

# THE WORKER



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## SEIZE THE ASSETS

SPEAKING to industrial workers from all over Britain Reg Birch, Chairman of the Communist Party of Britain (Marxist-Leninist), said that after 33 years of the oppression of our working class by social democracy on behalf of capitalism there is now a bursting out. It is having a cataclysmic effect which is illuminating in the minds of those involved what steps must be taken.

At this critical juncture we must seize the assets. What do we mean by assets? We can't seize them if we don't understand what they are. Assets are people, working people with their experience of class struggle, experience out of which they erected some machinery for their defence, the trade unions. The unions are the organisational form of the lead taken by workers in this defence from the beginning of our era. To seize the assets is to seize the leadership, to seize the mind of the people, to seize their machine. It is to seize these assets for a qualitatively new phase of class struggle.

If you try to read the theory of class struggle as distinct from some allegedly political theory, you'll get it all wrong. Class struggle is an economic thing - how do you get some money out of the governor, how do you organise a factory, how do you have a strike, how do you win or how do you avoid defeat? That's politics but you won't find the answers in any book. There's a lot of comment on the theoretical origin of the labour movement, on the why but not on the how. Because it grew like Topsy out of class development. What do you do if you work at Ford's? There isn't a book to tell you.

There are general theories of class relationships and that's all. There is a multitude of literature by those going along with this great mass and presuming to define why it behaves the way it does. But this literature doesn't say which way the mass should go. It merely explains how right it was - after the event.

We have to relate the practice of class struggle to the theory. That's the point. The one comes before the other. The explanation that class struggle whenever it bursts out is spontaneous is no ex-

planation at all. It is nonsense. It takes forever before you get angry enough to fight back. And in that process of taking forever you do a lot of thinking -- even about how to run away from that fight. There's nothing spontaneous about that. The strike at Ford's was unanimous because of all that had gone on in the past.

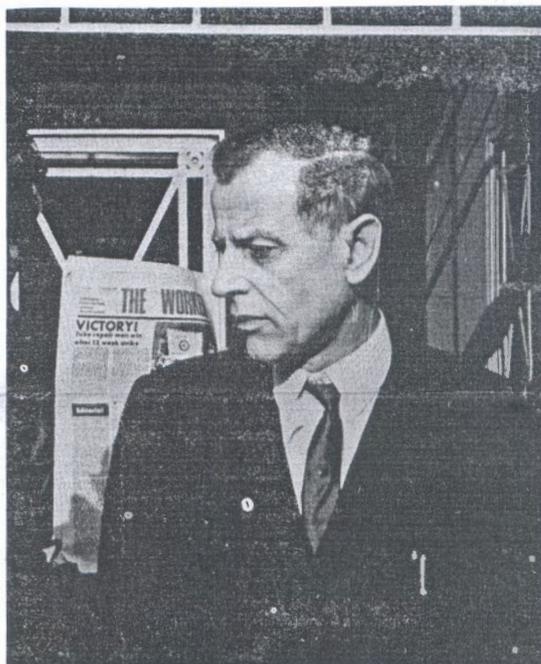
In the end you and your workmates come to some conclusion. Now we are at the threshold of our mates in their mass organisation coming to a conclusion and putting behind them the last 33 years of class oppression. We can define the stages of that struggle -- Labour's In Place of Strife, Heath and the Industrial Relations Act, the various forms of wage restraint legislation and compulsion, the Healey phases ad infinitum. They have culminated in the present situation.

A bad government at a time of stress needs all its statesmanship to retain power. This one, after an agony of time when it seemed there would never be any change, and that it would be easy to go on getting away with it, because people would bear any burden of oppression, suddenly finds that what was always horrible has now become intolerable.

The definition of political change is the need of a class opposing forceful oppression to change. The question for us now is: are we going to force them to surrender or are we going to make do with the confusions, the concessions and the compromises.

