



SAVE LEYLAND SACK EDWARDES

BRITISH Leyland management have admitted that after years of 'slimming' the company down it is now nearer to the precipice than ever. And what new proposal should they come up with and give the title 'corporate plan' - another diet of sackings to the emaciated patient.

THE WORKER was right all along - Edwardes was brought in as the axeman and the only way to save BL is to chop him down. In saying that, we must also say that Edwardes is only possible because of the disarray of the BL workers organisation. The long history of members leaving their craft union to join the T & GWU, leaving their defence of skills and jobs to someone else has taken its toll. The history of breakaway shop stewards organisations that made such a fuss over differentials but forgot about the transmission and the rest of their union machinery. Even the acceptance of the AUEW of the 'social contract' was made possible by members working at Leylands.

Naturally the poaching and the chasing of wild geese do not make for sound organisation. Certainly the refusal to support the fight at Speke, the refusal to fight at AEC and the refusal to fight at Park Royal, means the fight will now be that much more difficult.

BL is being closed down bit by bit according to the expert who could not build a car and has been allowed to make the plans that no one else will build a car - unless they be controlled by international monopoly. Not just British, that is certain.

Edwardes and Thatcher should be seen to be as foreign to Britain as they are to industrial production. Kick them out and we will produce, keep them and we will be joining the queue to the dole. The CSEU Executive have been led by Edwardes to his precipice and in their fear have sanctioned the murder of their members. So we have a secret ballot to see what proportion of members at BL will go along with the slaughter of their brothers. No wonder they want more secret ballots. What a great example of worker participation - we now have the right to choose which of us will get the sack.

BL will be bled dry unless the workers there save themselves. They will have to organise and fight, get rid of Edwardes and his plans.



Speke was left to die alone. When will British Leyland workers take up the fight to save their industry?

Photo: Lawrence Sparham (IFL)

Zimbabwe for freedom

LORD Carrington surprised no one when he adopted the posture of the colonial overlord at the Lancaster House Conference on Zimbabwe now in its sixth week. Britain is given the status of the colonial power responsible for that part of Africa. This was the basis laid down at the Lusaka Commonwealth Conference - a status which amounts to treating the people of Zimbabwe as cattle in a cattle market. Hence Carrington's threats, conditions and ultimatums.

The question is not to re-establish British rule over Rhodesia in order to end the UDI of 1961. The so-called 'illegal regime was sustained throughout by Britain, France

and the US working directly or indirectly through South Africa - UN sanctions notwithstanding. The government of Smith and his successor, Muzorewa, are in the eyes of the people of Zimbabwe no more and no less illegal than British colonial rule.

At the Lancaster House Conference great attention is being paid to a Botha of South Africa who threatens military intervention, to the white settlers who, having robbed the inhabitants of their land, insist on compensation before handing it back, to a fascist bishop whose only aim in life seems to be to kill and maim as many of his countrymen and the people of neighbouring countries and to inflict as

much mindless economic damage in the short period he remains 'prime minister', as possible: great attention is paid also to the incorrectly described 'front line states' like Zambia, Tanzania and so forth when the front line of this independence struggle is firmly drawn inside Zimbabwe.

Great attention is paid to these: but UDI, Smith, Muzorewa, the Conferences at Lusaka and Lancaster House are all a reply to the people of Zimbabwe who have spoken out. It is a great tribute to the people of Zimbabwe, for what they said when they spoke out was simply to declare themselves intransigently for independence.

Trade Unionists to demonstrate against Corrie's Abortion Amendment Bill

TRADES unionists from all over the country will be gathering on October 28th in London for a national demonstration called by the TUC against the Corrie Private Members Bill to reduce the availability of legal abortion for women.

The Bill, currently in Parliamentary Committee, seeks to curtail substantially the grounds on which it is legal for a doctor to perform an abortion and will also reduce the availability of the facilities, through closure of clinics run by non-profit making charities.

The policy of the TUC, reaffirmed repeatedly over successive congresses, is not only to oppose any changes in the Abortion Act 1967 which could make legal abortion less accessible to women, but is also to demand fully effective free contraception and sex education services and the expansion of NHS abortion facilities.

