



## Industry cut sets stage for

# NEW BATTLE FOR BRITAIN

AFTER all the hoo-ha about whether the Industry Secretary was going to make a written or verbal statement in Parliament about cuts in regional industrial development aid, the reaction in the Commons to the statement when it finally came out of Keith Joseph's mouth seemed muted by comparison. It seems as if those in that exalted chamber are more concerned with propriety than with the practical effects of their decisions.

Yet the cuts are drastic. The total amount of aid is to be cut by almost 40 per cent over three years, down to less than £400 million. Whole areas are to be excluded entirely from the aid, while others will have it trimmed dramatically. It is the end of an era which saw the area of Britain covered by these grants creep up to almost half.

### Storm of protest

Almost immediately, there were the beginnings of what will undoubtedly be a storm of protest from the organised working class at this attack. Mixed in will be the sad sighs of those capitalists who missed the boat and may now never receive those free hand-outs of cash. And there will also be a bleating from the Labour Party at the dismantling of its cherished system. The cuts are certainly an attack on the working class - but it is vital to understand exactly why.

The stated aim of the reg-

ional industrial development grants was to revive the so-called depressed areas by encouraging new investment. Employers investing in the designated areas received grants of 20 per cent, and sometimes more, towards the cost of new plant, machinery, buildings and works.

The effect was two-fold. Firstly, employers were incited, and financially encouraged, to desert non-designated areas such as London, with a high level of trade union organisation, for pastures new. Here, it was hoped, higher unemployment would have created a workforce too thankful to be employed to take on the employers - though this did not last for long. Militancy was to be punished by closure. The vast engineering estates of London emptied as employers moved their factories to the new towns.

### Close-down-unemployment

The second, less obvious, effect was, by encouraging investment in new industries, to ensure a flow of money from the old ones. Old-established industries such as heavy engineering and ship-building closed down, to be replaced by fancy goods factories or electronics factories employing far fewer workers. And so a "depressed area" like the North of England, managed to achieve a growth rate 1.4 per cent above the national average at the cost of seeing unemployment rise to 8.2 per cent, even



Brent teachers and parents demonstrating on the steps of Brent Town Hall against the proposed cuts in education spending. Photo: The Worker.

more above the national average.

On top of all this, the grants paid to the employers came out of the taxes paid by workers. All in all, you might think that anything which scrapped this system or reduced it would be good. In fact, quite the reverse is true.

If in the old system some of our taxes, even if only a fraction of them, went towards setting up some kind of production, now none of them will.

Instead of a roundabout method of putting money into the employers' pockets, there is now to be a direct one via the cuts in income tax. And regional development aid must go in order to subsidise these.

The Government then added to this direct handover to capitalists by putting up for grabs the more profitable state-owned industries or parts of industries - British Airways, to be followed by British Petroleum, Ferranti and others.

But that is not the half of it. The cuts in the system will further accelerate the rise in unemployment as no incentives at all are provided for investment. And almost on the same day the Government announced the lifting of restrictions on investment in the EEC. Any investment in Britain, whether it creates jobs or not, whether it divides workers or not, whether it is a weapon against militancy or not, is now to be actively discouraged. Britain is to be, not a depressed area, but a wasteland.

## Nicaraguan people win their own liberation

THE NICARAGUAN liberation movement, which was born when the people of Sandino took up arms against the oppressive Somoza regime and which grew in strength throughout last year as people all over the country rallied to its banner, achieved complete victory on July 19 when Managua, the capital city, fell to their guerrilla forces.

Just as the US had to stand by helplessly and watch their bloody puppet, the Shah of Iran, booted out by the Iranian people, so, right in their own back yard, they were powerless to prevent their appointed tyrant, Somoza, from being booted out of Nicaragua. He has fled to Florida, where he has stashed away millions in

booty stolen from the people.

Efforts at military intervention through the Central American Defence Council proved unavailing against the liberation forces. Indeed, when Somoza's successor, Urcuyo, threatened to hang on, in hopes of US military assistance, the US Government hastily told him there would be no help and he had better clear out to save his own skin.

