

# THE WORKER



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## Half the Working Class International Women's Day

International Women's Day, March 8th, of International Women's Year 1975, must be an auspicious day for the working class.

Superficially you would not think so. In Britain progress towards equal pay, due to be implemented by the end of the year, takes the form of exploiting the numerous loopholes contained in the Equal Pay Act. Equal opportunity in training and job opportunities is even further away that equal pay. Throughout Europe unemployment is increasing even faster amongst women than amongst men.

But women are half the working class. Our Party has stated that Britain is in a revolutionary situation; that 1975 will be a critical year for the working class: a year when it can no longer avoid the choice between fighting for socialism and lying down under growing fascism.

On March 8th, 1925, Stalin said: "There has not been in the history of mankind a single great movement of the oppressed in which women toilers have not participated. Women toilers, the most oppressed of all the oppressed, have never kept away from the highroad of the emancipation movement, and never could have done so... International Women's Day is a token of the invincibility of the working class movement for emancipation and a harbinger of its great future".

That is why this women's day must be an auspicious day for the working class.

The victory of the Vietnamese people, men and women, is proof of Stalin's words. Within living memory Albanian women were in purdah; today, in factories and farms, they build socialism in the country which they helped to liberate in 1944. The Chinese women continue, with their part in production, the role that they played in revolution.

Let the women of Britain's working class make this day and this year auspicious by deciding that never more will they or the other half of their class, submit to the oppression of capitalism, but will fight to hasten the socialist revolution, their revolution, in Britain.

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More than 20,000 students marched on February 28th to demonstrate their total opposition to the Governments cuts in education expenditure.

## WILSON GOES CAP IN HAND

At the time of Heath's visit to China, the British media dealt patronisingly with the warning he was given that Soviet imperialism whilst making a feint to the East really had designs on the West.

But just a few months later the British capitalist crisis and the relative weakness of the US has forced Wilson to go cap in hand to the Russians. Small wonder that we have seen a new US ambassador and new Head of CIA in Britain within the space of a week!

Yet more important to us - the ground is now prepared for Russia's economic expansion into Britain. And Soviet aid has led more than one proud state into eventual subjection.

Today, the bourgeoisie offers Britain, its independence, future and assets to the highest bidder. It joins the EEC for economic stimulus but finds that the problems of one decaying economy are only confounded further in a club of nine decaying economies. The 'Sovereignty of Parliament', sanctified if only in words for centuries, is sacrificed in a gamble for greater trade.

The economic and political documents signed in Moscow between Wilson and Brezhnev on February 17 are further steps in the same direction.

In the name of Capital, Wilson agreed to "political consultation" with the Soviet Union on issues involving a breach of peace or cause of international tension. This is the Soviet terminology for arm-twisting on international issues. On the question of the European Security Conference, the brainchild of the Soviet Union for extending its tentacles into Western Europe, Wilson agreed to the desirability of an early summit meeting. Wilson, in the name of the British bourgeoisie, offered the independence of Britain in return for some

crumbs of increased trade. The Moscow agreement indeed marked "the opening of a new phase in Anglo-Soviet relations", an unequal relation between a superpower anxious to spread its 'sphere of influence' and a second-rate power ready to accommodate.

Eager to attract capital the British bourgeoisie is mortgaging the future of Britain. Large slices of our industries are offered to foreign buyers. Huge long-term borrowings are made from oil-producing countries. And our collateral is North Sea oil still deep in the sea bed. Even before a drop is produced, the bourgeoisie is busy selling it. North Sea oil, we are told, is the salvation of Britain. When it begins to flow in 1980. But under capitalism there is no guarantee of anything. It will not be the first time that our wealth and resources have been completely squandered in the search of profit.

## WE DEFINE SKILL

At the hearing of the Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service (ACAS) in the case of the Cowley motor mechanics, Reg Birch speaking for the AUEW declared that only the Union had the right to define the skill of its members.

Having submitted the AUEW's evidence for grading the men as skilled, he set forth in the plainest terms the limits on the ACAS panel's competence. "Our Union does not permit an employer or any other party to define the skill of our members; hence we are not requiring you to do that: on the contrary we forbid it."

He pointed out that the Union had not requested the ACAS to interest itself in the matter - the employers had - and this interest could not be made conditional on a return to work by the striking motor mechanics. Indeed, since the terms of reference were the recognition or non-recognition by Leylands management of the motor mechanics' claim to skilled status, the ACAS panel had not even been entitled to investigate conditions at the Cowley plant. The only thing they were entitled to investigate was the management who had refused to accept the men's legitimate claim.

The panel did not demur from this strict limitation of their function.

On the question of the skill of the Cowley workers those

present were told that the AUEW alone is competent to determine the skill of their membership.