This working class definition of politics is from our origin. It comes from joining a defensive mechanism against an opposing force, the employer. And then when that defence seemed insufficient another piece of apparatus was invented to defend the better. Not to win and take over but merely to defend. It was because workers were getting bloodied that they invented a Labour Party. They said: we ought to get into that place where all the talking is and where they keep doing us, into Parliament. So it is difficult now for them to believe that they have to be recruited into some other thing - namely a working class political party,

cont. on p. 4



Reg Birch at the time of the 1974 pay settlement at Ford's for a 40% wage increase which blasted a hole in the social contract. Photo Nick Birch

### Government digging in

CALLAGHAN did not bother to address his declaration of war on the working class to the workers of Britain. He announced it at a press conference in Bonn. There he boasted that he would win the battle against inflation, by which he means the battle for profits against the workers.

He advised the foreign speculators in the Pound not to worry if there was a rash of strikes this winter. It would all be part of the necessary measures to keep down inflation -- by keeping down the workers.

At the Lord Mayor's Dinner at the Mansion House on the same evening, October 19, Healey, also behind the working class's back, spoke about the use the Government is making of monetary policy to keep the working class in line. It would be used, he threatened, if workers did not stick to the Government's pay code, to create higher unemployment. Healey praised the European

monetary system, which would make Britain financially dependent on West Germany, as a further means of curbing inflation: by which he means, of course, increasing profits. When he says that for Britain to be swallowed by the European currency union snake will lead to growth, he is only talking about the growth of profits. It is just like the argument for getting Britain into the EEC to begin with.

The Governor of the Bank of England, at the same banquet and speaking with the same voice as Callaghan and Healey, the voice of capitalism at its greediest, said there must be no relaxation on the curbs on public expenditure. Indeed there should be even more stringent cut-backs.

The intention of the enemy could not be more clearly expressed than in the speeches of these three champions of capitalist profit against the working class.

### FORD CLAIM

THE chairman of Ford, Sir Terence Beckett, addressed a letter to the 57,000 Ford workers advising them that collective bargaining could only take place when they returned to work - as if industrial action were not a part of the collective bargaining process.

Reg Birch, speaking for the workers in his capacity as secretary of the union on the side of the Ford national joint negotiating council, wrote a reply to the Ford chairman suggesting "a direct meeting with representatives of the council to discover a way through what can only be described as a ghastly mess."

Reg Birch's letter pointed out that the press heard about Ford's decision to negotiate outside the guidelines before the unions did. However, when the company had improved its pay offer to only 8 per cent on October 13th and hinted that more money might be available on condition of a return to work, the union negotiators had walked out. Reg Birch's letter to the chairman of Ford was followed by a letter from him and from Ron Todd, chairman of the negotiating council, to the 57,000 Ford workers (See page 4).

The Ford strike in Britain is already beginning to have effects on the Continent. In Belgium, Germany, Portugal and Holland Ford plants have already had to close or curtail operations and the same will soon be the case in Spain and France. Any attempts to get workers affected to blame their striking British mates have failed completely. At the end of September at a meeting of the International Metal Workers' Federation World Auto-Councils in Helsinki, representatives of Ford workers throughout the world pledged solidarity with the striking Ford workers in Britain. The general secretary of the IMF on a visit to strike-bound Dagenham said "no work normally done by the British factories will be transferred across the Channel".

In a statement issued by  
Continued on page 4



DESPITE the withdrawal of Chinese aid for the project, the first tractor completely produced in Albania, a 75 hp model, has rolled off the production line in Tirana. Coming at a time when the Chinese are opening the floodgates to foreign capitalist investment, this is a significant victory for the Albanian people in extending their self-reliance. Although the rate of growth of the Albanian economy may have been temporarily slowed by the removal of Chinese credits and technicians, in the end socialism in Albania can only be the stronger, if it is based chiefly on the efforts of the people themselves.

Photograph Nick Birch

## Iranian workers' strike undermines Shah's rule

A tidal wave of strikes has swept Iran to revolution. In spite of at least a thousand killed by the Shah in street fighting in the last year, unrest and demonstrations have continued to spread.

At Kermanshah in the west a tenth of the town's 300,000 population defied the armed forces, although ten were gunned down, along with others throughout the country. Yet government offices and banks continue to be ransacked. The 200,000 conscripts are increasingly unreliable. The regular core of the Shah's army, for all its vicious NATO weapons, is under growing pressure, unable to contain the violence of the assault on the regime.