Thus ends for Nicaragua nearly half a century of bloody Somoza family dictatorship, imposed on the people by US marines and propped up by US Government support. Under this imperialist tyranny the people have suffered appallingly. Some 80 per cent of the population are illiterate, infant

mortality is over 120 per thousand, 70 per cent of the dwellings lack even basic sanitation and all the diseases stemming from chronic malnutrition and hunger are rife. Under Somoza military expenditure 'to fight communism' was 4 times greater than the sum spent on public health.

We salute the people of Nicaragua, who through their armed struggle have won the right to set about improving their conditions and liquidating the terrible legacy of having been the slaves for so many decades of US capitalism and the local capitalist bosses in its service.

Representatives of the Sandinista National Liberation Front have begun talks with

those National Guard leaders who have not yet run away about the transfer of power and Mexico has recognised the Liberation Front leaders as the legitimate government of Nicaragua.

So crumbles from within another bastion of the American capitalist fortress. One can well imagine the joy and inspiration this news will bring to people throughout Latin America and the panic that must be rushing through the Pentagon.

The Nicaraguan people face tremendous problems, but they have freed themselves and can set about finding their own solutions. We, like all Marxists everywhere, wish them well.

### No future in the past

The first reaction of the TUC was a pathetic harking back to the good old days when the rotten aid system existed in full bloom. The main thrust of criticism was that the Government was "putting at risk the whole concept of a tripartite approach (government, industry and unions) to industrial strategy" involving "extensive consultation" - something which Keith Joseph did not do. We must all learn that there is no future in the past. Tripartite, consensus government has gone, for good. It is now open class warfare, and the sooner this is realised, from the TUC down to the smallest factory and office meetings, the better.

AT A TIME of 'oil crises' comes the world's worst oil spillage, in the Gulf of Mexico. It will take at least two months to drill new bores to relieve the pressure at the well that they cannot cap. By that time over 2 million tons will have poured into the sea, doubling the record held by the Amoco Cadiz. Pemco, the Mexican state oil corporation, is responsible. It has gone against strong public protest with its plans to sell oil to the USA profiteering from raised prices along OPEC lines, and modifying the previous policy whereby oil was extracted only slowly and for purely Mexican use.

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£533 million of profit - and these are half the real figure - have been made by British Gas. Yet the Price Commission which just two years ago proposed that the price of gas should be held while "excess profits" were made, now echoes the Government in calling for rises of 35 per cent, to keep in line with oil and gas prices. The Government has made good use of the organisation it is destroying. Absurdly the higher price is calculated on Norwegian gas while our own cheaper North Sea gas is what we mainly use. Doubtless, if the government could export our gas as it does our oil, it would do so. Falling that, the price is simply put up.

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'MY COLLEAGUES say and we all agree - alter your rule book and make your rules clear.' So said the Appeal Court under Lord Denning to the National Union of Journalists. According to the law, it is not for journalists to decide the rules of their own organisation, but for a handful of anti-union non-trade unionists to do so. And they call it a free society.

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THE LATEST and most grotesque example of the Conservative government's faith in means testing is now being considered in the corridors of the Department of Health and Social Security. It concerns death grants for burials. The grant at present is £30, at which level it has remained for twelve years. In the face of pressure to raise it to a more realistic £125, the Social Services secretary, Patrick Jenkin, implied that means testing might have to be introduced. This Government seems determined to hound workers not only into the grave, but inside it as well.

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OVER ONE million new cars came onto the market in Britain in the first six months of the year. This is equivalent to a yearly rate of one new car for every 25 men, women and children in Great Britain, bearing in mind that few of us will benefit. Seventy per cent of these cars are company cars. What clearer indication could there be of capitalism foisting on us the abolition of socially cheaper forms of transport (rail and buses), while urban life is throttled by the motor car, which causes 5000 deaths a year, pollutes and consumes vast quantities of petrol. Moreover, these firms ensure that more and more cars are imported from abroad (56 percent of all new cars now), so contributing to the needless rundown of the British motor industry.

