

THE WORKER



Published by the Communist Party of Britain (Marxist-Leninist) No. 42 30th. Nov. 1978 5p

WORKERS STEP UP SANCTIONS ON GOVT

"If the sanctions are anything like those imposed on Rhodesia you won't even see the memo." Reg Birch told Ford management as the company agreed to pay up. Now it is for workers in Britain to step up the battle against the government's pay policy, itself a sanction.

230,000 miners have formally put in their claim for £110 per week for face workers. 250,000 hospital ancillary workers and 1½ million local authority manual workers are claiming £60 minimum.

90,000 power workers are preparing for the fight. In every section of the class from the journalists to gas-workers, insurance clerks to engineers, pay claims are being submitted, and workers are imposing their own sanctions on this government and employers who would hide behind pay policy.

BOC Victory

THE 3000 drivers and manual workers in the gases division of BOC have settled for an increase of 9½ per cent. This guideline-smashing increase has also been accepted by the 1800 staff workers in the division, together with a common pay date for all grades which means that some workers will be paid the new increase 3 months following their last settlement in July.

Ambulance men

AMBULANCE drivers have submitted a claim for £65 a week minimum plus improvements in shift and overtime rates which at present account for 30 per cent of their wages.

The three main unions, NUPE, COHSE and TGWU are determined that ambulance drivers' pay will not be limited to the 5 per cent dictate of the government.

The fact that the drivers have worded this claim in terms of a special case is a sign of lack of clarity and will no doubt be seized on by the government as a sign of weakness. Far from being special, the demand for decent

pay is a general demand of all workers in Britain. The only special thing about it is the special contempt for life the government showed so viciously in the firemen's strike earlier this year.

Civil Servants

THE report of the Pay Research Unit, the body which compares the pay of civil servants with that of comparable workers in the private sector, points to an increase of 20-25 per cent.

The members of the Society of Civil and Public Servants, at meetings during the next week should unanimously support an Executive Council motion rejecting the Government pay norm and cash limit restraints and proposing industrial action to secure a just settlement if the Government refuse to negotiate on their full claim.

This will be a major step forward for civil servants who have reached a watershed in their policy on pay negotiations. They will be cutting

the shackles of social democracy in taking on the Government both as capitalist watchdog and employer, and there will clearly need to be thorough and early preparation for what could be a prolonged struggle.

Some will advocate caution. Maybe the Government will negotiate on a 20 per cent claim or make a special case of us. This timorous attitude ignores reality. Callaghan and Thatcher have spelt it out continually. Public servants' pay will always be overridden by national pay policy and neither will the White Paper 'special case' paragraphs apply to over 500,000 civil servants.

We must condemn low wages, mass resignations, permanent injustice on retirement, and an ever deteriorating standard of public service - all a result of our past refusal to fight on our own properly submitted claims and our failure to reject arbitrary restraints, and commit ourselves to struggle.

Whatever the outcome, the past few years will surely reveal the redundancy of a Pay Research system which delivers the goods only at the employer's benevolence. Civil servants must now make a fundamental political reappraisal of their struggle for wages.

Tanker drivers

THIS WEEK saw the rejection by negotiators from the TGWU of further final offers to tanker drivers by Shell and BP. Drivers have demanded increases on basic pay of £15 as well as the commitment from last year's settlement to boost the rate on which overtime is paid.

National meetings of shop stewards will decide what action drivers will take in response to these offers. Last year's negotiations were settled only after drivers imposed a work to rule and overtime ban which drastically reduced petrol deliveries.

Govt defeat at hands of Ford workers



57,000 walked out 9 weeks ago at Ford and 57,000 return to work after their victory against the government. Photo Carlos Augusto (IFL)

C A Parsons

3500 Tyneside engineering workers at C A Parsons were due to begin an all-out strike as this issue of THE WORKER went to press. The fight is over money - and the company's continued refusal to talk seriously about it.

The strike call comes after more than six months of on-off negotiation and struggle. Talks began in April over the £87.60 claim, but the company refused to negotiate until the workers called off their overtime ban. Yet even when the ban was suspended, the talks still got nowhere.

Even a half-day strike in September failed to break the deadlock. Eventually, the Confederation of Shipbuilding and Engineering Unions was called in. Still there was no progress, and the overtime ban was re-imposed.