The very size of incipient insurrection renders the repression impotent. The confidence of the people was demonstrated on October the fifteenth, when a general strike paralysed Teheran so effectively there was no need to take to the streets and be exposed to the army's bullets.

Struggle has reached a new level. The regime is being destroyed from within, as the government machine is racked by strikes. 4000 newspaper workers refuse to print the Shah's propaganda, and struck until press freedom was granted. The government had no TV or radio service until it capitulated to the wage demands of the workers. 15,000 telecommunications workers closed down the Shah's internal communications, while links with the outside were severed by the civil aviation workers. Postal services and the rail network have been paralysed. Oil workers have struck and stop-

ped the flow of oil so badly needed to bolster the Shah's sick economy. Banks, electronics, textiles have also seen unrest.

At Isfahan 30,000 steel workers struck for better housing and pay. The works were built with the help of the USSR. So much for the reactionary lie that Iranians are opposing NATO imperialism and the Shah only to throw themselves into the arms of USSR capitalism!

The Shah has had to concede wage rises of 50% and more. But the gains are more than economic. The wave of strikes has forced the government into considering cutting back its grotesque expenditure on arms, and to concede, at least in words, that the situation should not continue whereby over 10% of the Gross National Product is spent on "defence".

But we may be sure that NATO will provide the weaponry for repression, free if need be. Iran is the world's largest importer of arms. Callaghan and Carter have joined forces with every shade of right wing opinion in supporting the Shah. His Iran provides the most profitable and lucrative market of all. Without the Shah, who would buy British capitalism's 2,200 Chieftain tanks, the nuclear installations of France, West Germany's submarines, US missile systems, and so on? So of course, say all the capitalists, Iran should be maintained as a reservoir of poverty, starvation and inhumanity of every sort - a testing ground for capitalist weapons.

We should learn from the people of Iran and show no mercy to rulers such as these.

## US OUT OF BRITAIN: TROOPS OUT OF IRELAND

A PUBLIC meeting on Friday 20th October at the Bellman Bookshop made short work of analysing the role of British troops in Ireland and of US troops in Britain: it is only the ruling class who put armies in other countries. And they put them there to crush the working class, not as "a line of defence to resist invasion" or to "protect us".

Troops remain lest we forget the ruling class is backed by armed force. On the other hand, the working class are never willing to sacrifice themselves or to kill other workers for the ruling class's benefit.

The speaker illustrated these points with a wealth of historical detail. He showed how efficiently US imperialists sought to establish their presence in Europe after the 2nd World War, how they ensured that Britain would serve as an entry point for US troops in Europe; Britain he said could be described as the most conveniently placed 'aircraft carrier' that the US have.

Although the true significance of US bases on British soil may be hidden from some workers, a look at Ireland today, and at her long history should be a forcible reminder. The speaker described Ireland as a 'pool of labour and capital sucked dry by British Imperialism' guarded in that task by armed force.

Many of the contributions from the floor of the meeting spoke of the rumbles of war heard in recent months. We are told that China is worried about Russia, the US is worried about Russia, MP's at Westminster are worried about Russia. We know what all the imperialists, whatever nationality, are really afraid of - the strength of the working class. They are afraid of the Ford workers in Belgium; Germany, Holland and Spain who support the Ford workers of Britain in their attack on the bosses and the government they prop up. They are worried by a TUC Congress who voted overwhelmingly for peace between workers and pointed to the class war that had to be waged now.

Only this week President Carter has ordered the production of a new generation of tactical nuclear warheads. The threat of the neutron bomb has been resurrected for the people of Europe after a mere 5-month respite. Widespread protest forced Carter to delay neutron bomb production. But now he is proceeding to produce the same weapon under a new name. Europe will not be fooled. Already this latest decision has produced further strong protests in Holland. There will be more as workers everywhere raise their voices against the warmongers.

## REVOLUTION ATTACKED

EVERYDAY we read new confirmation that proletarian dictatorship is being broken up in China and growing in its place is a veritable corporate state such as we are seeing develop in capitalist countries and the Soviet Union. A recent Common Market delegation came back from Peking speaking of "huge and permanent possibilities for co-operation between the EEC and China". Not surprising since the Chinese took the occasion of the visit to reaffirm their faith in the conventional international practices in trade and financing.