The demonstration will assemble at Reformers Tree at the Marble Arch end of Hyde Park at 11.30 on October 28th, will march to Trafalgar Square via Park Lane, Piccadilly and the Haymarket at 12.30 and will be followed by a rally in the Square at about 2.45pm.

NATFHE - No Clegg commission delay to lecturers 1980 wage claim

COLLEGE and Polytechnic lecturers must make it a priority to ensure that their 1980 Salary Claim is prepared and pursued with full force in the New Year.

Recent developments in handling the 1979 Salary Claim reference to the Clegg Commission pose a major threat to NATFHE's ability to advance the aspirations of our membership under free collective bargaining.

The introduction of 'job evaluation' by a commercial firm 'Inbucon' could create a dangerous precedent in how to decide the 'correct' level

of lecturers' wages. In addition this 'study' will delay the final completion of Clegg's report from the intended December 1979 to February 1980. (How is this possible when we are to receive 50 per cent of the award in January 1980?)

Job evaluation will not give a scientific answer to our salary aims. Only the strength of our membership can achieve that. And to allow pseudo-scientific caving to delay settlement of the 1979 Salary Claim and thus interfere with our 1980 Claim can only set back achieving our goals all the more.

Nuclear power - technology itself is no threat

East - West
on imperialist
war footing

There has been criticism of British Leyland for putting up £18,000 a year to subsidise a team of six horses owned by Captain Mark Phillips. Considering what British Leyland, under the direction of Edwardes, is doing to the manufacture of motor cars in Britain this financial backing of the horse is eminently sensible.

The CBI displayed its economic literacy last week by declaring that the only way for workers to protect their living standard was to make sure that their wage rises were less than the price rises.

OUTSPOKEN opposition to the government from the Royal Shakespeare Company. "The idea that all the theatre needs to do is to pull in its belt and stop winging is crazy," said Trevor Nunn. The company already had a deficit in the 1978/9 season. Cuts in public funding would jeopardise the entire London operation at the Aldwych and the Warehouse, making a nonsense of the proposed move of the company into the Barbican Arts centre in 1981. Particularly damaging was the 15 per cent VAT while VAT in the theatre is almost unheard of in the rest of Europe.

"WE ARE looking for extra body protection on the lines of a flak jacket and a redesigned helmet. If this means we bobbies will begin to look like French riot police, it can't be helped," said a police spokesman recently. Apparently in the last three years, 56 officers have been injured (mainly arms and legs broken, and head injuries). This is not the result of demonstrations, but of the simulated riot conditions which seem now to be a staple part of police training.

READERS would do well to pay attention to the latest Dairy Council advertisement. "One dairy cow to every six households in the United Kingdom", an industry employing 45,000 roundsmen and a workforce of a quarter of a million to produce 70 million pints a day - half of that freshly consumed. All of this is under attack from the EEC dairy proposals.

CIVIL service unions are protesting at the move of the Health and Safety Executive to Bootle. The ostensible aim is to create employment in a "depressed area". In fact 800 of the 1200 staff will come from London, not only uprooting themselves, but facing enormous difficulties of communications with the very departments in London with which their work is connected. The effectiveness of the Inspectorate will be severely affected, with rising costs, both direct and indirect to the taxpayer.

Although the Jaguar combat aircraft has only just come into service, Britain, France and West Germany have begun new talks on a replacement. The programme, costing billions of pounds, will rival the largest military aircraft development since the war, that of the 809 Tornados, which cost £8 million each.

AT A TIME when the destructive capabilities of nuclear energy are being ever more refined for war, it is becoming increasingly fashionable to condemn the productive application of nuclear power as an acceptable threat to public safety. Not only have several large demonstrations been held in France, West Germany and the United States but the anti-nuclear campaign has become the cause celebre of aspiring politicians, few of whom have special knowledge in the field of nuclear physics and engineering.

What is the truth about nuclear power? What are the real issues in this field today? Is generation of electricity from nuclear fission intrinsically so unsafe that it should not be undertaken under any circumstances?

Ever since the work of Rutherford and the early pioneers, the harnessing of nuclear energy was understood. The question was, was it to be for good or ill, for profit or for the benefit of people? These are the questions which face us today.

Both in the construction and operation of nuclear installations the potential exists for exposure of workers and possibly the general public to harmful levels of ionising radiation. But this is no different to many other areas of work in which workers face risks. The answer is not to abandon modern industrial methods but to fight to ensure they are made as safe as possible.

