a couple of kids do) Now, we are told, we are professionals after all, so we are criticised for being on strike. The

Government and the public now realise that training and experience is needed to make a good fireman.

"We were very disappointed and angry at the refusal of the TUC leaders to support us - but considering that those TUC leaders worked with the Government to set up the guidelines, we were hardly surprised!

"The Government has made so many mistakes - they never believed that we would actually go on strike. They did not realise that

we would have support from the public. Now they think that by hanging on and on, we'll be forced back to work eventually by waning public support. But that won't happen - the strike is solid.

"I have noticed that lately the national newspapers only report on house fires where people are involved. There was a big fire in a Glasgow warehouse, a few days ago and the national press did not mention it. 21 Green Goddesses turned out for that one - they are sending out amateurs to do our work.

"I read the other day that Insurance Companies will be making a loss this year compared with several millions profit from last year. I don't think the Insurance Companies will last out as long as we will."

rity to order equipment, while all over Britain the old hospitals which the new were to replace have their facilities drastically cut back.

The Department of Health's excuse is that the region is better served than most others, in line with its strategy of 'prioritisation'. Since there are waiting lists, no area has enough hospitals, and when a hospital's facilities are passed over while qualified medical staff remain on the dole and people go on suffering, this can only be an attack on the well-being of our class.

It is quite clear the Government has no regard for our health or skills. We must demand the use of new hospitals, an end to the destructive cuts and build the health service to serve us properly.

New hospital half empty in Newcastle

AFTER several delays the new Freeman Hospital in Newcastle upon-Tyne has finally opened. The hospital is one of the most technologically advanced in Europe, so you might be forgiven for thinking the standard of health care in Newcastle will undergo a real rise. However, of the 18 operating theatres costing £100,000 each to equip, several will not be used at all, and the £1 million X-ray department

will be open only two afternoons a week, because the Department of Health will not approve the appointment of enough staff to operate the equipment. Only half the 800 possible beds will be in use by the end of 1978.

The situation is not unique to Newcastle. The new Barnsley General Hospital is in a similar position due to lack of funds and failure by the Area Health Authority

to blow for progress has been struck, against 'loyalty' to a 'Labour' Government and against reaction - for a future, for the working class and for socialism. It must not now be undone." The Confederation of Shipbuilding and Engineering Unions followed suit as did the TGWU and then in September the TUC affiliated unions formally declared an end to what workers had by then rejected.

"The contract is dead. Live the contract? Clearly the philosophy has to be exorcised, root and branch, for before the contract there was a contract, a mental deal whereby we fight the employer but not the employers. There is still a hankering after the old order which gave rise to the oppression of the social contract in the first place. It is not yet accepted that there is no going back.

The workers of Mackie and Sons in Belfast were the first to be reminded that the Government had not heard that pay restraint was over. But against the huffing and puffing, and the attempted blackmail, the workers through their union stood firm and won a

22 per cent wage claim. Ford workers also broke the 10 per cent 'guideline'. The Government reserved its fiercest opposition for a group of workers in the so-called 'public sector', which from the Government's myopic viewpoint, lacked the resolve and experience to fight. But soon the unity and solidarity of the firemen for their 30 per cent wage claim, and support they received from the British public left the Government isolated. As Christmas approaches the firemen still stand firm, despite being promised jam tomorrow.

University lecturers also demonstrated to protest at the fall in their standard of living and erosion of differentials, reminding us of the vast potential of the entire class in struggle. Agricultural workers, teachers, lorry drivers, civil servants and others, have wage claims beyond the 10 per cent.

The Christmas message of organised labour to the ruling class should be, "Out of the way! We will run Britain ourselves, for ourselves. For socialism."

Farmworkers' settlement breaks 10 p.c.

FARM workers, members of the National Union of Agricultural and Allied Workers, have recently settled their wage claim at between 12 and 16 per cent. The claim was negotiated through the Agricultural Wages Board, a statutory body which fixes minimum wages and conditions.

The Minister for Agriculture Silkin attempted to intervene in the settlement as it broke government guidelines, but the AWB held firm. The fact that the NUAAW could break 10 per cent proves that the union is not as small and weak as is sometimes stated.

The rise brings the minimum rate to a mere £43. On this wage a married man with two children can qualify for supplementary benefit. There is nothing to stop farm workers fighting for wages above AWB minimum - NUAAW policy is for a minimum of £60.

Action would not be easy as membership is scattered, and there are 80,000 employers, but farmworkers must have industrial muscle since they produce half of Britain's food. Now is the time to prove it.

St. Nick's hospital stays

ST NICHOLAS Hospital, Plumstead, is to stay open. The vigorous campaign against its closure waged by workers in the hospital and trade unionists and their families outside, has forced the Government to back down, as David Ennals, Secretary of State for Social Services, admitted during his announcement on December 14th.

This is by no means the end of the fight to save health services in the area. Ennals made it clear that the Government will switch its attack to other smaller hospitals in the name of 'rationalisation'. The victory at St Nicholas will give workers encouragement to continue the fight for the service which is their right.

NEW ALBANIA SOCIETY EXHIBITION

"ALBANIA TODAY"

Town Gate Theatre, Basildon.

Saturday 28 January 1978 - Saturday 11th February 1978
10.30 am to 8 pm

Organised by Basildon Branch of New Albania Society.

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