After denying that they would do so the Chinese have told a visiting British business delegation that they would accept government-to-government loans. Direct foreign investment in China is sure to follow.

The Common Market delegation concentrated on trade but the Commissioner for External Affairs said "I stress that the co-operation we envisage is not limited to economic terms. Our co-operation is also of high political importance to both sides".

Reaction is not confined to foreign policy and showed itself clearly in the recent national trade union conference in the typically Common Market guise of "worker participation". The Vice-Premier Teng Hsiao-ping told the conference "workshop directors, section chiefs and group heads in every enterprise must in future be elected by the workers in the unit".

Combined with the abandonment of the dictatorship of the proletariat, this is not proletarian democracy but the same phony self-management socialism as in Yugoslavia or the

phony worker participation schemes in capitalist Britain.

Chinese workers will have to fight against this new divide and rule policy where politics (i.e. class unity) plays a secondary role and exploitation and profits return in the guise of greater financial and technical expertise. Will Chinese workers place more faith in such experts than British workers have done? Certainly we in Britain have suffered enough from experts to begin to see that we could do it better ourselves.

With such changes of attitude taking place in China how long, before we hear that the leadership there welcomes the election of the new Pope on the basis that the Common Market is pleased and the Russians are upset. Such heights of analysis!

According to People's Daily there is unemployment in China caused by the shortage of industrial jobs and the increasing numbers of school leavers coming on to the labour market. Unemployment is something China may also have learned from Yugoslavia which has to send its people abroad, to West Germany for example, to find work. If China really wants to catch up with capitalism, they will have to be able to number their unemployed in many, many millions.

There could be no better comment on what is happening than that of Hu Chiao-nu, president of the Academy of Social Sciences, "Capitalist countries are often more successful in applying 'objective economic law' than China has been and the Chinese people should learn from them what is applicable in China".

## THE WEEK

IN 1976 the top 20 companies made profits of £4,300 millions and paid a total of £145 millions in tax.

Last year however, they did even better and the top 25 companies paid no tax at all thanks to massive tax relief given by the government in the vain hope that this would lead to increased investment. The list of companies that managed to pay no tax last year includes British American Tobacco, Rio Tinto Zinc, Courtauld, POO, Grand Metropolitan, GKN, Dunlop, Reed International, Bowater, British Leyland and Fords.

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DESPITE the recent campaign to save London's docks, the Port of London Authority still intends to press ahead with the destruction, by axing over 2,000 jobs in the next two to three years. In the draft plan it has been considering with the unions, the PLA also wants union involvement in marketing, traffic forecasts, and cost reductions. The dockers' unions join in these corporatist measures at their peril.

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THE attitude of Ford workers to the Motor Show has been, "The only Ford there will be Henry himself." This was all too much for the company's President, who has cancelled his intended visit to Britain, saying that he did not want to be personally identified or involved with the current dispute.

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RECENTLY British poultry farmers have been complaining that there are too many eggs on the market with the result that prices and profits are too low. The solution? - to seek Government approval for a nationwide cull of millions of hens to restore high egg prices. Only capitalism could bring about the absurd situation where millions of people throughout the world starve while the quest for profits destroys our capacity for producing more and better food.

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In the week when Rhodesian security forces have violated the sovereignty of Zambia, it has been confirmed that South African soldiers have been fighting in the Rhodesian army since 1967, as well as in the security and prison services, where they are the torture experts. They have yet to learn that People's War is invincible.

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Catering workers employed on North Sea oil rigs have recently won the right to union recognition following a threat of industrial action by the two unions involved - the TGWU and National Union of Seamen.

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Following a fierce struggle by peasants in Southern Portugal to retain control of collective farms set up on expropriated land after the fall of the fascist regime, the Government there has been forced to suspend the enactment of the Agrarian Reform Law, which returned the land to its former owners.