Because of the serious consequences of exposure to radiation nuclear installations are built to strict safety criteria and their day-to-day operation is subject to the scrutiny of the Nuclear Installations Inspectorate of the Health and Safety Executive. A recent review of the hazards of nuclear power generation in comparison with extraction of energy from conventional sources carried out by the Health and Safety Commission showed that no-one had died in the industry from exposure to radiation since nuclear plants started operating in this country over 20 years ago. In contrast it has to be remembered that about 60 miners die every year in British coal mines, over 500 are seriously injured, and many hundreds still die prematurely every year as a result of past exposure to dust.

The real issues in the field of nuclear safety are about whether the government is going to abandon our own Advanced Gas Cooled Reactor in favour of the cheaper American Pressurised Water Reactor. The British AGR, which is the Rolls Royce of nuclear reactors, is not only our own independent development but is intrinsically safer than the PWR. Then there is the immediate question of the staffing of the Nuclear Installations Inspectorate. Safety in industry depends upon people and organisation. At present NII consists of only 70 inspectors

for the whole country, yet even this level of staffing is threatened by cuts in HSE and resignations which will follow if the Government is allowed to get away with plans to banish the whole of HSE to Bootle. In addition to this there is also the question of funding of research - particularly into areas such as nuclear waste disposal which urgently require new and safe solutions.

The real issues of public safety faced by the people of Britain today are missed by the anti nuclear brigade. Above all there is Thatcher and her exposure of the people of this country to nuclear extermination. 6000 people die every year on our roads, 6000 die accidentally every year in the home, 1,300 die every year in industry as a result of accidents and diseases. Modern industrial plants are developed close to centres of population with major companies objecting to proposals for even simple systems of HSE scrutiny and control.

All these examples illustrate the principle that it is not technology that threatens the lives and health of people but the ends to which that technology is used. It is not nuclear power which should be abandoned but capitalism. With this Government set on a policy of profit at all costs the battle for public safety must be stepped up on all fronts.



The people of Zimbabwe have spoken for independence.

(See article on page 1)

Overseas bogey to quell workers

IT IS a savage irony that on the fiftieth anniversary of the Wall Street crash, the same money market should be the epicentre of world-wide financial instability in October 1979.

The repetitive formula of US politics is that serious domestic dismay is best diverted by acts of would-be international statesmanship. Hence the great "show of force", in the mock invasion of the US Guantanamo base on Cuba. Hence Carter's Camp David talks on the Middle East, discussions with Teng Hsiao-Ping, meetings with the papacy, latterly declarations on Cuba and Vietnam.

These plays are stale with centuries old repetition. The US driven out of Vietnam, has to play its war games on that tiny portion of Cuba the Cubans allow them. US diplomacy is so inept that it is thrown off balance by the Soviet offer of troop and weapon reduction. The US responds by stupidly parading before the world its contention that arms increase is the

only way to world peace.

To rally the nation against the "external threat" has always been the last resort of the tyrant. The Domestic threat is invariably the real concern.

The US to-day is in some turmoil. Inflation a year ago was 8 per cent. To-day it is 13 per cent and still rising. Unemployment puts 6 million workers on the scrap-heap. 26 million live under the official poverty line. Carter is haggling for a social contract imported from Britain, just as religion is imported from Rome, long after the organised European working class has rejected both. American workers are doing likewise. The trumpeted National Accord is neither national nor an accord, while the Teamsters and United Auto Workers unions have already broken through the seven per cent pay "guide".

Carter blames inflation on "world oil prices", yet American oil firms dominate the world market, an awkward fact not lost

on American workers. He blames the "world crisis" on the Soviet Union. They dream up "com...unist influence" where there is all too little of it, to justify their own repression both internally and externally. Within the US, this means the wrecking of the possibilities of an economy geared to peace, the destruction of all industries and jobs that do not contribute to the Pentagon's plans for war production. That supreme waste of productive capacity is used as a weapon against workers.

As the McCarthy era showed, the essence of the Cold War Strategy is the attack on human rights, on any aspirations to socialism or progress. The present drive towards war is no different in intent. But with the new plans for nuclear weapons, their campaign to place them in Europe, on British Soil, it is more murderous in practice. The increasing stupidity of US imperialist policy in decline makes it increasingly dangerous to us all.