The response of the company was predictable - they tried to pick off sections one at a time. They wanted to aggravate the situation in an attempt to force the workers into what would then have been a premature all-out strike.

The workers stepped up their action by refusing to allow a power station core, destined for Canada, to leave the works. The despatch joiners were put on strike to prevent the load being shored up. When joiners from the construction shop were called in to do the job, they refused - and were immediately laid off.

C A Parsons have always boasted of their 'good' record in industrial relations. Now they are faced with a claim, they are showing their true capitalist colours.

In the past, the Parsons workers were prepared to forego decent wage increases in the vain hope of keeping jobs. Now all this has changed. The attitude has turned into one of 'if we're not good enough to be paid for our skill and labour, then we won't work at all.'

Independence and freedom - nothing more precious



With the slogan 'Nothing is more precious than independence and freedom' Vietnamese workers celebrate their liberation of Saigon. After years of fearless struggle the Vietnamese nation is now united and independent and even better able to take care of itself and continue its progress to socialism. (Picture, Hsinhua)

Labour movement free, independent and sovereign

CAPITALISM doesn't create what prosperity we have in Britain. Nor does 'industry' - for 'industry' produces nothing without the labour of the working class. In the fight against the organised oppression of those who have exploited us, workers have grown and grown in strength - the strength of millions and millions of people organised into the world's most advanced trade union movement. In response to such strength the British capitalist class is pursuing a 'burnt earth' policy in Britain - a course of the deliberate destruction of industry and services to the people who work it. The role of the 'Labour movement - workers organisation' becomes all the more crucial in this situation. So the speaker argued in a recent meeting held by the CPBML in London.

Is today's struggle of the trade

union movement purely 'economic' and something to be denigrated? he asked. The answer is no. It was never purely 'economic' to oppose exploitation. The strength of the Trade union movement, its vitality comes from the fact that it reflects the hearts and minds of people in their struggle for progress. The crucial political importance of this struggle can be seen from the history of governments since the second world war alone.

Pointing out that 'pay policies' arise solely because employers individually couldn't cope with the strength of our movement, the speaker underlined the fact of our strength by reminding us that each and every pay policy had fallen in ruins. The attempts to shackle the trade union movement itself through policies like 'In Place of Strife' and the 'Industrial Rela-

tions Act' had equally foundered. But what followed these victories also showed where our weaknesses lie, and why it is we have not been able, up till now, to advance beyond the perpetual strife between employers and workers by winning socialism. And the weakness is philosophical.

For after the defeat of the Industrial Relations Act and Heath's 'stages' the trade union movement agreed to tie its own hands behind its back in a deal where the Government promised to remove what we had already destroyed. And in the last four years it has taken up too much energy to get rid of a misdeed which should never have occurred.

We have to be rid of the ideology of social democracy, which bases itself upon our wish to leave responsibility to somebody else.

Now that the capitalist class is

saying that they can't afford us, we, as a working class must answer that we cannot afford them any more. We must create majority rule in a country which calls itself a democracy - we must seize power and build socialism, and the foundations of success will lie in our accepting what we are - workers - and using our working class organisations to achieve their basic aims; the right to work, improved wages, education, health, housing. This basic struggle has already brought about a new situation in Britain, where for the first time the Trades Union Congress is actively opposed to a Labour Government, and all the attempts to patch up an agreement have failed. Now, we must use our strength, make this policy 'stand out' of the paper it is written on, and ensure that it is implemented throughout the country.

Less steel more profit

COUNT Davignon, the EEC commissioner for industry, has plans for reducing steel output. They have been made a nonsense by workers everywhere opposing cuts in industrial production.

Indeed, the capitalist heads of the nationalised steel industries of Europe, particularly the British and Italian, are being forced to pay more attention to the demands of the workforce for increased production, than to the edicts of the EEC. As British and Italian steel production, each in its own way, leads others in efficiency, it is no surprise that attempts at closure by the EEC, along with workers' militancy in opposing them, are focussed here.

The British Steel Corporation's plan to close one of its most advanced plants at Beswick was hammered by the threat of all-out strike of 110,000 members of the Iron and Steel Trades Confederation. Nothing daunted by the EEC, the unions are now going on to implement an overtime

ban as part of a campaign to keep jobs.