# DON'T GET SICK IN DEVON

HAVING discovered you feel poorly, you make an appointment to see your local doctor - for the following day, of course, since he will be fully booked. The next day you set off. If you are registered at one of our health centres you're likely to need a bus to get to it. The concept of health centres as the focus of health needs and preventive work in the community has been crippled because they have merely centralised the doctors' surgeries. If you live in one of our Devon villages you could be doubly unlucky here, since both the village GP's and the bus services to town are fast disappearing. If you receive a prescription after being seen you may be in for another hike - the hopeless inadequacy of the government allowance on prescriptions, despite introducing charges, is causing many chemists to close.

Should the diagnosis lead you to hospital, you must expect to wait from 3 to 10 days to see a consultant. You must again bus in, since the ambulance service in Devon is desperately short of money and overworked too. Even the hospital departments have to order ambulances 24 hours in advance, except in emergencies. If you live in the Okehampton area and are pregnant, you are too late to have your baby at the Maternity Unit there, since a reduction of staff (2 gone, leaving 4) has wiped out the service. And here is one of the first consequences - just today we hear of a woman living near and due to stay at the Okehampton, who had to wait so long for an ambulance to take her to an Exeter hospital, that she gave birth before arrival. The only Okehampton ambulance was taking a patient elsewhere and one

had to be called from Crediton, further away.

If you are found to need an operation you should be prepared to wait up to 3 years for it, or 2 months even if your case is an emergency. This is due to operating staff shortages, on top of inadequate facilities. If you have an infectious disease you could be joined by others soon, since our main hospital, the Wonford, has had to close its isolation ward from lack of staff. Government policies on pay and the NHS have taken their toll and shortages are everywhere. Despite the dedication of NHS workers you should not develop any complications if possible, especially at night. Recently 5 wards at the Wonford started the night without any trained staff, leaving 10 students to cope with 115 patients. 15 wards had only 10 trained nurses, with 13 students and 10 auxiliaries. The story of an auxiliary left to cope with a patient bleeding to death is disturbing, not least for the patient and auxiliary.

Anyway, you are eventually well on the way to recovery, which is just as well because with a waiting list of around 3,500 for Exeter the beds are needed as soon as possible. Of course you could probably have left earlier if there were convalescent facilities available, but these have virtually disappeared.

Not surprisingly this disgusting situation has drawn forth cries of 'Scandal!' from all quarters, but the reality is that it is typical of the national situation at large. Our lives and future generations' depend on us turning the present discontent into a concrete fight for progress. No more cuts! A better health service for everyone!

# Shipbuilders need unity over wages

BY 1980 there will be half as much work for the world's shipyards as there was in 1975-6. According to the Association of West European Shipbuilders, the 1976 figure of 21 million compensated gross registered tons (CGRT) will fall to some 10 million CGRT. The present oil tanker fleet of 353 million dwt will dwindle to 330 million dwt in 1985. Virtually no new shipbuilding will take place - except as a result of an accelerated programme of scrapping existing ships.

Against the background of a possibility that next year there may be no ships built in UK yards at all, the Confederation of Shipbuilding and Engineering Unions, representing 86,000 workers, is drawing up plans for a uniform pay bargaining structure, along with a common date of settlement.

The 29 yards brought together

by nationalisation have in the past bargained on a local basis, with individual yards or sections setting examples for others to follow. Last year the ten per cent rule was broken to the extent that the government under pressure from a number of yards, had to grant far larger increases through the Central Arbitration Committee.

But nationalisation has strengthened the employer's hand. They now stand united behind the Labour Government's wages policy. The need for more unity against them is clear to all in the CSEU. On occasions in the past, competition between section and section or yard and yard has been harmful overall, as when division among workers allowed the government to cancel the Polish contract on the Tyne, and allocated it elsewhere.

But the proposed common claim

on pay will not bring real unity unless it is based on improvement in pay and conditions for all, including those most highly skilled or paid. The view accorded to which the 'better off' should forgo increases in favour of others, is a concession the employers would readily grant, welcoming it as a shying away from the fundamental duty of the unions - improvement of pay and conditions for all.

Forced by declining profits into a world programme of redundancies, the employers are hoping above all for acquiescence, and are fearful of any challenge to their rule. News of the strike of three thousand ship repairers in Marseilles and massive resistance against 1300 redundancies at another yard nearby will cheer the CSEU delegates as they seek greater unity at their conferences.