JUST AFTER the 30th anniversary of the founding of the People's Republic of China, Hua Guofeng, Premier of the Council of State, is visiting France, West Germany, and Britain as the representative of a country no less imperialist than they. What a celebration for the period of China's National Day, once observed by workers all over the world as a great socialist holiday!

Just as the Soviet Union defected from socialism after Stalin's death and paid its way into the imperialist club with armed occupation of its neighbour, Czechoslovakia, so China after its defection from socialism has paid its way into the imperialist club with its armed aggression against its neighbour, Vietnam.

Hua Guofeng has already picked up the lingo of the imperialists. He praises the governments of western Europe for their "defensive" arrangements - allowing US imperialism's nuclear missiles to be planted on their soil aimed at another imperialist power, the Soviet Union. He assures them this is necessary because the Soviet Union is bound to launch aggressive war on western Europe - a war that will suit imperialist China very well. Gambling in millions of lives is the game imperialists love to play.

Hua's visit to the West was prepared for by the staging of the show trials of a couple of Chinese dissidents - that is, people who don't think the restoration of capitalist ways is going fast enough and whose public arraignment is intended to make China look socialist and democratic.

In China itself what is meant by "modernisation" becomes daily more apparent - the rapid rise of unemployment and inflation. The reactionary government has just increased food prices by over 30 per cent and a little book entitled "Why There Is No Inflation In China", proudly published while socialism still flourished, has had to be quietly withdrawn.

Not only does China invite foreign firms in through an open door to exploit the people and resources; China even invites them into lands which are not certainly Chinese, as when inviting the US firm, Amoco, into an area claimed also by Vietnam.

The switch from socialist to the purely materialist incentives of capitalism, hailed a year or so ago as a great economic breakthrough, is leaving the working people all over the country blank-faced, robbed of the old motivation to build a better socialist China for themselves and their children and still wondering when they are going to get the luxury goods promised.

In the speeches for this National Day there were no references to China's great socialist achievements - feeding, clothing and housing all her eight hundred million people, and giving the lie forever to the argument that suffering is inevitable for the peasant masses of the as yet undeveloped countries and adopting a foreign policy based on proletarian internationalism.

Editorial

The battle over the survival of THE TIMES demonstrates some of the complexities that can arise in the course of a straight-forward class struggle in the period of declining capitalism.

On the employers' side, the Thompson Group chose THE TIMES and the various Supplements as the field of conflict partly because these papers are not all that profitable and having them closed down for a long period or even for good would not represent so much of a financial loss and partly because the international reputation of THE TIMES as a quality newspaper could make the print workers, if the responsibility for closure could be fastened on them, look like illiterate vandals.

This very willingness to put THE TIMES and the Supplements at risk and deprive not only the general public but teachers and writers in particular, for whom the Educational and Literary Supplements provide a valuable service, shows who the vandals really are and what happens to quality or public service when they get in the way of profits.

Technology used to destroy jobs

The real issue of the dispute is that which is bedeviling industrial relations over the whole economy: the rapid introduction of technological developments which change industry from labour-intensive to capital-intensive at a time of general decline and contraction. Such a change has always been presented as progressive, lightening man's physical burden and giving him more leisure for all round development. Indeed, sociologists a decade or so ago were worrying about whether workers were ready for all the time they were going to have to pursue the arts and cultivate worthwhile hobbies. In fact, technological developments have been used under declining capitalism as never before to give hundreds of thousands of workers full-time leisure on the dole queue and, because of the falling rate of profit which the process entails, make those still employed work longer hours than ever. Hence the importance of the successful strike by engineers.

The organised working class is not and never has been opposed to technological progress. Indeed, all technological progress stems from the creativity of the working class; and management on its own is not even capable of buying and installing the right equipment, as was also demonstrated in the case of THE TIMES. But the organised working class is quite rightly opposed to the use of technological advance to destroy jobs wholesale and to mobilise a vast reserve army of unemployed to weaken the trade unions. Print workers are perfectly aware that THE TIMES is a stalking horse for introducing redundancy on a colossal scale into Fleet Street - even if they have not always been able to sink various differences among themselves in order to present a united front in their efforts to save THE TIMES and the newspaper industry in a form in which they can survive themselves.

