



As Government policy collapses

WAGE WAR INTENSIFIES

THE GOVERNMENT has had to capitulate in the lorry drivers strike by scrapping any threat of price sanctions against members of the Road Haulage Association who accede to the workers' claim. The Government also realised that if they gave way to the Tory demand for a state of emergency and the use of army vehicles the situation would get even worse for them.

In asking the TGWU to draw up its own code of conduct for picketing the Government was aware that the striking workers would only abide by their own rules.

The NUJ provincial journalists concluded a highly successful strike by winning a 14½ per cent rise.

Having shown that they mean business by two one-day strikes last week, ASLEF has called another one-day strike in pursuit of their claim.

Department of Employment figures published on January 17th show that nine major settlements for over half a million workers are officially admitted to have smashed through the Government's guidelines.

Workers at Ford and British Oxygen, Merchant Navy seamen, motor vehicle repair workers, those engaged in Scottish baking production and working in narrow fabrics have all settled well above the 5 per cent the Government tried so desperately to impose.

And that is only the beginning. Many settlements have been delayed by employers trying to hide behind the Government's pay policy skirts. There are numerous claims above the guidelines in the pipeline and many strong sections of workers yet to be heard from.

What has perhaps shocked the Government most is the strength of organised claims in the public sector.



THE Royal College of Nursing, potentially the strongest force for uniting nurses, both as skilled professionals and as the organised body of the largest section of health workers, will be holding an extra-ordinary general meeting on February 26 to call, if need be, for limited

industrial action.

At a mass rally on 18th January over the nurses' current pay claim, speakers from both the Tory and Liberal parties were booed and hissed when they refused to give any support to the nurses' pay claim.

The union's general secretary

said, "Commitment to the health service has been taken for granted for too long. Our patience has run out." It is clear that nurses are now prepared to tackle the Government with the only language they seem to understand.

Photo: Michael Abrahams.

What can capitalism do now?

CAPITALISM'S spokesmen in the Government, the Opposition and the Media are all musing aloud about what to do with a working class that insists on having a say in evaluating its own labour power.

THE TELEGRAPH says that the present industrial disorder proves that the country is as ungovernable under Callaghan as it was under Heath. Therefore, while not calling yet for a national coalition government, it does ask for "a temporary alliance" of Labour and Tory "directed to bringing about some at least of the reforms which both plainly believe to be necessary to the conduct of government itself."

Margaret Thatcher in her television fireside chat performance spelt out just what the reforms enabling the government to govern were - curbing the power of the unions by rendering picketing harmless, imposing rules from outside on union elections and strike decisions and making strikes for a large section of the working class illegal. Since Labour would like to see the same restrictions imposed on the unions, she proposes a joint

Tory-Labour alliance solely for the purpose of dealing legislatively with the labour movement. Labour having failed to impose "In Place of Strife" and the Tories having failed to impose the Industrial Relations Act, let them both join together to impose a kind of amalgamation of the two.

Certain members of the Labour Government like Shirley Williams think the answer is to make the Government's pay policy statutory and give the guidelines the force of law. The only trouble with that is that Callaghan treated the guidelines just as though they were, indeed, statutory and it did not do him any good.

Margaret Thatcher would not have come forward with her cunning proposal for a Tory-Labour front against the unions if she had not been encouraged to do so by Callaghan's remarks to MPs in a meeting to try to allay their panic over the deteriorating situation.

He told them that the unions might find themselves in a

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One day strike

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'Dedication doesn't pay the bills' say nurses

OVER THE past few years, Britain's nurses have shown remarkable courage and endurance. Despite shortages of staff and resources the NHS somehow still functions as a public service. The last few weeks have tested that endurance to the utmost, as bad weather led to accidents and hence long queues in the casualty departments, while staff sickness and exhaustion reached a peak. In return for the sacrifices and suffering of the nursing profession the Government have closed 120 hospitals since 1974 and as a bonus in 1978 reduced the number of learner nurses by 8,000.