## In Brief

Parents in one London school are being urged to encourage their children to contribute 2p out of their pocket money towards school costs. The reason given is that prices are going up which may result in cutting, for example educational excursions to museums. Great emphasis is laid on the fact that most of this money will go on essentials such as potted plants and ingredients for cooking which the children have become used to. This may be so today but it will not be long before 2p becomes 10p to be spent not simply on plants but pencils and paper. And will children who refuse to participate in such self-financing deals be victimised?

Under capitalism no section of the working class is free from attack.

On Tuesday 17th October porters at Edgware General Hospital staged a 24 hour strike. The strike was over understaffing and poor working conditions, including management's failure to supply protective clothing as requested.

It was the first strike in the hospital's history. As a porter on the picket-line stated: "Whenever we have put our grievances to the Hospital Authorities we have been ignored. They now accuse us of acting against patients' interests. But we know that so long as the porters are understaffed the patients suffer everyday."

If the outcome of current talks with the authorities is unsatisfactory, further action is planned for this week.



Urban dereliction surrounding the Royal Docks. The shadow of shipyard dereliction also hangs over Britain's docks. (Picture, The Worker)

# 'EXPANSION' MEANS CUTS

"THE question is," said Alice, "whether you can make words mean so many different things."

"The Question is," said Humpty Dumpty, "which is to be master - that's all."

A £60 million cut in education was entitled a "Framework for Expansion". This tradition is alive and well in Liverpool. The proposals for sacking teachers, once called "teacher assessment" and a method of "graceful egress", are now entitled "Staff Development". Furthermore, plans to close a number of Liverpool schools, demolish the comprehensive system and abandon the finest purpose-built comprehensive school in the city becomes a scheme designed to establish "flourishing schools" and a "five year period of stability".

The authority's re-organisation proposals seek to close a number of schools, justifying its action with the plea - "falling rolls". Schools will only be allowed to retain sixth form groups if they contain at least six students.

The latter proposal will eventually lead to the closing of many of the city's sixth forms, and the restriction of access to sixth form education. Many teachers and parents have argued that this will effectively reintroduce a tiered grammar school/secondary modern system.

Liverpool serves as a national example of the falseness of the falling rolls argument. The argument that states that cut-

backs in expenditure are the result of fewer children in our schools. Paddington comprehensive, a relatively well-equipped school, was built in the 1960's when its inner-city catchment area was more populous. After building the school the authority engaged itself in a "development" programme and demolished many houses. Despite this, many parents have still decided to send their children to this school, and it has an excellent examination record.

According to the Housing Department almost 1,500 new dwellings will be completed within the schools catchment area by 1982 - homes for young couples. Having in the 1960's built a school and moved the population away the authority plans in the 1970's to close the school and move the population in! Falling rolls??

The reaction of teachers, parents and pupils has been magnificent. Across Liverpool, meetings organised by city councillors have seen the total condemnation of the reorganisation plan. The scheme was justifiably described at a recent NUT meeting as "an attack on the whole of Liverpool's working class".

The importance of the task facing workers in Liverpool has been summed up by one of the young pupils, who declared to a group of local politicians at a recent meeting: "you've got your future. We want ours!"

# Kent teachers fight redeployment

TEACHERS in Kent recently stepped up their opposition to redeployment, in accordance with the decision of NUT Conference. Having already firmly opposed compulsory transfer, the teachers are realising ever more clearly that "voluntary" transfer is just as bad.

Either they are conniving in the loss of jobs that could be filled by unemployed teachers, or else the transfer only appears to be voluntary, and in fact involves pressure on teachers to move.

In view of this, Kent NUT are demanding that no further redeployment be permitted unless the following aims have been substantially achieved: protection of curricular, pastoral and educational

needs of all schools; staffing provision for marking and preparation time; in-service education and induction programmes; improved provision for children with learning difficulties; and pre-school education and adequate careers guidance. If redeployment is proposed without these aims being met, the teachers will consider industrial action to prevent it.