Of course, some so-called leftists would say that if a bourgeois paper like THE TIMES disappears that is no loss to the working class. The first answer to that kind of silliness is that we save jobs and the skills that go with them for ourselves and for those to come - even if in an ideal workers' state of the future we would not be making, or not be making in the same way whatever those jobs are now producing. But an equally important answer is that the positive qualities in a paper like THE TIMES, efficient news gathering, lucid presentation of facts, entertaining features and good graphics and design represent the skills of workers in the same way that the physical production of newspapers does. Capitalism will destroy those skills and their valuable products tomorrow if they are not profitable enough. We have to save them.

Orchestration of tax fiddlers

TAX avoidance is big business. A recent report on the successes of two accountants in helping their customers - both individuals and large companies - to avoid paying tax, shows the extent of the practice.

It is estimated that through various schemes, which they changed every time the Inland Revenue legislated against them, they have "saved" their customers £200m a year for the last ten years and made £5m clear profit in the process.

It is interesting and revealing that they have ceased operations since the Tory tax changes!

It is becoming increasingly obvious that only the working class in Britain actually pay income tax. We have no fancy accounting schemes or "experts" to help us avoid payment.

The Tories claim we have all benefited from their so-called tax cuts. Like all the Tories claims this one, on examination, proves false.

The income tax reduction

amounted to a total of £3.6 billion. This was paid for with VAT increases netting £2.4 billion this year, and public expenditure cuts of £2.5 billions. Of course this means we are actually losing more through VAT and Public Expenditure cuts amounting to a net reduction in national real income of £1.3 billion.

Divided evenly into 20 million households this would mean each household being £1.25 per week worse off in 1979. But, we know not everyone in Britain is equal as far as income is concerned so it follows that not everyone is suffering a similar cut in living standards. With a gross salary of £50,000 (the average for a company executive) take-home pay has increased by well over fifty per cent.

It is obvious that when the Tories claim they want to set up a "free property-owning democracy" who is meant to own the property - certainly not those who produce all wealth in this country - the working class,

Cash limits an excuse to cut jobs and services

IN 1976 the Labour Government introduced the notion of "cash limits" in order to attempt to control the struggle for wages in the public sector. Supposedly it works like this: if wages rise by more than the cash limits allow, the money cannot be found by borrowing or being provided by the government.

Thus, the workers in the nationalised industries are supposed to see that pay increases will result in cuts in services or unemployment. Workers are not stupid. We know that in both the private and public sector in Britain, no matter what profits the workers make for the employers - very little is ploughed back into industry. Furthermore increased wages can only yield better services all round. But still, the employers and the government trot out more reasons why we

should not fight for higher wages, and all in our own interest!

The present Government, with all the commitment to its election pledges that has been manifest since it took office, is already preparing for the coming winter and pay demands from workers in the nationalised industries. Letters have been sent from Senior ministers to Chairmen of some nationalised industries setting cash limits where a figure of 17½ per cent is being regarded as the Treasury's maximum target for public sector pay increases this winter.

The letters state that wage bills should not rise by more than the Retail Price Index. In a letter to Chairmen of the Post Office, Shipbuilding and Aerospace industries, Keith Joseph wrote that the 'pay bill in a case where output is constant should rise by less

than the Retail Price Index and therefore labour costs per unit of output should fall in real terms."

If they are clear about nothing else, the employers and the government understand the need to plan their tactics well in advance. Public Sector workers will not be misled by arguments about "cash limits" or threats of unemployment. Nor will they submit to any form of covert pay policy.

One of the first of the nationalised industries claims to be negotiated is that of the miners who are demanding a 65 per cent increase from November. The Tories promised us an inflation rate of 17 per cent by December - we must ensure that our wage demands reflect not an arbitrary figure drawn out of a hat by the Treasury, but rather our strength as organised workers.

Capitalism's bitter pill for pharmacists : closures and waste of skills

IN 1962 there were more than 14,000 retail pharmacies in Britain, now there are only about 10,000 and on average one is closing nearly every day. Against this strain on the services they provide, pharmacists met in Exeter recently for the annual conference of the British Pharmaceutical Society.