"When candidates present themselves they have to fill in forms giving their trade designation, years worked in the trade, whether apprenticeship is being or has been served, if they have joined of their own free will, have a copy of the rules and have read them and if they accept the Constitution of the Union. Aspirants should understand that membership is serious and that they are not joining a Goose Club."

"In questions of trade overlap and members who cannot produce indentures the District Committee composed of their peers, fellow members of the Union working at the trade in that district, determine the trade designation and skill assigned to the member. They alone and no-one else.

"So we make it plain to you gentlemen of the panel that we are not asking you to determine the skill of our members or what they do. Indeed we do not permit it since you are not members of our Union. Skill refers to what a man is, not what he does. It is what a man knows, not how much of his knowledge is required by an employer, that determines his trade status in our Union.

"The Company says they will not change. They will not accept that our members are skilled. Then we shall have to deal with

that. If that is where the Company is, the Unions can withdraw their labour."

Any intentions the Labour Government has of turning the Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service into an under-the-counter Industrial Relations Court received a severe set-back. It was made clear that having smashed the Industrial Relations Act, workers would not permit some new body to be conjured up by Foot to perform the same function for the employers as the Act was to have done.

The development of this case of the designation of one group of workers has begun a process of putting skill back into all questions concerning motor car workers, the very area where the reduction of men to assembly line automata has gone furthest. The illusion has been challenged that abolishing differentials helps the 'unskilled' and lower paid. All management is trying to do is eliminate the skilled who are also the best organised and may be best able to take on the employers in the interest of the mass. The TGWU has been compelled to fight a Labour Government-sponsored body on an issue of the dignity of workers. That same body, the ACAS, has been put firmly in its place and Leyland's management soundly rapped for putting profitable wage structures above people!

# EDITORIAL

## Unemployment

Wilson, Healey, Foot, Crosland have been serving the interests of the employers so faithfully. They speak with the same voice and it is the voice of the boss wielding the big stick - accept cuts in your wages or get the sack!

The reserve army of unemployed has always been the weapon used by the employing class to keep wages at a low level and weaken the capacity of the working class to fight back. New recruits to this army are being made in their thousands week by week. There are already some 800,000, even according to Government figures, and this does not include the part-time soldiers in this army who are on a short week.

Just as the previous Government blamed inflation on the working class, so the present Government is blaming unemployment on the working class. Every time workers demand decent wages they are, according to Wilson, Healey, Foot and Crosland, simply volunteering for the reserve army of unemployed. Workers are, they say, sacking themselves.

### The TUC's Answer

But now we come to the craziest part of all. What does the TUC suggest should be done about growing unemployment which is expected to reach over a million during this year?

It proposed that the Government should spend a thousand million pounds on wage-creating schemes: subsidies to enable crisis-hit firms to keep men on the pay-roll, investment in distressed areas, a massive building programme, and so forth. In other words, the Government is urged to put millions of pounds into the hands of the employing class, to persuade them to give us jobs.

But what is this money which is to be given to employers to take out their cut and then, hopefully, to let us have the rest in wages? It is our money, collected from us in taxes which take a good two-thirds of any rise we do manage to get. The TUC's great plan is no more than our guaranteeing our jobs by paying our own wages!

### Enough!

Ever since the beginning of the capitalist system the working class has been struggling to get decent wages and to stay in work. In the course of this struggle workers have developed their own organisations - the trade unions, - and their own guerrilla tactics - those of answering the employers' attacks in laying off workers where profits are low or non-existent by the counter-attacks of withdrawing their labour in those areas where profits are high. They have developed new methods of fighting redundancy and closures such as occupations and holding the capitalists' assets, like goods and machinery, to ransom. They have to go on with this fight in order to survive at all.

Yet in spite of this persistent struggle, after two hundred years of capitalism, workers are no better off, in terms of job security and the proportion of worker-produced wealth paid in wages, if not actually worse off. We cannot beat this crooked system. We have to smash it.

## Ceiling Fixers on Strike

When the ceiling fixers working for Campbell-Denis Ltd. on the extension to St. Thomas' Hospital at Waterloo opened their wage packets on February 13th, they were in for a shock. They found that they had not received the nationally agreed 17 per cent increase for all building workers. Their firm had merely added the 17 per cent to the standard union rate, which is the minimum rate, and paid them at that level. As they, in common with most building workers, are paid above the minimum rate, this represented no increase, and, indeed, for many a wage cut.

The firm had something like forty lumpworkers on the site, outnumbering the direct workers. The strategy was to force the direct, unionised workers from the site by wage cuts and hand it all over to the lump.