It is obvious that a new kind of courage amongst nurses is needed - a courage that consists of asserting our own worth. At present, the Government is using the strengths and dedication of the nursing profession to kill that profession and with it, the National Health Service.

On the 22 January nurses will be joining with other public sector workers in a mass demonstration to say a resounding No! to pay restraint and Yes! to a decent wage. The Confederation of Health Service Employees (COHSE) now sees the 22 January as a starting point of a national pay campaign for nurses, with the National Executive recommending actions such as a ban on overtime, refusal of nursing staff to do some of their clerical work, limited stoppages, and refusal by nursing staff to act-up for absent or unappointed seniors.

The Royal College of Nursing recently published a comprehensive report of the attack on the nursing profession and low state of morale. Surely now is the time to act on that report. The RCN march and lobby of parliament last Thursday was a beginning.

Nobody goes to market

these days expecting to buy a loaf for sixpence. But the Government comes to the labour market expecting to pick up skilled, dedicated labour for a song: a point that none better than nurses can attest to.

To illustrate, take the case of a ward sister today. Along with three years' basic training and several years' experience in her field, she probably has at least one certificate in further training, part or whole of the Diploma of Nursing (a degree standard course), and some formal management training. Her responsibilities include planning nursing care programmes for 25-35 patients, instruction of learners in her area and standing in for senior management. She may take a further course qualifying her to be an examiner in the practical field. As all nurses, she works unsocial

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"A just cause enjoys abundant support while an unjust cause finds little support," Hsinhua caption to a picture of the warm welcome for Vietnam liberation fighters marching into Cam Ranh.

Photo: Laurie Sparham (IFL)

Kampuchean People reject Pol Pot regime

Failure of Chinese plots against Vietnam

THE KAMPUCHEAN People's Revolutionary Council stated from liberated Phnom Penh on January 7th:

"The momentous uprisings undertaken by the Kampuchean people to save their country and themselves have been crowned with complete victory. The dictatorial, militarist, nepotist administration of the Pol Pot-Ieng Sary clique has entirely crumbled throughout the country. The Kampuchean people, on the brink of extinction, have risen up in arms. From now on Kampuchea will be independent and free, and the Kampuchean people will be masters of their country and of their destiny."

There could be no greater proof of the unpopularity of the Pol Pot regime than the refusal of the Kampuchean people, who had shown themselves capable of defending their country from the armed might of US aggressors, to defend this regime.

In the name of socialism the Pol Pot regime carried out completely undemocratic acts against the people and tried to pretend that it was rushing on to communism by abolishing family life and turning the whole country into a vast labour camp. Nothing is so harmful to socialism as the pretence that it exists where it so obviously does not.

It was incorrect, but no more than could be expected, of the UN to allow Prince Sihanouk, representing nobody, to speak for Kampuchea. Nothing could match the hypocrisy of the US, the actual invaders of Cambodia, waxing indignant about a fictitious invasion of Kampuchea. And the same goes for Britain which supported the US throughout its war against the people of Indo-China.

On January 7th Heng Somrin, President of the Central Committee of the Kampuchean United Front for National Salvation, in whose name the uprisings against the Pol Pot regime took place, set forth the aims of the movement:

"Our people will certainly realise the policy of building Kampuchea into a peaceful, democratic, neutral and non-aligned country advancing towards socialism."

The Central Committee of the KUFNS has abolished the division of the population into three categories and recognises the same political, economic and social rights and duties for all. People will return to their families and may live at their former birth places or in any locality they wish. The former city-dwellers desirous of returning to the liberated urban areas will be allowed to do so as soon as the situation over the country as a whole permits.

Food, clothing and housing for all people will be ensured immediately. The fruits of production will be divided according to the amount of work done and assistance will be given to the aged, sick and disabled. General primary schools will be built for children from 7 to 10 years of age and illiteracy will be abolished. A public health network, making full use of traditional medicine, will be established.

In a statement on foreign policy the KUFNS says that the Kampuchean people wish:

"To live in peace, independence, freedom, happiness and in friendship and co-operation with all countries, near and far."