IN THE SECOND week of May, 1549, the Duke of Somerset (then Lord Protector of the realm for the child King Edward VI) received a report from one of his spies telling of a disquieting new development in the ceaseless ebb and flow of class warfare. On the previous Sunday, 5th May, some two hundred men, mostly weavers and tinkers and other workmen, had gathered at the small cloth-making town of Frome and set to work tearing down hedges and fences which the growing bourgeois class had erected around their commonly-held lands.

Lordes, bishops and justices were sent out to appease the precocious ruffians who were trying to save their homes and livelihoods. Bishop Barlow, their tactician, made one crucial error

in his negotiations for the rulers. He thought that the rebels were so ignorant that they were being led into action by a group of powerful leaders. He tried to trick these "leaders" into stepping forward by asking the men to send a delegation with a petition of their grievances to him.

The men chose their delegates. They went to see the Bishop, who promptly clapped them in jail, assuming that would put an end to the trouble.

Rather than quelling the people's flame, Barlow's action stoked it up. Peasants and workmen all over the south gathered in anger and solidarity, uttering such subversive opinions as: "Why should one man have all and another no thing?" They boasted that if one of their number were arrested

then 10,000 others would come to his rescue.

Further uprisings were to follow. All were made necessary by the appalling conditions the peasantry was being pushed into.

A particularly violent confrontation took place in Kent where the appropriating gentry gained the upper hand and on May 13th hanged several peasants as an example; then they fortified Canterbury with heavy artillery borrowed from the Crown's arms monopoly. Soon British peasants, workmen and tradesmen would be up in arms, governing one city and besieging another as part of their fight against the hideous destruction which baby capitalism was causing.

They were to bring down one form of Government, put the ruling a group of leaders, good or bad.

class in panic and engage in pitched battles with the King's mercenary troops. How this came about will be considered in the next three weeks in "Historic Notes". Enough will have been said this week if we can learn from Bishop Barlow's mistake. The massive action which was carefully coordinated by the oppressed classes in May four hundred years ago was itself only possible because of a long tradition of struggle against oppressors on which the peasants of 1549 could draw, so intensifying class contradictions into an antagonism which soon changed the course of history. The peasants and handicraft workers created all the wealth of society and the revolts were the real motive force of development made by a class, not

## Sutton teachers call for action

SUTTON members of the National Union of Teachers last week pledged themselves to action in order to fight the monstrous attack on the standards of education that the Government has imposed. The cuts in Sutton have already taken their toll - 22 primary teaching jobs are threatened, and now a further 22 teachers throughout the Borough must go in order to save the £300,000 which the London Borough of Sutton has seen fit to axe off education since the Budget.

Sutton schools already suffer under the strain of over-sized classes, a lack of supply teachers and misuse of remedial departments caused by successive years of economic stringency by the employer. This latest cut, which is by no means the last, has enraged a previously over-tolerant teaching force. The

teachers have called for no cover of unfilled vacancies or for absences known in advance or after the first day of absence, and for a refusal to teach classes which exceed 30 in secondary schools and 32 in primary schools (27 in reception classes).

The unanimous vote for this policy at a local Association meeting is a clear indication that Sutton teachers recognise the true nature of this attack.

It is an attempt to undermine the teaching profession, create unemployment, and justify school closures in order to cream off resources into the private sector. The decision taken by Sutton teachers is a significant step towards combating these attempts by successive Governments to destroy our education system.

## US panic measures to shore up capitalism

THE MAIN TROUBLE with Carter's panic measures to deal with the energy crisis is that he has been misled by the apologists of the capitalist system about what the crisis really is. It is not an energy crisis: it is the crisis of capitalism itself. It is the crisis of a system in which the profit-seeking of the huge multinational corporations, whatever commodities they deal in, results in ever more irrational and unjust consequences for the people generally.

In the barbarous war the US waged for more than ten years against the people of Indo-China, mainly against the heroic people of Vietnam, enough oil and its derivatives such as gasoline and kerosene were used up to have kept the whole of US industry running for years. Indeed, part of the very reason for the war was simply to use up all that oil, so that prices could soar and the oil companies could make huge profits. Every major move in the field of transport in the capitalist world has been specifically aimed to be as oil-wasteful as possible.