Meanwhile, in one area of Kent, over 30% of the primary school population (3,321 children) are being educated in oversize classes - in some cases as large as 38! Faced with this situation, the local NUT has decided that the time to remove this abuse has come. Again, following the national

union policy, the Association is encouraging all members to apply for Union backing in refusing to teach oversize classes or cover for unfilled vacancies. This procedure can be followed by any member, without recourse to a general ballot of members, and is thus a way of harrying the employer constantly.

The stand taken on these issues by Kent teachers will help ensure that Conference decisions are not merely "on paper", but have a real relevance to the struggle for education. Such an attitude, which is being adopted by teachers in many parts of the country, is essential for the defence and improvement of educational provision.

Cont from p.1

## SEIZE THE ASSETS

not a parliamentary bourgeois party.

That is the difference between those still rooted in the past and new members of our class, uncluttered with all that, who say: I have read, I have thought, I see the scene around me and for me the only road is revolution.

Now we are seeing all the ways, under man-power commission schemes and so on, that they try to put the whole education of our class back a hundred years. They use unemployment to enforce their plans of having only limited people for limited jobs, limited both in number and scope. The question of our being able to think is at issue. How can you think if you're not educated? Being able to think is a question of our culture which they would deny.

We must talk about everything to do with our class. We can do this now at Fords because we don't have to be at our jobs. We should involve in this process those who're on strike. Ask them to reflect on other things connected with the stand they're taking. Hold classes outside the factory. And when we do, we'll find how broad their interests and knowledge are. They'll teach us things we didn't know. What keeps an unemployed person from suicide? A capacity to think.

The fight for wages and the fight against unemployment are inseparable. The fight at Fords and in other places against repression and diminution of wages is the greatest contribution to the fight against

unemployment. When we compare the situation now with the depression of the 'thirties, we see that the massive unemployment of today has not diminished our desire to improve our lot in the factory. Workers are less intimidated by growing unemployment. They're less frightened when the foreman says: there are plenty more to take your place.

In 1950 we coined the slogan on "the right to work" because capitalism was proving that it was unable to resolve unemployment and we had to give notice that we were not going to let 1931 happen again. We must not retreat to the old position where we walk from town to town begging for some work-house accommodation to pass the night in. We must wage battles against closures. We must recognise that redundancy payments are no answer because they will not be available.

The fight against this Government and capitalism apropos of wages is a lofty one in that it prevents us from entertaining the servile notion that by accepting all that's being done to us we might be allowed to retain our jobs. The argument about inflation was always that the classic way to resolve it was to have unemployment. The Labour Government and the Tory Government both said they would not do that. Now we have both inflation and unemployment.

Is it going to stop me or any worker from saying: I don't care if you're bankrupt. I still want to live. You'd be better give me more wages.

### Continued from pg.1 Ford workers pay claim

the International Metalworkers' Federation, delegates of IMF-affiliated unions representing Ford workers in Western Europe said "we have gathered here in London to demonstrate with our presence our solidarity with the 57,000 Ford-UK workers, striking for decent wage increases, improved working conditions and better

pensions. What we have learned we can bring back to our own unions to counteract the propaganda of Ford-Europe, for we are indissolubly linked together in a vast chain of labour solidarity. A victory for British workers will ultimately mean a victory for all 145,000 IMF-affiliated Ford workers in Europe."

### Vauxhall

ASSEMBLY workers at Vauxhall's Ellesmere Port plant have voted to atrike from November 1st in reply to the company's pay offer of 4.8%.

Workers at Merseyside, Luton and Dunstable plants have also rejected this government dictated offer, but demand for collective bargaining requires solid action not the traditional hanging back to see what happens at Fords.

### Dockers

DOCKERS in Southampton and Hull are putting in wage claims for an additional £15 a week with improvement of overtime and shiftwork rates. The Hull dockers voted to ban overtime until the employers made an acceptable offer. The dockers have made it clear that action would be stepped up in January if agreement had not been reached by then.

### Footwear workers

MEMBERS of the National Union of Footwear, Leather and Allied Trades voted overwhelmingly to reject the Government's 5%, and have sent their officials back to work on a new agreement with the Manufacturers Federation.