Davignon, unable to get all the closures he wants, is reduced to the threat of shipping in steel from outside the Community in an effort to bankrupt recalcitrant domestic producers. In this he has the support of another count, Otto Lambsdorff, West Germany's Economics minister.

Nevertheless, even he is being opposed by West German capitalists who set a higher value on the profits from their workforce than on the Franco-German plan.

The proposal to tailor steel production in a way that profits so few (and, of course, would not profit Lambsdorff or Davignon!) has given it few friends.

In effect, they would seem to intend nothing short of massive cuts in every industry outside today's axis - the Rhine-Rhone. Behind all the smokescreen of words, this is what the European Monetary System, that brainchild of Schmidt and Giscard, really boils down to.

Open govt- a dying myth

NEWSPAPER reports after the recent Old Bailey secrets trial have failed to grasp the most important implication of the case. The calls for the sacking of Attorney-General Sam Silkin, the demand for a Freedom of Information Act, and concern over the gag on investigative journalism all miss the point.

It is this: the so-called liberal British state is unconcerned with Parliamentary legislation and is incapable of reform. And that will remain true if Silkin is sacked, the Official Secrets Act is amended and journalists win access to once-secret documents.

By its very nature, the capitalist state maintains dark and sinister groups whose only reason for being is to ensure the continuance of the state. The justification for these all-powerful groups is 'national defence' or 'international freedom', but their interest in democracy does not stretch to themselves being democratic nor in being answerable to the people whom they claim to defend.

There is good reason in their terms because the enemy for these state-controlled forces is the people - i.e. the working class.

What the ABC trial of two journalists and a former soldier has revealed is the extent of signals intelligence, in which international telephone calls are monitored.

They also showed that the links between the USA and British intelligence services are very strong. The brothers in capitalism are each other's keeper.

The journalists, Duncan Campbell and Crispin Aubrey, were conditionally discharged and the soldier, John Berry, was given a suspended jail sentence.

There was an outcry by the working class over their prosecutions and spying charges were dropped. But they were found guilty, after an amazingly long deliberation by the jury, of minor offences.

Now the outcry must be directed towards asking the essential question: why does the British capitalist state have so much to hide from the working class?

THE WEEK

THE BEECHING axe on railways is being commemorated at East Grinstead. Where once there was a railway track, which Beeching ripped up, there will be a road by-pass. It will cost £3 million, and may be named 'Beeching Cut' in honour of that distinguished local resident.

STATEMENT from the National Council for One-Parent families: "Powerful voices are calling into question the findings of the Fisher Report that one-parent families have special needs. It is no part of our philosophy to say that one parent families should be helped at the expense of other groups. We insist, though, that their needs must be dealt with at once." Over half such families claim supplementary benefit. Yet Ennals says the picture is 'not one of unrelieved gloom and doom.'

THE GOVERNMENT is pledged to vaccinating all women of child-bearing age against German measles. Yet in the last seven years the number of babies born abnormal as a result of German measles has remained constant at about 400 a year. There is now a widespread outbreak of German measles, yet only a percentage of women are vaccinated. The cost of proper preventative service would be in order of £1 million.

IF WE continue with the present level of emission of fluorocarbons into the atmosphere the ozone layer, says scientists, will be so depleted in 10 years that it will lead to increased incidence of skin cancer and related diseases. Over half the fluoro-carbons come from aerosol cans, where they are used as a propellant. Although there are safer alternatives the use of fluoro-carbons makes the most money.

WITH the announcement that Massey-Ferguson is to concentrate combine harvester production in France, 1000 jobs will be lost at Kilmarnock, virtually ending combine harvester production in Britain.

CARETAKERS at Brent schools have just concluded a ten day strike following a settlement which brought up their evening duty pay to £1.70 an hour, over 20% above the previous offer. The strike, which closed 88 schools affecting 34,000 school children, had the support of the parents throughout Brent, with demonstrations, letters and phone calls to the Town Hall.

STUDENTS at the Stafford, Stoke and Nadeley sites of the North Staffs Polytechnic staged a one-day strike in pursuit of increased grants. Meanwhile on the industrial front, TASS members at Allied Insulators of Milton in Stoke-on-Trent are on strike after rejecting the company's 5 per cent pay offer.