What has happened is that the pre-war insanity of paying American farmers to burn their wheat crops to sustain prices, in a world starving for bread grain, has now spread to other commodities as well. At this stage of capitalism the big profits do not come from expanding production but from destroying it - wasting products to create shortages.

Carter's answer to the so-called oil crisis is to achieve cuts of oil imports amounting to 4.5m barrels a day by 1990. This will not increase the world's supply of energy nor will it hurt the giant oil companies in the slightest. They are completely international in not caring a rap where their biggest profits come from. All it will do is try to shift onto other backs some of the consequences of the capitalist exploitation of oil.

In Carter's cabinet window-dressing to show how serious he is about all this, the Treasury post is to go to the Federal Reserve Board chairman, another monetarist, who has been describing the US economy's performance this year as "distinctly unsatisfactory". He has also had to point out that the gloomy forecast by the Administration that in the present recession output will actually drop by more than the optimistic prediction of 0.5 per cent to more like 2 per cent.

And to what does he attribute this decline which is taking place all over the capitalist world? To the recent OPEC oil price rises! With capitalist governments everywhere collaborating in the general rise of all commodity prices in order to net the companies immediate profits, the oil sheikhs, who are behaving just as capitalists always behave, are being singled out as the real culprits in a world-wide recession.

What is wrong with capitalism is capitalism itself.



A Vietnamese worker preparing woollen carpets for export. Despite ten years of barbarous war waged against them by the US, and the recent destructive invasion by China, the Vietnamese people get on with building socialism in their own country. This is the "crime" for which the capitalist world really condemns Vietnam. Photo: Vietnamese News Agency.

## Save the whales - from the Whaling Commission!

THE 1979 ANNUAL meeting of the International Whaling Commission, held this year in the sumptuous Cafe Royal in London, is over. What has been decided? Not much.

Factory ships are banned, except for minke whales, and the Indian Ocean is to be a sanctuary of some 40 million square miles. Despite all this, the whale slaughter quotas were agreed at a total of 15,835 animals for this year, less than 500 below last year's figure.

Bowhead whales continue on the path to extinction. No moratorium on killing them was agreed, despite the fact that there are only about 2000 of these beautiful creatures left in the world. Even the scientific committee reporting to the Commission declared that "the safest course for the survival of the population is for the take to be zero."

Much has been done and some

progress made by the demands of workers across the world to save the whales from extinction. But capitalism is infinitely myopic. It is vital to do all we can to ensure the survival of the species, not just for any benefit we may gain in, for example, the medical field, from the study of physiology and biochemistry, but also to advance human knowledge and preserve an abundance and variety of natural life for our children to enjoy.

Yes, we should use the fruits of the Earth, but there is no agreement on what constitutes sustainable yields of the various whale species and sub-species - leave alone the disgraceful way in which whales are used as pet fodder and as perfume bases. We should err on the side of caution. A moratorium? Why not? Jobs lost! All over the world boats and fishermen lie idle due to over-fishing. Whaling is no different.

## More public spending cuts say Tory Councils

THE ONLY WAY working people can liberate themselves from exploitation is by revolution. Exploitation is the appropriation by the ruling class, who own or control the means of production, of a large proportion of the goods produced by the working class. This exploitation can only be ended by a revolution which fundamentally alters the relations of these two classes.

No ruling class in history has ever voluntarily resigned its exploitative "rights"; and any revolution, to succeed, must deploy at least as much violence as that implicit in the subjection of those who wish to liberate themselves. The revolution must be made by the working class itself: any making of a revolution on behalf of the workers, or from the top down, or of importing or exporting revolutions, will always turn out to be another kind of exploitation.

These truths have been learned by the working people themselves through centuries of class struggle. Only in the period of capitalist exploitation did the essential nature of the basic class contradiction in society become clear enough for the principles of revolutionary change to be formulated scientifically in Marxism - the ideology of the working class. To be non- or anti-revolutionary is to be non- or anti-Marxist and, therefore, in the long run, anti-working class. All true Marxists anywhere in the world can be judged by whether, as part of the working class, they are engaged in either making a revolution or in defending one that has already been made.