Kampuchea will not:
"Join any military alliance, nor allow any country to set up military bases in Kampuchea."

"The traditional friendship and solidarity between the peoples of Kampuchea and Vietnam will be restored and friendly relations will be re-established with Laos, Thailand and other Southeast Asian countries."

"Friendship with the Chinese people is highly valued and normal relations with the People's Republic of China should be established. But there is firm opposition to the Chinese authorities' schemes and acts of interference in Kampuchea's internal affairs and their assistance to the Pol Pot-Ieng Sary reactionary clique in opposing the people of Kampuchea and neighbouring countries."

It is obvious that the present anti-socialist regime in China had no more concern for the people of Kampuchea in propping up the Pol Pot regime and encouraging it to attack Vietnam than it had for the people of Iran in embracing the Shah. China, once the great true friend of the peoples of Indo-China, now embarked on the road of self-aggrandisement and great power politics, is sowing dissension and war in Southeast Asia.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam, welcoming the stand for peace in the region taken by the National Front for the Salvation of Kampuchea, pointed out on January 6th:

"The Pol Pot-Ieng Sary clique, serving the Peking authorities' expansionist policy, have carried out an extremely barbarous policy... The made war on and caused conflicts with all neighbouring countries, thereby undermining peace and stability in Southeast Asia... They have waged a large-scale war of aggression along Vietnam's south western border committing extremely barbarous crimes against the Vietnamese people."

Historic Notes - Picketing

NOW that there is again talk of which sort of picketing the Government will allow - picketing is alright so long as it has no effect - we look back at lessons from history.

Ever since the establishment of the Craft Unions for skilled men, the employers and their governments have been trying to break them up. The Unions set up large strike funds, and boasted of their size, so the Lord Chief Justice sanctioned the theft of funds from the Boilermakers by a treasurer who absconded - even though unions had been officially legal, they were 'so far in restraint of trade as to render the society an illegal association'.

The struggle for wages and shorter hours led to a massive lockout, but still the employers could not win, without the aid of the law. So finally, in 1866, when a can of gunpowder exploded in a blackleg's house in Sheffield, the government immediately cried out against the 'terrorism of Trade Unions'. The government promised to protect those 'forced to join' the unions from the extremist minority, the 'number of unscrupulous men leading a half-idle life'.

The immediate response of a handful of 'respectable' union secretaries, nicknamed the Junta, including Allen of the Engineers, and Applegarth of the Carpenters, was to suggest the government set up a Royal Commission to investigate trade unions. The government seized on this to set up a Commission to investigate all trade union activity every where for the past 10 years. They granted a pardon to all witnesses, accomplices and even perpetrators of violence who would come and testify against their unions.

Before the Royal Commission, Applegarth and Allen insisted that their unions were not really militant organisations, that the new unions sought not to encourage but to prevent strikes, and that they were more like insurance companies, with their stickiness

benefits, than fighting organisations.

The Commission took them at their word, offering the unions legal protection on the condition that they abandoned all restrictive practices, and ceased to help one another. This shocked the labour movement. The International Working Men's Association, in which Marx was involved, the London Trades Council, and many national unions began agitating for a bill granting the unions' case.

The agitation was so great that the Liberal Government was forced to recognise the unions' legality and protect their funds, provided that their rules did not contravene the law. Strikers could no longer be imprisoned for conspiracy.

But the struggle was not over. Applegarth's attempts to disown pickets who resorted to more than 'peaceful moral persuasion' was seized upon by the Law. In 1867, Judge Bramwell pronounced that pickets in combination were guilty of 'molestation', even if they only gave black looks, or were present in large numbers, or stood across the road from their employers premises.

In 1871, an act was passed which while recognising the legality of trade unions, made them impossible to operate. It resurrected the words of the Combination Acts without definitions: 'molest', 'obstruct', 'threaten', 'intimidate', etc. 'Persistently following' any person, or 'watching or besetting premises', was outlawed. While employers could 'blacklist' workers, a man who conspired to persuade another not to work could be imprisoned for three months. This threat was indeed carried out.