MAGAZINE journalists at IPC have stepped up their action for a house agreement. Now Woman, Woman's Own and Woman's Realm will not publish their Xmas issues, and further suspensions are on the way. At their last meeting, the journalists stood firm in the face of threats to dock wages, and showed an unprecedented unity and determination.

EDITORIAL

GOVERNMENT and the politicians who aspire to it or serve it have never been subjected to such public mockery - caricature and criticism, lampoon and ridicule - since the time of the despised Hanoverian kings.

Contrast the discipline and growing unity of the Labour movement with the hollow faction on the other side. The rump of the Tory party defies Thatcher to openly support the racist Smith in Africa, Callaghan's government survives the Queen's speech only with the support of its Northern Ireland puppet MPs, bribed with promise of increasing their numbers at Westminster and continued military occupation. A capitalism surer of itself would not need the feeble tub-thumpings of a CBI conference.

Every one of the Government's planks - Common Market, nationalisation, devolution, participation, wage restraint - has been shown to be rotten.

Only the destruction of working class organisation and spirit in Britain could raise the hopes of the employing class here for the submission of the exploited in the world. Impelled by fear in this risky task, their present disarray shows them hesitant.

We cannot underestimate them. In their fear they will become more vicious. So while they dare not call openly for troops on British streets, they have to turn to Soviet imperialism as an excuse for armed forces. They plot for a new world war.

Revolution requires both the ruling class's inability to rule and the working class's refusal to be pushed around. The former condition of revolution is not the most critical and with Shakespeare's Greeks, we have to realise that capitalism, like Troy, "in our weakness lives, not in her strength".

Railways and commuters

CITY accountancy firms have been involved recently in preparing and advising companies on schemes to obtain tax-free travel concessions for employees. Earlier this year, the Treasury minister, Robert Sheldon, suggested that it would be possible for an employer to provide free season tickets without any tax being payable by the employee. A number of problems with such schemes required expert advice from accountants - not least of which has been the precondition that the issue of concessionary season tickets by companies must not be a substitution for salary payments. Without salary adjustment the Price Commission may conclude that the pay guidelines have been exceeded.

It has been a justifiable complaint by City workers that they are penalised by soaring travel costs on British Rail when the jobs they have the skills and training to perform are concentrated in the capital. It has only been a few weeks since the chairman of British Rail announced an application for fare rises of over ten per cent to follow the fifteen per cent rises of 1978. Even the press and new pundits expressed concern over the size of the application which is well in excess of the increases in costs to operate the service. It was no surprise that the increase was passed by the Price Commission, since the application is vetted by the same government that appointed its chairman.

Nevertheless, tax concessions are no defence against these rises; just as Healey's tax concessions were no substitute for the demand for more wages. All City workers suffering from increasing costs of performing their jobs must organise to demand increases in salary to maintain and improve their living standards. Employers are more likely to instruct their Government to reduce the cost of rail fares when workers set their own guidelines for salaries and fight for them, than when the concessions are humbly asked for. It is also necessary to view the situation in the light of the serious rundown in the rail system which has taken place ever since it was initiated by Beeching.

British Rail proudly displays advertisements showing how it has managed to reduce the number

of locomotives, the numbers of passengers, rolling stock, and the numbers of goods rolling stock as well as the manpower; in fact the so-called over-manning has arisen only through the reduction of services. The Government has continued to preside over a decline of the most efficient form of transport available in terms of resources, and any switch by commuters away from the train services would eagerly be seized upon as an excuse for further contraction.

The workers in British Rail have already made their position clear by fighting to maintain their living standards and the employment levels within the industry. Those that use the services can also show their concern for the survival of railways - by fighting for their own living standards and refusing to accept sub-standard conditions of transport and overcrowding which would not be permitted in the transport of livestock.

Kirkby Co-op

THE DETERMINED workers at the Kirkby Manufacturing and Engineering cooperative are facing yet another take-over, with further redundancies. The Kirkby factory, which started 18 years ago as part of BMC, has changed hands so many times that its products have included washing machines, fruit juices, storage heaters, bicycles, central heating radiators, gas cookers and the proverbial kitchen sink itself.