The Society's president spoke of the difficulties facing qualified and experienced pharmacists to leave the job. The NHS gives a "notional salary" for the work pharmacists carry out, including a remuneration on every prescription they deal with. It has always been grossly inadequate. This coupled with the extortionate prices for drugs and medicines has forced pharmacists to rely on cosmetics and tights to earn their living. Now with the growing monopoly of department store chemists, more and more find it

impossible to compete, and close down. How many people have a chemists shop just round the corner anymore?

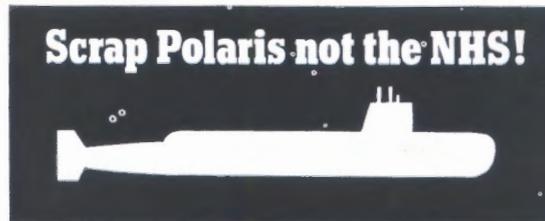
Pharmacists have campaigned by petition and protest for some time now to get the remuneration they are paid on each prescription increased, as the only real way to preserve their existence. At long last they have won a rise publicised as 45 per cent. But, according to the NHS, pharmacists have been overpaid for the last two years, and so the increase is being suspended until they have paid back the surplus. When it is eventually paid back, pharmacists will get something substantially less than the 45 per cent.

Reflecting the waste of pharmacist skills, a Liverpool neurosurgeon, John Miles, told the conference how four years ago a British medical team researching into pain relief iden-

tified the body's natural pain killing substances, which act like morphine only without the dangerous side effects. These substances, manufactured as drugs, could rid people of pain from all illnesses, but the only funds for further studies are a £50,000 grant from the Medical Research Council - about £3m is needed for full scale research. Mr Miles said, "Having made the initial breakthrough here, there is no reason why we could not lead the world if we had the money."

It was never more clear that to lead the world again in the march for progress, we must throw off the shackles of capitalism.

Capitalism in its decline is bleeding all areas of research that could benefit us and diverting our money into the perfection of the means of war and destruction



The fight for union recognition

FOR MANY workers coming in to the trade unions for the first time, union recognition marks a big step forward in self-respect as they stand up for their rights collectively, and exercise a greater degree of control over their own lives.

By contrast, the employers have always resisted formal union recognition, and now the government is seeking to strengthen their opposition by gaining acceptance for its own version of "compulsory recognition".

According to this principle, workers having trouble with their employer would be able to apply to ACAS (the Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service), which would then be empowered to compel the employer to grant recognition.

At a time when the government and the employers are solidly united in their efforts to curb the

unions, workers are rightly suspicious of generous offers by the government to solve their problems for them.

Where compulsory recognition already exists, as in Europe or the US, the government simply assumes the right to examine membership registers, pronounce on what union the members are allowed to be in, and determine procedure to be adopted. So, instead of fighting one intransigent employer the workers find themselves face to face with a more formidable enemy, the capitalist state.

The TUC has so far made clear its rejection of 'compulsory recognition'. It is up to workers already fighting for recognition to make sure they do not let their employer off the hook, and to draw on whatever advice and assistance they can from the labour movement as a whole.

Lewisham cuts

HOW LONG does it take to chop £5½ million from the budget of the Lambeth, Southwark and Lewisham Health Authority? A packed audience of local townspeople heard that the five commissioners, appointed by the government to replace the suspended Area Health Authority, were managing their task by working one day a week.

Amidst angry calls of "resign or retire" one commissioner described how she was refusing her wages of £40 per day in case it interfered with her pension rights.

Their axe has already fallen on St. John's Hospital. This decision was challenged in the High Court because the statutory obligation of consultation with the Community Health Council was ignored. The judge found on the side of the five on the basis that St. John's closure would not seriously affect health provision in the area!

Doctors and nurses are to be replaced by judges and commissioners when it comes to deciding on provision for the sick. Teachers no doubt will not be allowed to decide how best to educate, but it will be left up to some creature of the government. Nutritionists will be replaced by raving Tory councillors when it comes to school dinners.

Toddler triumph in Islington

WE HAVE won! Toddlers have triumphed at the town hall. That was the jubilant cry after Islington councillors threw out plans to cut grants to under-fives. In the climax to a furious campaign, mothers and toddlers lobbied councillors as they arrived for the meeting. Shaken by the demonstration councillors voted by 27 to 20 to continue paying grants to playgroups and mother and toddler groups at the present level for the remainder of the financial year.