Great demonstrations followed. In one of them, 20 000 trade unionists marched through Glasgow, carrying banners saying "Down with all Class Legislation". As a result, Disraeli's Government was compelled to legalise picketing and make acts committed by trade unionists subject only to ordinary laws (1875).

The Week

IRANIANS danced in the streets as the Shah was finally forced to announce his departure. The butcher Shah, put on the peacock throne by US imperialism, phased only to receive condolences from 'Peace Prize' winner Sadat of Egypt, before slipping back to the lair of his protector.

The British press, which long talked of the Shah's benevolent modernisation, now spurns him too. Their articles now admit that his regime was one of military expansion, corruption and torture, and had nothing at all to recommend it.

The people of Iran were threatened by US warships and were not deterred. They are now being threatened by a military coup. Again, they will not be deterred. But already a great victory has been won.

THE PRIME Minister has highly praised a newspaper article which blames 'Britain's problems' on union members themselves rather than finding scapegoats amongst 'union bosses', shop stewards and whatever. The Labour Government is in no doubt. The problem for them is the whole working class.

JUST when the demand for the withdrawal of British troops from northern Ireland was beginning to embarrass the British government there was a new spate of terrorist bombing there.

Just when the Government was facing the possibility of having to declare a state of emergency in Britain, terrorist bombs are planted among fuel storage tanks in Canvey Island and in a gas storage tank in Greenwich.

The British Government and the terrorists are working hand in glove whether they are prepared to admit it or not.

THE CHAIRMAN of the Rochdale Area Health Authority, Mr. Arthur Cleasby, has said that there was a risk of intestinal diseases if untreated water was drunk, and that it was a matter of weeks for an outbreak of typhoid to be detected.

The employers and their Government are prepared to see Britain return to the most primitive conditions, and will keep wages down too.

CLAIMS by Ennals, the Social Services Secretary, that nurse recruitment between April and September last year was up by 40 per cent to 7701 have been scotched by figures from the General Nursing Council, which says the true figure for recruitment over the last year is down by 1171, due to an increased drop-out rate in the first six months of training.

NURSES and midwives in Derby have responded to the callous threat to close the much-loved Florence Nightingale Maternity Home by pledging that they will fight any such attempt.

Hull - nearly a museum piece

HULL City Council recently opened the third phase of their Town Docks Museum, housed in the old Docks Office. Telling the story of Hull's early trade, docks, inland traffic and steamships, the new gallery complements the existing Whaling and Fishing exhibitions.

Imaginative displays, with full sized models of fur-gowned Baltic merchants and a Humber keel's cabin, brightly painted portraits of 1840's paddle steamers, lucid explanations of pilotage and navigation, of sixteenth century navigation and Humber lighthouses; all these are a tribute to the combined skills and enthusiasm of archivists, historians, model-makers, artists, designers and conservationists.

There is nevertheless a gloomy side to this bright new museum: despite the designers' imagination and ingenuity, the Town Docks Museum is a memorial to Hull's dying past. Fishing, Docks, Shipping are indeed fast becoming "museum pieces".

Perhaps we can't go backwards. Certainly no one would want to revive whaling, though the idea of weekly passenger services to New York and Riga (which Wilson Line adverts tell us were regular services around 1900) is

attractive.

But one thing is certain. We cannot allow our children and grandchildren to grow up in a ghost town where their only knowledge that Hull was, and could still be again, a flourishing world port, is provided by a museum.

Dear Comrades,

On the tenth anniversary of your newspaper we send you our warmest congratulations. These ten years were an important period in the history of the British working class, characterised by an increase in its fighting strength and its class consciousness. As the organ of the Communist Party of Britain (Marxist-Leninist) "The Worker" has made an important contribution to this development.

We wish you further successes in your struggle and future activity.

With revolutionary greetings, The editors of the "Roter Morgen".