In 1972 the workers defied their jobs against Thorn with a well-organised occupation of the factory and gained the support of workers throughout Britain. Now, after 6 years as a cooperative, the Government is proposing to hand the factory over to Worcester Engineering with £4 million, having refused to consider the £2.9 million development proposed by the cooperative.

It is typical of 'economics' in Britain today that the cooperative started after the previous owners were taken into receivership by Barclays Bank should now be handed back to a company funded by Barclays Bank.

Yet how different Britain could be if all workers fought for the basic right to work with such determination as the workers at this factory.

Community care, excuse for more cuts

IN THE official plan for the Health District of Dartford and Gravesend (Kent) over the next decade, a euphemism has been found for hospital closures: "community care".

Enormous savings are planned, chiefly from the sale of Darenth Park Subnormality Hospital, and possibly Mableton Psychiatric Hospital next door, to Blue Circle Cement who wish to use the land as a chalk quarry. The whole move is justified on the grounds that patients in large hospitals become "institutionalised" or divorced from normal life. (Some plans are included for new smaller hospitals and hostels, but eight hundred patients from other districts are not accounted for.)

There are many flaws in the argument. Firstly, it is really the size of the hospital, or is it the underfinancing which creates "institutionalisation"? Darenth Park once had a famous "training colony" with its own farm, school, and workshops. Now, staffing is so poor that "training" means toilet training. Only one qualified physiotherapist is employed for over 1000 patients, most of whom have physical handicaps as well as mental. Daily, wards are left in the hands of nursing assistants with only a week's training. Nurses left alone on certain wards are in danger from some patients. (On one ward of 20 potentially violent adolescent boys, a single student nurse was left on duty each night.) If the concern over standards of care were honest, staffing would be increased.

Secondly, if they were genuine about not wanting large hospitals, they would not threaten to close Mableton, with its one hundred patients, but would see it as the model. In spite of wards in converted nissen huts, it has a homely environment with pleasant gardens, a patients' social centre and badminton courts, and a suc-

cessful relationship with neighbouring villagers so that patients can come and go as they please without locked doors. And to avoid "institutionalisation", there are facilities on the wards for patients to wash and iron their own clothes, so that they maintain independence and self-respect. Altogether about 20 per cent of the psychiatric beds will be lost in the name of "community care". So what is it? It is a progressive demand, arising from genuine concern for the style of treatment, which has been prostituted by this Government as yet another excuse for cuts.

We've had a dose of it already, as hundreds of Darenth Park patients were despatched to seaside boarding houses, several to a room, with a landlady substituting for nurses.

Real "community care" demands a healthy community. Where is it? Daily, our capitalist society drives the weak to the wall. Poverty, poor housing, unemployment; the waste of youth and neglect of the old; work situations which are hectic, noisy, dangerous, degrading, and where the worker neither decides what it is worthwhile to produce nor how to make it - these all bear down on personal relationships and are probably the root causes of mental illness, as individuals fail to deal positively with their problems. Our "community" is the cause, not the cure, for mental disorder!

So the Plan goes for "secondary prevention", in other words community nurses, psychiatrists, and physiotherapists to visit people at home. To be more exact, 3 nurses, one typist, and one physiotherapist to deal with the incidence of subnormality in a population of 200,000.

On the psychiatric side, "experience suggests that 5 nurses already appointed may not be sufficient. Possibly the requirement is 75." So each nurse will

deal with the 14,000 patients belonging to 5 family doctors, and count as their patients over 200 at any one time.

Of course, new drugs have been invented. In particular, phenothiazine, injected monthly, reverses changes in the brain chemistry that accompany schizophrenia, and controls the symptoms. But to suggest that this cures mental illness is superficial. When people become angry, their adrenalin increases, but you don't stop the cause of the anger by removing the adrenalin. It is clear that far from psychiatry helping patients to understand their underlying problems, including the situation in the real world they find intolerable; instead of community nurses and psychiatrists studying and helping the patient's family and liaising with doctors and social workers - psychiatric care is reduced to a visiting injection service!

Thus proposals for transfer of resources from hospitals into "the community" really means the disappearance of those resources altogether. No mention is made of the future of the nurses from the closed wards. No word of the increased burden on the family and its doctor.