Public Services are defended by Kent workers

Education

More than 200 schools are refusing to teach classes of over thirty, and to 'cover' for a teacher who is absent. This way they hope to force the Education Authority to employ some of the many unemployed teachers, and to take on 'supply' teachers when needed. The Authority chooses to worsen all staffing levels in primary schools to a ratio of one teacher to every 34 children. NUT members will be discussing ways of escalating their action in the event of the employers carrying through this intent. Cleaning staff and caretakers are refusing to cover for frozen vacancies.

Health

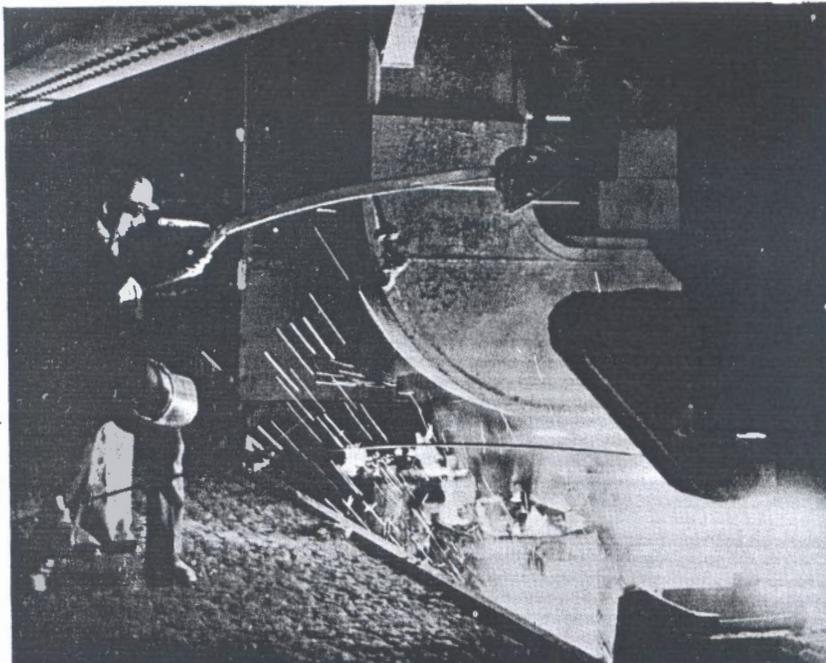
COHSE, NUPE and NALGO have organised a joint action committee to resist attempts to close orthopaedic and geriatric facilities in the Medway towns. Several public meetings have been packed with workers opposed to any cut. In Sittingbourne, such action has temporarily halted the proposed closure of the town's main hospital.

Social Services

The Conservative philosophy of conserving nothing that workers need has also hit Children's Homes and Old People's Homes. Ten closures are planned before the end of the year. An immediate work to rule has been started with the refusal to cover for vacancies and the possibility of occupation is under discussion.

Local Govt

All Unions representing employees of Kent County Council have formed an action committee whose first step will be to call a mass picket of the next Council meeting. Farm workers, lorry drivers, cleaners, teachers and other white collar workers are working together in a new unity. Never has there been clearer expression of Kent workers' determined resolve to alter the course of Government and County Council.



The steelworks at Corby. The fight to save Corby from capitalist destruction goes on. Steelworkers all over Western Europe are realising that the Common Market is simply a way of reducing or getting rid of no longer profitable industries like steel. Photo: Syd Shelton

ABORTION - A RIGHT TO CHOOSE

ABORTIONS, or attempted abortions, have been carried out for centuries when unwanted pregnancy occurred. For too many women it involved the horrors of the hot bath, the gin or the knitting needles of the back street abortionist, and afterward infections, sterility or even death.

The present abortion laws are not only humane, in that at least in theory medically safe abortion is available regardless of the woman's ability to pay, but it goes some way towards recognising the most fundamental of women's freedoms, that of controlling her own body. It is a most precious freedom.

If the Corrie Bill to reduce the availability of legal abortion becomes law, the comparative freedom from the fear of unwanted pregnancy brought by the 1967 Abortion Act will be lost.