Editorial

WHEN IT comes to trade unions in Britain everyone is an expert - especially those who are not members of one. So, at a time like this, out come all the old arguments and cures from a chorus of parasites without a trade themselves - employers, politicians, even bishops.

'Trade unions are too powerful' they say, so they think of resurrecting old anti-union laws and making up some new ones. 'Secondary picketing must be banned' they scream, as the courts continue with the backlog of prosecutions of pickets from the bakers' strike. 'Workers in essential industries should not be allowed to strike' as the process of capitalist dismantling of those same industries goes on apace. 'We must have another social contract' so that a Labour Government at least can have some control over the unions.

What do people mean when they say the unions are too powerful? It would be ridiculous to suppose that the unions represent an alternative executive force which is usurping the power of the capitalist ruling class. Have the unions succeeded in changing the ownership of the means of production by our class enemies? Have they changed production for profit into production to meet the needs of the people? Have they put a halt to the exploitation of our working class?

They have done none of these things. All that can be meant by the power of the unions is that the labour movement, united in the determination to restore collective bargaining, has been able through the unions to have a greater say in the level of wages at some cost to profits. In this way the unions have merely been restored to the natural defensive role for which they were originally devised.

Social Contract

Of course in the world crisis of capitalism the British ruling class cannot afford to let workers have any say at all in fixing the price of their labour power; and so the workers' right to collective bargaining is a dangerous challenge to the capitalists' right to profitable exploitation and, ultimately, to the capitalist class's very existence. The present wage battles, therefore, have revolutionary implications and the unions in this perspective, if they continue to function as intended, are potential instruments of revolution. But for us to think that the victories won by workers over the Government's pay policy represent, as the hysterical press would have us think, a conquest of political power would be disastrous illusion.

We must remain clear through all this argument so that the labour movement does not get into the farcical position of 1974 when, having defeated all attempts at legislation against trade unions, we accepted the social contract in exchange for the removal of legislation we have already smashed. Certainly we do not want to reverse that farce and now, having torn up the social contract, allow to be imposed on us the legislation our enemies are suggesting.

It is not for us a question of social contract or legislation: it is a question of who controls our unions - the working class membership or the capitalist state. The great strength of trade unions in Britain is that they never have accepted that anyone else should have a say in how they are run. The policy and the rules are made by the membership not by some arbitration court. It is this strength that is under attack and has to be continually reasserted.

Potentially the working class is the most powerful force in the country, but without state power we are being robbed daily, not only of surplus value but of the very industries we have built, our strength sapped through massive unemployment and our health and education whittled away. We workers and the organisations representing our industrial and social strength, must actually become as powerful as our class enemies already say we are.

Grant fight can unite NUS

PARTICIPANTS in last December's NUS conference cannot be forgiven for their decisions to further enmesh our Union into the DES. That any delegates could believe that closer relationships over grants-cuts and the MSC would maybe stave off the next series of attacks, is naive at best and reactionary at the worst.

Encouraging signals, however, show the path forward for a strong independent Union. Numerous delegates from active colleges, exposed the line of 'lie down and beg for mercy'. The autonomy of the Union was temporarily surrendered to the shriek of 'Public Accountability' and 'students are privileged kept people'.

The major problem with this national position is that colleges

who are fighting to save education will never surrender their ability to use their Union to challenge Government dictates, and with the initiatives of local Unions the leading line of resistance will forge unity in action. The greatest opportunity to prove the class position of students is the current wages battle. Within the context of collective bargaining students can assert their right to a decent grant for all and in doing so, say 'Education is valuable, we will save it'.

This collaboration can only be destroyed if students use their unions for educational advance. The real fight is now beginning and the DES and Government is seen as the main enemy.



At the Special Local Government Group meeting to be held on January 26th, NALGO will decide on whether or not the time has come for social workers to return to work for the time being in the knowledge that, by their action they have wrung improvements out of their employer on their existing grades. The important lessons learned from this struggle will serve them well when they next take up the fight. (Photo: The Worker)

Underspending aids health cuts

ONE effect of the cash limits imposed on Health Authorities is to cause underspending for fear of going beyond them, so that the Health Department as a whole was about £57 million under-spent on health and personal social services in 1977-78, about 1 per cent of the total national health budget.