Real concern for the style and standard of care would bring about a doubling of staff, an investment in training so that the skills of all grades would be raised, time for all staff to discuss improved methods. Then we would hear no more tales of mass tranquillisation, as a solitary nurse tries to keep control over a whole ward. Nor of electro-convulsive therapy used as a cheap substitute for analysis. Nor of new admissions quickly degenerating into apathy. Nor of occasional outbreaks of violence between nurses and patients, as nurses cannot cope with the impossible workload and the patients are frustrated in their recovery by lack of attention.

Take up your beds and . . .

HOSPITALS throughout London have recently received notification from the London Ambulance Service that the Service is no longer able to cope with the present load of 'non-urgent' requests for transport.

All hospitals have been asked to vet carefully any requests for ambulances and to ask patients to make their own arrangements for getting to and from hospital if possible.

Government cash limits on health service expenditure now mean that an essential part of the health service is close to breaking down completely in London. Not only are hospitals forced to close wards and casualty departments at short notice so that ambulances are forced to make longer journeys to take patients to hospital, but the ambulance service itself does not have the staff or the vehicles to maintain much more than an emergency service.

We tend to think of ambulances with flashing blue lights on emergency calls as the main part of the service, but in fact these calls form a very small proportion of any ambulance station's work. The vast majority of the work involves the daily ferrying of patients to out-patient departments, physiotherapy and occupational departments for rehabilitation, or to day hospitals for the elderly.

Certain specialties, ophthalmics for example, can carry out most of their treatment on an out-patient basis.

At the very time when public transport services are being savagely cut, many patients, the frail and elderly are being forced to do as best they can to get to hospital, or to go without the treatment necessary to bring them back to health. Either they wait at home for an ambulance which has been cancelled, or stay for long hours at the end of the day in crowded out-patient waiting areas, hoping that an ambulance will come soon.

After a certain time in the evening their only hope is that an ambulance crew on emergency duty will have the time to take them home. Or the hospital staff will frequently order a mini-cab to take them home because they are not prepared to see the patients suffer.

This is the extent to which the government is prepared to destroy the health service. Their attitude to the recent claim by senior works staff for decent pay to match their responsibilities shows clearly how little they care for the NHS. We cannot allow them to whittle away its vital transport system with highly trained staff and specialist vehicles. This would mean the end of the NHS.

NHS cancer

WHEN THE NHS hospital supervisors recently took action, the Labour Government showed itself prepared to let people die for the sake of Government pay policy. They tried to lay the blame on the hospital supervisors, accusing them of 'murder'.

A major part of this slanderous attack centred on the delay in treatment of cancer patients. How ironic to see what the real murderers are doing to our Royal Marsden Hospital, one of the world's foremost cancer hospitals.

The hospital has received no funds for development for the past 3 years and the hospital board has now been ordered to reduce expenditure by reducing staff and patients and by cutting back on drug prescription. The hospital medical committee has proposed that only certain 'designated' doctors will be allowed to prescribe the anti-cancer drugs.

Treatment by such drugs is continually developing since it is not known which drugs might be most suitable for different cancers. Thus the restriction would bring this cancer research programme to a standstill.

So the Government is putting an end to cancer research at the Royal Marsden. Indeed, the children's ward is already closed. By banning research and ruthlessly cutting the health service, the Government has revealed itself as the real murderer.

More pay, say teachers

ON NOVEMBER 21st Hull NUT passed the following resolution:

"Hull Teachers' Association recalls the success of the Union's struggle against government pay policy earlier this year, and notes the decision of the TUC, supported by the NUT, to return to free collective bargaining. Hull Teachers' Association therefore calls on the Executive to pursue a claim for the 1979/80 settlement of a 25 per cent increase for all teachers; this claim to be pursued irrespective of any Government policy, voluntary or compulsory.

"Further, HTA calls on the Executive to draw up a plan of action, fully involving the membership, to be used if necessary, to win the claim."

Speakers pointed out that it was an important occasion, because teachers were now free to determine their own claim. This new situation had come about through the TUC's decision to return to free collective bargaining.

A claim of 25 per cent was realistic; it would go a long way to restoring and even improving teachers' standards of living, so miserably eroded by our past acceptance of pay restraint. 25 per cent might be too small in purely financial terms but it was important to think of the unity of the Union. The same point was made against an amendment to substitute a flat rate increase of £1000 in place of 25 per cent: flat rate is not Union policy, it is divisive and it erodes skill (besides the fact that £1000 extra per teacher would be cheaper for the government).