The first sign of revisionism is a change in the attitude towards revolution, both at home and abroad. None of the great Marxist leaders, Lenin, Stalin nor Mao Tsetung, ever ceased from making or preserving the revolution in their own countries, nor from encouraging genuine revolutionaries anywhere in the world. The Khrushchevites in the Soviet Union began to argue that the world was too dangerously poised on the brink of nuclear war to be able to afford revolutions, and socialism could come peacefully, anyway. The Hua Kuo-feng Teng Hsiao-ping clique in China began by using a "third world" concept to justify non-revolutionary progress, and then went over to open, all-out attack on the revolution at home and on China's revolutionary neighbour, Vietnam.

Defections from socialism in the two great countries, the Soviet Union and the People's Republic of China, have led many people, some in good faith but most in bad, to question whether there ever was socialism in these countries, and even whether Stalin and Mao were Marxists at all. It is a disservice to the working class to deny that working people under correct leadership have ever been capable of overthrowing their class oppressors and establishing a system free from exploitation, even if they have not so far been able to consolidate that system and preserve it.

We in the CPB(ML) must always be prepared to be judged on our attitude toward revolution. Partly as a corrective to so many who, in the heady days of '68 were keen on revolutions everywhere except where they actually were at the time, we have always said that the greatest service we could do for revolutionaries anywhere else was to make our revolution in Britain. But this must never be a refuge from declaring ourselves openly in action whenever revolution anywhere is under attack, particularly by British imperialism - as at the time of the War of Intervention against the Soviet Union or the attack on the Chinese legation in London as part of British imperialism's hatred and fear of the Cultural Revolution which was taking place in what was then socialist China.

We have to declare ourselves openly in action when British imperialism makes war on people anywhere, even if no organised revolutionary force yet exists there - as in the case of Suez or Ireland. This we do, not as an alternative to making revolution in Britain, but as part of it, since we share with those people the same class enemy.

Long live Marxism Leninism!  
Long live revolution!

THE FACT that the struggle for money is one and the same thing as the struggle for moral values is clearly shown by the recent deliberations of the Conservative dominated Association of County Councils in trying to meet Howe's public spending plans.

Their proposals include the end of obligatory provision of free school transport, free nursery education, school milk. Nutritional standards for school meals should be reduced, they say, along with building standards for new schools. They should be free to charge what they like for adult and further education, and do not want to have to give grants to all students. School closures should be accelerated, they say.

In the social services area they have called for an end to pocket money for old people in homes, a delay in the enforcement of fire protection standards in old people's homes, a reduction in fire inspections and they want to claim from insurance companies the cost of rescuing people from accidents.

Legislation covering consumer protection, environmental protection and of course, the Health and Safety Act they want repealed. Waste disposal planning, they say, should be stopped. And to top it all they want an end to compulsory public participation in planning, just when the public has begun to use this right to oppose the rundown of Britain.

Money spent on these things, it appears, is "inflationary" and unproductive - of profits, of course. We should not be deceived by this or any other "economic recovery" argument to justify cuts. The fact is that in every area, from sewage through basic industries like steel and rail to the social services, the public spending cuts are undermining the very infrastructure of our society - in some cases literally, as underground sewage pipes collapse for lack of repair.

Far from being a remedy to the "absolute decline" which Howe talked about in his budget speech, they are deliberate and integral part of it. We must be opposed to them as such.

## Massive campaign against cuts in arts

RARELY can a government have so quickly and totally lost whatever support it might have had in a General Election, as among actors and all who work in the theatre.

The Tory promise was of "no candle-end savings" and indeed more money for the arts. The reality is:

- A massive VAT increase.
- A cut in the arts budget of at least 2 per cent (over and above inflation).
- Cuts in local authority subsidies.
- Equity, the actors' union, called a march on July 24th through Piccadilly and London's theatre-land to the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden.
- The Musicians' Union and

other associated unions, the Writers' Guild, as well as all the management associations - West End, provincial and touring - pledged support.