Meanwhile the list of hospitals due for the axe continues to grow, so that the inadequate services

in Essex (reported in 'The Worker', issue No. 1 1979) are to be expanded, supposedly, at the cost of closing six hospitals in the London part of the North East Thames Regional Health Authority, including the Queen Mary's and German Hospitals, and the loss of hundreds of beds at the Royal Free and Bart's. And now we are threatened with more cuts as part of the Government strategy on pay restraint.

The working class mourn the death of Bob Watson - a picket who was killed during the lorry drivers' strike.

AUEW Resolutions for National Committee

THE TWENTY-SIX Divisional Committees of the Amalgamated Union of Engineering Workers have been considering the resolutions received from Branches last year, and sorting out which will go forward for the 1979 National Committee in May.

There are motions on wages for a claim of £100 per week minimum for skilled engineers in all industries. Other motions call for a 35 hour week and 5 weeks holiday and a reaffirmation of the union's policy on equal pay.

Members concerned at what happened through the years of

the social contract are insisting that it does not happen again and that the AUEW remains opposed to any form of wage control or Government norms, and continues to reject any interference in collective bargaining by any Government.

Following a year of debate in the union, there are resolutions demanding rejection of the Engineering Industrial Training Board for shortened apprenticeships.

The question of a campaign against unemployment and for the revitalisation of industry will

also be debated at National Committee. Branches have tabled resolutions opposing the neutron bomb and demanding the closure of all nuclear bases in Britain. Other motions call for improvement in health, education, housing and provision of nurseries.

The Union's policy on the Common Market, a key issue with the European elections coming up, will be determined through debate at the National Committee, and branches are once again demanding the withdrawal of Britain from the EEC and that the sovereignty of Britain be upheld.

Police attack on civil liberties

POLICE chiefs want the right to re-try an acquitted person, one of a series of horrifying proposals to the Royal Commission on Criminal Procedure.

The Association of Police Chiefs wants changes in the legal system which would go a long way towards bringing in a police state. They say that it should be possible to vet the background of a jury. Not content with the abolition of the requirement for a unanimous jury, they say that the present 10 to 2 majority needed for conviction is too high. Spouses should give evidence for the prosecution. In addition, the accused should no longer be entitled to make an unsworn statement in court, and so avoid cross-examination.

McNee, Metropolitan Police Commissioner, has since said that the right of a defendant to remain silent in court without prejudice to his case might be modified. The Police Chiefs submit that the accused, generally, should be the first person

to give evidence.

This last, seemingly petty, recommendation underlines the gist of the police approach. They are particularly worried by the fact that if the accused gives evidence later on in the trial, the police are unable to discredit it. Hence the proposal for re-trials if further evidence comes up later. They are therefore asking, in effect, for convictions to be made on the basis of less evidence collected by them. Yet the police are the ones who, if their demands for a judicial system giving them more power were met, would be in virtual charge of deciding whether a person were guilty or not.

Many submissions have asked that less power be given to the police to prosecute. The Director of Public Prosecutions argues that the police should be assisted in their powers of prosecution. Legal services available to them in special police prosecuting solicitors' departments should be expanded.

This friend of the police (he and not a court decides whether action should be taken against a policeman who kills in the pursuit of duty), argues, among other things, for the abolition of the police obligation to tell an accused that he need not say anything. He also thinks that present regulations which rule that evidence is inadmissible if made under threat or inducement, need modifying, being, as he put it, "excessively solicitous towards the accused".

What longing eyes they must cast at the rest of the capitalist world, where the principles of Roman law obtain, and where the person accused by the police is guilty until proven innocent. As anyone detained by the police knows, this is a basic police assumption, and like little tin gods, they seem to want a legal system in their own image. Under such a system crime can be simply that which displeases the police, the repressive arm of the capitalist state machine.