The demand for abortion would not decrease because of legislation: there would be

to curtail severely the medical profession's ability to take the necessary decisions without the fear of prosecution. As an article in the British Medical Journal noted wryly, "The record of legal vindictiveness amongst the extreme opponents of abortion can leave little doubt that charges might be brought against an NHS obstetrician for a technical offence, despite his having acted in what he saw as the best interests of the patient." The grounds for abortion would be altered so that it would be legal only if there was grave risk to the life of the pregnant woman or substantial risk to her or her children's physical or mental health. What juggling with words! How great must the risk be before it can 'safely' be deemed as 'grave' or 'substantial'? Such a distinction is both cynical and vindictive.

One of the most senseless proposals is for curtailing

loopholes galore for the rich, but ordinary women who have become accustomed to controlling their own fertility and unwilling to return to compulsory motherhood, would return to the evils of the backstreet abortionist.

For the medical profession, the new legal requirements the Bill proposes would further complicate decisions which are already difficult.

The proposed restrictions on the time limit for abortion from 28 weeks of pregnancy to 20 weeks, would be extremely harmful. All doctors would rather carry out abortions as early as possible in pregnancy, since it is a much safer and simpler procedure. But it is often the most needy cases who present late, unsure of their dates, and certain tests for foetal abnormality can only be carried out after 20 weeks if the women's life was actually at risk.

Other proposals combine

the work of the abortion charities by forbidding a licence to any pregnancy counselling service which has "a financial arrangement or other relevant agreement" with any approved abortion nursing home.

The woman would, however, be free to go to any private nursing home, where the counselling service could not guarantee standards. The charitable sector provides just over half the abortions carried out in England and Wales, although in some parts of the country this proportion may be as high as 75 per cent. The Royal Commission on the National Health Service criticised the failure of the Health Service to provide adequate abortion facilities.

Yet the Corrie Bill does nothing to ensure that better NHS early abortion facilities be made available for those women who could no longer turn to the charities for help.

Further, we have to see the Tory support for the Corrie Bill as running hand in hand with the general attack on maternity provisions and the needs of working women in childcare facilities and the like.

Education is reduced to childminding on the rates, and the role of women to baby factories and unpaid baby-minding.

We must defend the Abortion Act against changes which make legal abortion less accessible and demand the expansion of NHS abortion facilities.

Watney Mann transport crews fight lockout

WATNEY MANN have locked out all transport crews at the depot in Whitechapel Road, London. THE WORKER was given an interview by one of those locked out, a member of the T & G WU, the main union involved.

Q: Why were you locked out?

A: Without prior consultation, the management introduced new security measures, supposedly to stop pilfering. We asked for this 'different work practice' to be suspended under the 'status quo' agreements, but they refused. We were given an instruction to continue with the new procedure which we declined to do. The management, therefore, locked out all transport crews.

Q: Is the introduction of the new procedure the real reason for the dispute?

A: No. What they (the management) are doing is carrying out a union bashing exercise. The initial dispute was in fact only an excuse to get us outside the gate and take us on.

Q: What support are you getting?

A: Our members are 100 per cent united on this, with all members involved in picketing the company's depots. Two sites are stopped completely and on Monday we shall stop Isleworth and Mortlake breweries, the company's two major breweries. If needed, we can call on the craft unions for support.

The workers know that this is an important battle and are determined to keep the management off our backs. If we lose this we go back 20 years in union organisation.

Bookshops

Bellman Bookshop 155 Fortess Road, London NW5
Brighton Workers Bookshop 37 Gloucester Road, Brighton
Clarion Books 5 The Precinct, Stanford-le-Hope, Essex
Main Trend Books 17 Midland Road, St. Philips, Bristol
Northern Star Bookshop 18A Leighton Street, Leeds
Basildon Bookstall Tues, Fri, Sat Marketplace
Hull Bookstall Old Town Market, Saturdays
Liverpool Bookstall every Thursday Liverpool University

Public Meetings

Public Meetings in London will start at 7.30 pm

Fri Oct 26	The Party of the British Working Class.	Bellman Bookshop
Fri Nov 9	Britain in the World Today.	Conway Hall
Fri Nov 23	Britain's Future, solely in the Working Class.	Bellman Bookshop
Fri Nov 30	Britain in the 80's, an Industrial Wasteland	Conway Hall

OXFORD

Mon Oct 29	Save Education	Cowley Community Centre, 8pm
Mon Nov 26	For an Industrial Revolution	Cowley Community Centre, 8pm

The Worker

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

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