As the Equity General Secretary said: "This will be a clear visual demonstration of the depth and breadth of living theatre in this country. The government cannot make cuts without threatening the very existence of theatre. The biggest casualties are the regional theatres."

The VAT increases mean virtual bankruptcy. Not only will the public have to pay inflated prices, but the cost of scenery, materials everything needed for a production will rise as well.

"The Stage" in its editorial writes "The VAT increase can be des-

cribed as iniquitous," and could well cause untold damage to many theatres struggling to survive.

"Regional theatres already have to cope with a form of 'never-never' budgeting, receiving as they do only 75 per cent of their subsidy in the year for which it is granted.

"It is the climate of opinion which needs to be changed and it is the profession which must take the Initiative. We hope this demonstration will begin the work which needs to be done, and that it will unite a sometimes divided profession.

"Now is not the time for any decline in our major cultural asset. This year's cuts might not be the last. We suggest you all turn out on July 24th."

## Bitter medicine to swallow for the opponents of National Health Service

THE MAJOR recommendations of The Royal Commission on the Health Service fly in the face of government policy. The Health Secretary, uncertain how to react, has had to put off dealing with it.

- The Commission recommends, among other things:
  - Abolition of prescription charges;
  - Increase by half in NHS abortion services and cutting surgery waiting lists;

- A fifteen-year hospital building programme;
- More money for inner-city areas;
- No more closure of mental hospitals;
- Controls over private hospital development;
- More money for health education.

Now the fight is on to get the proposals implemented.

The report has proved the level of support which exists on the part of the working class and professional organisations for the original concepts upon which the NHS was founded.

It is the outcome of prolonged deliberations by representatives drawn from a broad range of organisations and interests - including the TUC, who have exerted a strong influence on the scope and shape of the Commission's recommendations.

### Service must be for all

It comes at a time when the attack of the previous government on the NHS is being strongly intensified. All the more timely, therefore, that the Royal Commission have recommended that the NHS must continue to be financed out of general taxation and that the original concept of a service open to all should be preserved. The report includes the recommendation that all charges for services should be removed.

In a statement published on July 18th the TUC welcomed the Royal Commission's findings.

The General Secretary stated, "The TUC fully endorses the Royal Commission's view that the aim of the NHS must be to provide a high quality health care service which is free at the time of use and is available equally to any citizen and which is financed out of general taxation. Any decisions by the Government to replace this by an expansion of health insurance and private care would raise the ghastly spectre of two levels of health care - good services for those who can afford them, inferior services for the rest - a spectre that we believed had been laid to rest in 1948."

### TUC welcomes report

The statement continued, "The TUC particularly welcomes the Commission's recommendations on a concentrated 15-year programme of hospital capital development; its emphasis on preventative medicine and dentistry; its proposal to continue the present system of phasing out pay beds; its support for the expansion of health centre provision, particularly in inner city areas; and its endorsement of present plans to recruit extra health visitors and district nurses."

With the new Minister Patrick Jenkin daily announcing new schemes for the 'rationalisation' and 'denationalisation' of the health service, all the positive aspects of the Royal Commission's report will have to be upheld and emphasised.