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hours and public holidays, possibly taking a turn at night duty. Her starting salary is £3300 and after five years at her job she will earn £4100.

Nurses will only succeed in their fight for pay if they are honest about their present situation for Mr Ennals will undoubtedly orchestrate another slanderous attack as he did on the Health Service Supervisors.

Of course he, the great weeping crocodile, will plead with nurses not to cause suffering to patients. Nurses long ago allowed him the monopoly in that. People who have accepted unsocial hours, demanding work and low wages for as long as nurses have, need no lessons in loyalty from the hatchet man of the NHS. But the action they are planning to take now is fully justified. If the Government think it's not - maybe they'll send in the troops to give the enemas, dress the wounds and dish out the pills?

We cannot deny that our actions will affect patients. Nevertheless, the COHSE

national executive call for maximum attendance on the 22 January advised nurses "to leave adequate cover for patients." In reality, however, there is never "adequate cover" for patients in Britain's hospitals today. Our justification for action is that by our inaction over the past few years our patients have suffered greatly.

Let there be no claim for nurses as a 'special case' - we learnt that lesson last year when the staff side of the Whitley Council, with the exception of NUPE, hailed the claim for the 'compensatory award' as justification for accepting the 10 per cent. Nor is there any need for the 'waiting to see what the ancillary staff get' attitude - for who can respect nurses when they expect someone else to fight for them.

Recently, the prime minister refused even to attend meeting to discuss the nurses' pay claim. Let us not attach too great an importance to such a meeting - just let the Government know that nurses aren't going to be insulted anymore



(Photo: Laurie Sparham I. F. L.)

PICKETING UNDER ATTACK

WHILE the politicians work themselves into a passion about picketing, 'secondary picketing' and perhaps 'tertiary picketing', we know that it is not picketing as such that concerns them. What they are hatching is another round of anti-trade union legislation although you would think they would have given up by now.

Through the years many workers have been arrested, fined and imprisoned because they were picketing. That wasn't the charge of course - usually it was obstruction, intimidation, or conspiracy.

As one judge put it in 1876, "If you wish by your own conduct to assert your right to 'picket' you are almost certain to get into difficulty, for, whatever you may intend, there will be some among you who will go beyond what is intended as 'watching and besetting' within the meaning of the Act." He was referring to the Conspiracy Act of 1875, the same law that was used to imprison building workers in the Shrewsbury trial 5 years ago for conspiracy, i.e. picketing.

In 1899 attempts were made to further safeguard hard-pressed employers from pickets by using bye-laws such as "No person shall, alone or together with any other person, after being requested by any person annoyed by his conduct, or by any constable instructed by such persons, to move

away, so act in any street or public place as wilfully to obstruct, insult or annoy any foot-passenger..."

Another law which virtually made picketing illegal was the 1927 Trade Disputes Act, which was worded so as to leave everyone in doubt as to what you were able to do legally. It was this law which made it illegal for civil servants and postmen to belong to the TUC.

The postwar legislation of 1946 took trade union legal rights back to the position they had reached in 1906 and the failure of "In Place of Strife" and the Industrial Relations Act only showed more clearly the difference between the

wishes of the Government and their actual power.

And remembering the Industrial Relations Act with its attempt to outlaw sympathetic strikes or even strike collections, blacking of goods and its various codes of practice, its not difficult to see where Thatcher got her thoughts on secondary picketing, or Callaghan his code of practice for members of the Transport and General Workers Union.

We do not go on strike for fun and effective picketing is a weapon in the struggle to achieve our aims as quickly as possible. The capitalist state will always be in favour of picketing - so long as it is ineffectual.

What can capitalism do now? continued from Page 1

position where public opinion was running against them and the Tories might be swept to power on a tide of public resentment. "This tide of public opinion could come to a point where a government would be able to take action (against the unions)-knowing it had the support of the public."