Speakers emphasised how important it was to be clear why this claim was being made. The National Executive was also talking around 25 per cent, but they must come clean and state a figure, and not wait to see what other workers would get. Similarly the 'special case' argument is not only a non-starter as

a bargaining position, but is also cowardly and dishonest. What is so special about teachers? Is this the way to gain other trade unionists' respect? The NUT is against pay restraint full stop, so how can it argue a case within the parameters of a pay policy it doesn't recognise? Besides, the employers will see a special case argument as a sign of weakness, which is a false position. The pay struggle last Easter showed that teachers do have considerable muscle.

The idea that teachers should base their claim on 'parity' also took a hammering at the meeting. We need to assert our worth, our value, it was said, not rely on other people's fight, or lack of it. The trouble with chasing someone else's tail is what if they're chasing yours at the same time? What if civil servants get 10 per cent or even 1 per cent? Nor can we ponce off Ford's. Teachers, the meeting was told, must stop being apologetic. We are human and we do have a right to live!

To go for anything less than 25 per cent would be to suffer a further wage cut. It would not mean more money spent on books, rather the opposite. It would be taken as a sign of weakness, an invitation to devalue further the education service.

Finally the meeting was reminded that their pay claim had nothing to do with the rate of inflation. Workers have no control over the prices of goods in the shops; the TUC General Council accepted that when they rejected the joint statement with the Government on price control. The one price we do have control over is the price of our labour.

By its vote Hull NUT has accepted a commitment to fight in unity for a firm, realistic and attainable target, relying on teachers' own dignity and strength, and asserting without apology, "this is at least what we're worth and we are determined to get it!"

Plan to destroy teaching hospitals

"BELSEN I've seen photographs of. But why not look at Connaught Hospital? After closing it they have to occupy it to prevent vandalism. But the vandalism was theirs to start with."

Over 500 people suffering from the closure of this East London hospital two years ago met recently to oppose the closure of the Jubilee, just up the road in Woodford, Essex.

The Area Health Authority wants to move resources from London to Essex. Hospitals like Jubilee must close, and then they will build a new hospital in Ilford - in 6 or 7 years.

"Transferring resources to Essex", as recently proposed by the North-East Thames Regional Health Authority, is a lie. In reality they are closing down the nation's leading specialist, research and teaching hospitals in London.

The Royal Free and University College Hospitals will lose more than 500 acute beds. Over 1000 beds are to go in the Barts and

London hospital area, the City and East London Area Health Authority. The latter, along with Camden and Islington, where the bulk of the teaching hospitals are concentrated, are to suffer cuts of 15 and 12½ per cent respectively.

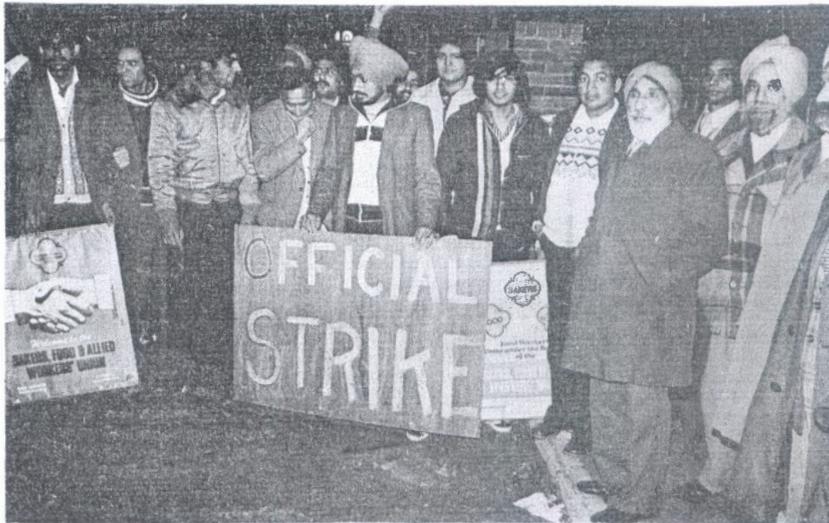
It is a plan so horrifying that, like the "Final Solution", it cannot be given its proper name, and it has received virtually no national publicity. By floating the idea that teaching hospitals should go, they are attacking centres of specialist research and treatment for the whole country. The whole world, as well as ourselves wherever we live, benefits from the skills of these hospitals.