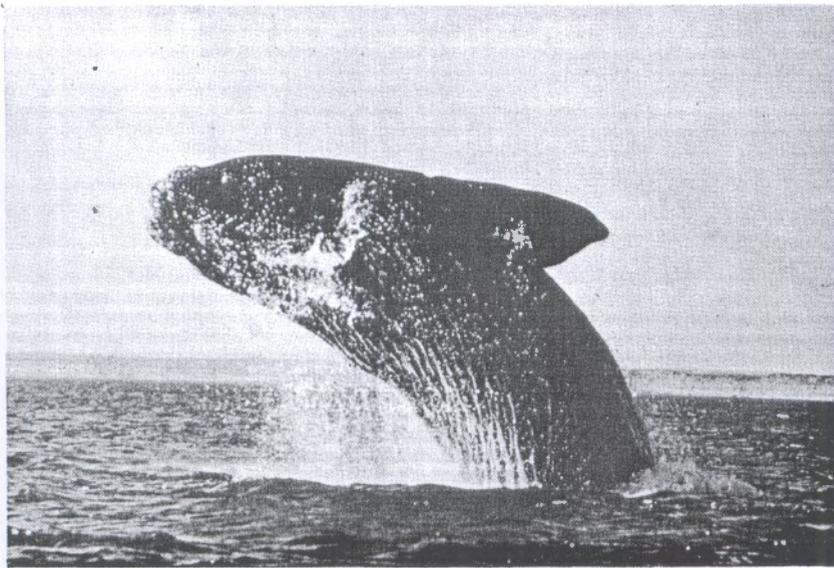


Photo: Friends of the Earth.

## The armed police are the executioners

THE POLICE now play the role of judge and executioner, a spokesman was reported to have said after the shooting dead by police of one of their three victims this year. Surrounded by police, whom many believe to be responsible, Blair Peach, a teacher and trade unionist was killed while peacefully demonstrating against racism. His murderer has yet to be discovered.

The debate in Parliament to bring back hanging was police-inspired through the MP they sponsor to represent their views, and who initiated the debate. He said that Parliament might have wanted the death penalty abolished, but "we did not succeed in abolishing the death penalty in this country... The danger is that our police more and more find themselves acting as surrogate executioners of armed criminals without due process of the law." Such is the future they envisage.

There has been a vicious and violent campaign for

many years now to increase police powers, turn the police force into an armed force - although not all policemen agree. They have received the total support of the reactionary press. They have tried, with some success, to impose conditions on the factual reporting and even drama serials about the police. They have instigated riots as at Southall, and used their Special Patrol Group in a Nazi fashion to brutalise whomever they pleased. In evidence to the Royal Commission and elsewhere, they have urged the dismantling of the system of British justice and its protections for the accused. They used the Election for a sustained propaganda campaign for the reintroduction of the iniquitous death penalty and harsher police methods. They won the open support of the new head of government, and, it was proclaimed to all, of a near majority in the House of Commons for the death penalty.

They failed miserably, with

a massive majority of 119 against them - and this in a body dominated by reactionaries of all parties. The great Thatcher, so sure she represented the views of "her people" found herself outvoted 12 to 5 even among her hand-picked cabinet. The mass of MPs voted as public opinion and as the trade unionists demanded.

Police abuse, failure to do their elementary tasks, convictions on false grounds, all of these are more in evidence than ever before, as the police turn to their new role of armed counter-revolutionaries - Britain's National Guard. No wonder simple common-sense, let alone justice, dictated that MPs respect human life and the views of the public by not voting for judicial killing as the cure for society's ills, as the police demanded.

One thing we know: the campaign to bring repression and injustice to Britain will not cease because of this one defeat.



Photo: NUAAW

## Fight for 3000 Times jobs continues Farmworkers campaign underway

THE MANAGEMENT of Times Newspapers have made a massive climbdown from their position of eight months ago (November last year) when they ceased publication - an exercise that was to show all the proprietors in Fleet Street how to deal with unions. The idea was that, if sufficient funds were available, it would be possible to take advantage of new technology to decimate jobs and thus bring the unions to heel. This method of taming the unions was based on the experience of how it was done in the US.

Some £20 million lost during the closure was the price they were prepared to pay to cow the militant workers but it is management that has been brought to its knees. Composed of hawks and a few doves, the hawks in ascendancy, they locked and bolted every door against a negotiated settlement. Nothing

less than abject surrender would do. When they realised they were on a loser, it was embarrassing to try to get the talks started. They used a stormy share-holders meeting; to reopen negotiations and then issued a document as a basis for a return to work which was not acceptable, but at least negotiable.

The workers victory is undeniable. The main stumbling block to settlement is the Company's demand for no victimisation on either side. In return for the Company not victimising the men it locked out, the unions must agree not to take action against workers who scabbed. Unions have every right to discipline their members within their own rules.

Hawks on the management side still threaten settlement. The fight to keep the new technology from being used as a weapon in the hands of greedy employers goes on.