When one of the Ministers at the meeting pointed out that "the Labour Party needs the trade union movement," Callaghan quickly retorted: "No; the trade union movement needs the Labour Party - in government." Without a new Government-TUC agreement, he went on, there is no future for either. We can assure him that the labour movement and its trade unions will still be around a

long time after the Labour and Tory parties have ceased to exist.

There is nothing new about all this to the labour movement. It simply means that we have no friends in the enemy camp, the camp of capitalism. What is new, brought about by capitalism's crisis and our own clarity over wages and the class struggle they represent, is the way our enemies in the parties of capitalism, Labour and Tory, who in easier circumstances can enjoy the luxury of pretending to offer alternatives in the present plight show themselves to be identical on the all-important issue of how to deal with a working class that refuses to be profit's slaves.

The sleeping giant awakes

WITH A one day strike and demonstration in London on January 22, there has started a massive campaign by a consortium of unions to defeat the Government's last-ditch effort to make the pay guidelines stick. COHSE, GMWU, NUPE and the TGWU, representing NHS ancillary, ambulance and nursing staffs; Local Authority manual and airport workers, and University manual workers, have decided to take united action, following a £60 a week claim.

The necessary offer of 5 per cent to ambulance drivers is another indication of how little the Government cares about our health service. The drivers are taking action on Monday and not covering emergency services, only because an emergency service doesn't really exist anyway. The low pay has been driving ambulance men away from the service and people are increasingly being transported to hospital in minicabs. On Monday sick people will have the privilege of being carried to hospital by Army Ambulances, as this capitalist government pretends to care.

A whole range of selective sanctions are proposed by COHSE

for all sections of NHS staff, from the 22nd onwards, with catering staff, porters and cleaners to refuse to do work not essential to patient care (eg refuse to move rubbish from non-ward areas), nurses to ban overtime and refuse to 'act-up' in senior staff absence, and in the long run, if necessary, selective and short-term withdrawals of labour. Although these actions are limited, to avoid patients suffering, the threat of these, and similar from the other unions involved, have already been enough to push Callaghan to talk of offering £3.50 a week instead of 5 per cent, and hint at 'comparability' with other sectors. This has now been followed with threats from Joel Barnett at the Treasury to make up any pay increases won out of the rest of public expenditure.

For too long the public sector has allowed itself to be the backbone of support for pay restraint, and to avoid struggle in favour of Whitley Council negotiations and other social democratic devices, with the result that it has always found itself in the 'low pay' position it now complains of so bitterly. Even now the official aim of the campaign is to bring about

a 'special enquiry' into pay grievances, pleading special case status. We do not need the illusion of a decision by 'independent' assessors to justify our pay claim by comparability with other sectors (if other sectors' pay went down, would we demand pay cuts to be fair?); we need only our own decision that we deserve and need a decent wage for the services we provide, and that we will fight to get it. The Government is attacking public services directly by outbacks and indirectly by underpaying those who work in them, relying on their concern for the rest of the working class whom they serve, to prevent them taking industrial action. But the bluff has been called and the sleeping giant stirs.

Bookshops

Bellman Bookshop 155 Fortress Road, London NW5

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Basildon Bookstall - Tues, Fri, Sat Market Place

Liverpool Bookstall - every Thursday Liverpool University

The Worker

155 FORTRESS ROAD, LONDON NW5
6 months £2.50 (including postage)
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Public Meetings

London		
Jan. 26	The world in ferment	Bellman Bookshop
Feb. 9	Pay policy smashed: What next?	Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, Holborn.
Feb. 23	Devolution and the EEC: whose benefit?	Conway Hall
Mar. 9	Out with the Labour Govt.	Bellman Bookshop
All meetings are at 7.30 p.m., venue as stated.		
Oxford		
Wed. 31st January	For an Industrial Revolution	
Wed. 7th February	The Struggle for Health & Education	
Wed. 14th February	Our Trade Unions, our decisions	
Wed. 21st February	Seizing the Assets	
All starting at 8.00 p.m., Cowley Community Centre		