### Social workers

SOCIAL WORKERS in 10 new areas may join 1,100 colleagues in a strike now in its third month. The strike committee of the National and Local Government Officers Association has had applications from the areas to ballot members on strike action.

Social workers in Newcastle upon Tyne and the London boroughs of Southwark and Newham have been on strike for nine weeks, while staff at Liverpool and Lewisham joined in last week. Now the action could spread to Bradford, Leeds, Cheshire, Sheffield, Rochdale, Greenwich, Hackney, Wandsworth, Surrey and Kent.

The dispute hinges on an attempt to replace national pay bargaining by local agreements and a demand for a pay scale of between £4,600 and £6,350.

# Letter to Ford Workers

FORD NATIONAL JOINT NEGOTIATING COMMITTEE

Transport House,  
Smith Square,  
London, S.W. 1  
16th October, 1978.

## TO ALL FORD WORKERS

Dear Colleagues,

On Monday 14th October 1978 you received a letter from the Ford Motor Company outlining their views in relation to the recent breakdown in national negotiations. The company's letter stated that the unions would not "commit themselves to any discussions on the day to day problems in the plants".

The facts are that the unions indicated to the company that we were prepared to examine and discuss any problems that the company wished to table "but not in isolation from a realistic reply by them to the claim we had submitted on behalf of the Ford workers".

The company's letter also states that "the unions said that the strike would continue because we have not put more money on the table. If the Ford Motor Company are to remain competitive in the labour market it is vital that we achieve a substantial improvement on the basic rates but collective bargaining is not just about wages in isolation. It is about improving the quality of life of working people. It is about improving your working environment. It is about gaining advantages for you over the coming years.

In pursuance of these aims our claim consists of a number of demands on your behalf:

- \* A shorter working week
- \* Allowances for line workers
- \* Improvements to sickness and pension benefits

Our proposals in respect of service holidays and sabbatical leave are aimed at giving positive incentives to workers to remain with the company.

Remember these claims were submitted to a company highly profitable and widely regarded as one of the most successful in Britain.

In your interests we expect a responsible reply from the company - one in which reference is made to the company's ability to meet the claim as well as to the company's needs; one that provides you with a fair reward for the company's vastly improved financial position.

As soon as the company realistically responds to our claims the terms of the reply will be given to you through the machinery of the unions and not through the medium of the Press or company publications.

Yours fraternally,

RON TODD: CHAIRMAN  
F. N. J. N. C.

REG BIRCH: SECRETARY  
F. N. J. N. C.

## Bookshops

**Bellman Bookshop, 155 Fortress Road, London NW5**  
**Main Trend Books, 17 Midland Road, St. Philips, Bristol**  
**Brighton Workers Bookshop, 37 Gloucester Road, Brighton**  
**Northern Star Bookshop, 18A Leighton Street, Leeds**  
**Basildon bookstall Tues Fri Sat Marketplace**  
**Liverpool bookstall - every Saturday at Paddies**  
**Market, Great Homer Street, Liverpool**  
**Hull Bookstall - Old Town Market, Saturdays 9.30-4.00**

## Public Meetings

The autumn series of public meetings held in London and organised by the Communist Party of Britain (Marxist-Leninist) will be continued.

Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, Holborn, November 3rd, 7.30 p. m.:

"BRITAIN IN THE WORLD 1978"

Bellman Bookshop, 155 Fortress Road, London NW5, November 17th, 7.30 p. m.:

"LABOUR MOVEMENT - WORKERS' ORGANISATION"

Croydon, Tuesday, October 31st, 8.00 p. m., Study Room, Central Library, Katherine Street:

"NO CUTS, NO CLOSURES - SAVE BRITAIN"

## 'The Worker'

155 FORTRESS ROAD, LONDON NW5  
 6 months £2.50 (including postage)  
 1 year £5.00 (including postage)

NAME.....

ADDRESS.....



The Fire Brigades Union which set such a militant example last year of attacking the Labour Government's anti-working class policies has just finished their annual conference at Bridlington. They voted to implement a 42 hour week, unilaterally if necessary, and backed their negotiators to press on with the strike settlement guaranteeing them wage increases outside the Government's 5%. Photo John Sturrock (Report)