The so-called transfer to Essex is a shabby deceit. There will be no new building, except at Colchester, Clacton and Chelmsford. Here, as in the London suburbs which are Essex only in name, it will be provision long overdue, concentrated almost exclusively on long-term beds for the elderly and community care. For the Authority, this

means beds with the least specialist treatment.

The Health Authority spokesman claimed at Woodford that closure of many smaller hospitals was preferable to shutting wings of larger hospitals as the savings were greater and more permanent. But why should we have to make this choice? He added that the reduction in beds was proportionate to the fall in population. "There'll be an even bigger fall in population if you close all the hospitals!" shouted someone. Soon the Authority spokesman was drowned in the din of foot-stamping.

One area where the Authority cannot plan is Whittington Hospital. This is because it was to have 'expanded' after the Elizabeth Garrett Anderson was closed. At the Woodford Jubilee meeting, a speaker from the Euston hospital was heard with respect as he spoke of how the hospital was occupied and reoccupied six times to thwart the Authority. The continued struggle of the EGA hospital is an example for us all.



Bakers strike picket at Walthamstow. With the breaking of the closed shop agreement by the Bakers Federation, members of the Bakers Food and Allied Workers Union have decided to step up their action. At a special conference in Birmingham delegates voted to continue the strike against the two big bread suppliers and plan to use flying pickets against flour mills owned by the Bakers Federation companies. Photo Mark Rusher (IFL)

Students plan national response to Government's union autonomy threat

FACED with proposals from the Department of Education and Science which would limit the independence of Student Unions, members of the National Union of Students have decided to call an Extraordinary Meeting of Conference to formulate the Union's counter-proposals.

The last attempt to destroy student unions as campaigning bodies came in 1971, but following prompt and decisive action by the student movement the Tory government was forced to "shelve" their plans for exercising control over what activities student unions could engage in. At that time the NUS was strong and determined - 400,000 students on the streets showed the extent of the involvement in the campaign to assert the union's autonomy.

The proposals are ostensibly about money and who should pay for student union subscriptions: the original NUS submission asked for a guaranteed minimum union fee of £15 for all students paid by the local education authority which awards the grant. The DES response was to come up with the idea of a suggested minimum of £1.25 to be paid out of students' own pockets. They also want a two-tier system of financing - the first £15 of a union fee to be paid with the grant as at present, and any money over and above that level to be paid direct to the student union in one lump sum by the maintaining local education authority, or in the case of universities, out of the block grant given by the Universities Grants Committee. This would put student unions in direct competition with other

departments, schools, libraries, etc and would lead to tension between students and lecturers and administrations. The other part of the proposals has to do with guidelines. There is talk of a model constitution defining what are and what are not valid areas for expenditure by student unions. Clearly the Government does not like students campaigning on such issues as grants and education cuts, and would like student unions to revert to being mere social clubs. The issue now for students at the Conference on December 2 is to throw out these proposals and push forward in the fight for independent student unions serving the membership and able to take up the issues of "Full Grants for all Full Time Students" and the Right to Education.

departments, schools, libraries, etc and would lead to tension between students and lecturers and administrations.

The other part of the proposals has to do with guidelines. There is talk of a model constitution defining what are and what are not valid areas for expenditure by student unions. Clearly the Government does not like students campaigning on such issues as grants and education cuts, and would like student unions to revert to being mere social clubs. The issue now for students at the Conference on December 2 is to throw out these proposals and push forward in the fight for independent student unions serving the membership and able to take up the issues of "Full Grants for all Full Time Students" and the Right to Education.

Bookshops

- Bellman Bookshop, 155 Fortess 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
- Basilidon 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

The Autumn series of public meetings held in London organised by the Communist Party of Britain (Marxist-Leninist) will be continued on Friday, December 1st, at 7.30 p.m.:

"SOCIALISM IN ONE COUNTRY"

Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, London WC1.

READING MEETING: "Britain in the World 1978" 8.00 p.m. Thursday November 30, AUEW Cttee Rooms, Oxford Road.

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

NAME.....
ADDRESS.....