UNDER THE slogans "Pay the Bill for Skill" and "A Square Deal for Farmworkers" the National Union of Agricultural and Allied Workers, in keeping with the 1978 Biennial Conference decision, will be lodging its claim with the Agricultural Wages Board in September. The target is £100 for a 35-hour week and a fourth week's annual holiday.

The justice of the claim is evident to anyone who considers that British farming is the most efficient in Europe and that farmworkers have adapted to complex and dangerous machinery worth thousands of pounds without commensurate rewards in their wage-packets. 73 people were killed on British farms in 1978.

In the July edition of the union's paper, "The Landworker", the General Secretary wrote: "Other workers will support us. The majority of the public will support us. But the main responsibility is on the membership to push the campaign, to discuss the issues and to plan forms of action to back up the undeni-

able justice of our case. We will open up opportunities to recruit many colleagues who have not yet realised that only by joining us will they strengthen the fight to improve the conditions of all in the agricultural and allied industries."

And this is the key to the matter. Farmworkers produce more than half our food and in that lies their strength. Yet it is a grossly under-unionised industry because of its fragmented nature, and this leads to inevitable weakness.

For instance, the previous claim for £80, a claim of equal worth as the present one, had to be settled at a basic minimum of £48.50. There is also ideological weakness in the union: the involvement with social democracy and reliance on the Labour Party, which is responsible for the low wages, must be dispensed with, as must union policy with regard to the EEC.

As previously pointed out in THE WORKER, the Common Agricultural Policy is specifically designed to create food surpluses and destroy our

agriculture in the name of profit. So such statements from the union as, "The union shares the view with many other bodies that reform of the CAP is urgently needed" are merely expressing a vain hope. The Union was originally opposed to entry into the EEC in 1973; now is the time for farmworkers to stand in the forefront of the struggle to get us out of, and destroy, that capitalist cartel.

Clarity on this and other issues will only come from pursuing with the utmost vigour every attack on the profit system such as the current claim. The union points out that when the boss of British Steel, architect of so much destruction, gets an annual pay rise of £3,500, which is £400 more than the average total annual earnings of a farmworker, something is badly wrong. What is wrong is the whole of the capitalist system, and farmworkers should use their potential strength not only to fight for higher wages, but also to save agriculture for a self-reliant, socialist Britain.

## ON THE INDUSTRIAL FRONT CORBY FIGHTS ON

STEEL WORKERS in the threatened town of Corby have met the British Steel Corporation's plans for closure with a call for a nationwide strike.

On July 20th 6000 people streamed out of work to a protest meeting called by all the unions in the giant steel-making complex. Wives and children attended, underlining the fact that the shutdown of this steel plant (and the tube works which would follow, although BSC deny this) has profound consequences for people's lives. The meeting overwhelmingly called on the TUC Steel Committee to organise a national strike over the planned Corby closure. Corby workers are ready to strike now, but feel their fight is so clearly part of a national struggle that it needs national resistance.

BSC's management also wishes to speed the closure of steel-making at Shotton. It hopes that it will be able to bribe workers at Shotton and Corby into selling their jobs by offering large sums of redundancy money. Hand-in-hand with the BSC are the EEC plans for steel, master-minded by Davignon, the Belgian commissioner. British steel, which planned to be capable of producing 30 million tons by the mid-80s, is trying to trim back to around 14 million tons output. Yet imports of finished steel increase: Shotton could be manufacturing the steel that the British car industry now imports.

The so-called crisis of over-production of steel in Europe is not an objective reality. Britain could use 30 million tons of steel.

New rolling stock is desperately needed. Hospitals are under-equipped, new machine tools are needed to replace obsolete ones. There are many households without basic amenities like washing machines, and there are unemployed workers. Is it not more irrational to import cheaper steel from elsewhere? Every nation must produce steel itself in order to be self-reliant.

It is up to other unions and other plants to support Corby. The blastfurnacemen's leaders have insisted that there will be no shutting down of services until new ones are shown to be operating efficiently. With such a question mark over even the big coastal sites, this will be an additional force to fight closures.

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