The workers took an immediate stand - voting unanimously to start strike action at once, demanding the full 17 per cent rise on their previous rate and that all lump workers be withdrawn from the site. After two days of picketing, with the full support of their union, the TGWU, the firm surrendered to their demands, the full rise and the withdrawal of all lump workers.

This victory was all the more impressive in that the majority

of these workers are under twenty-one, newly enrolled in the union and with no previous experience of industrial struggle. Despite their lack of experience they won, due to their own tenacity, high morale and sound leadership. This is a lesson for all, even the most experienced trade unionists.

This battle will be fought again all over the country as employers seek to pass on the burden of the economic crisis on to their workers. Building workers are already being hit. These young workers have shown the way. Only by militant action at site level will the bosses' offensive be halted and driven back. In the coming months this will be the task of all who wish to defeat the capitalists' attempt to bail their system out at our expense.

## EEC Beef Mountain

Because of the rules of the Common Agricultural Policy over 250,000 tons of beef have been put into storage by the EEC Administrators. The reason? Because the price was too low, and only by heavy direct buying could high prices be maintained. As a result in the rest of the EEC the price of beef is between £21.24 per live cwt, whilst outside the

# On the industrial front

## WOMEN IN SUCCESSFUL STRUGGLE

90 women production workers, all members of TGWU and AUEW, have by their determination and collectiveness won a victory over their employers Ariel Pressings of Beeston and Carlton, Notts. The firm was refusing payment of £3.20 outstanding threshold pay, giving the women only the first £1.20. The company claimed that it was unable to afford the rest. As a result of this the women downed tools and went on strike. After three days of dispute the management agreed to pay the outstanding £3.20 threshold and further to hold talks on equal pay for women. The women then returned to work.

## ONE MAN'S EFFICIENCY IS ANOTHER MAN'S REDUNDANCY

Since the last pay agreement, Ford management has been trying hard to increase efficiency in each department. Fords have been trying to frighten workers about this crisis in the capitalist system, and have been trying to educate the metal pourers in Thames Foundry about efficiency. But the metal pourers know all about capitalist efficiency: it means one man doing another man's job!

Two weeks ago, management had the cheek to take all the pourers into the office to show them how to pour. They wanted no more bad moulds. The workers were told, 'If you make better moulds, we can make more cars and sell them cheaper, so there will be no more unemployment.' The pourers knew their jobs and their politics, and replied, 'Bad moulds aren't our fault; it's because of your penny-pinching maintenance. And when we did things your way, and made more cars than we do now, you never sold them cheap - you just increased your profits. Cooperating with you does us no good.'

## UNEMPLOYMENT AND SHORT-TIME WORKING

Over three-quarters of a million unemployed and over 250,000 on short-time working: such is the record of the Labour Government since it has been in power.

In the hosiery trade it is now estimated that 55,000 to 60,000 people out of a total of 80,000 are on reduced working and 12 mills have been closed. But the Government does nothing to stop imports of foreign textiles.

The worst-hit areas are the West Central Region of Scotland, 18,000, Merseyside - 20,000, East Midlands, 13,000, and the West Midlands with 11,400 workers on short-time. The capitalist press does not shout 'disgraceful' at this short-time working as it did during the Miners' dispute a year ago.

## AN END TO THE POSTAL BALLOT

One of the items to be discussed at the AUEW Rules Revision Conference this month will be the present Postal Ballot system, agreed by only one vote at the 1970 conference. The effect of the Postal Ballot on the Union has been quite clear - a weakening of the branches - it gave members one more reason for not attending - and must be seen as a further serious erosion of the democracy of our union. In addition the rapidly increasing cost of the postal ballot, now running at £500,000 per year, is an unnecessary and unjustified waste of workers' money. We must take this opportunity of returning to the system of branch ballots, so that those who use their right to vote know who, why and what they are voting for. The reintroduction of branch ballots would help regenerate branch activity - the very life blood of the union.

## NO RUNNING AWAY

Bowaters paperworkers who agreed to move to another factory 30 miles away might have done better to stand their ground; they are now being put on short time.

When Bowaters announced the closure of their large Thames papermill in Northfleet, Kent, they offered their workers jobs if only they would move to the newer and larger mill in Sittingbourne. The firm even promised that council housing would be provided, but Sittingbourne Council refused to be bound by a promise they themselves had never made, and in any case had none to spare. Nevertheless, a quarter of the men moved to the new factory; the majority were thrown out of work in December. The rest are on short time. Bowaters' right to dismiss was never challenged.

Workers at Sittingbourne are now telling the press of their lack of faith in Bowaters to run such a large papermill. A short step to understanding that capitalism can never run industry in the interests of the working class. A short step, but one which should have been made months ago.

# Three year fight for jobs

For 3 years now the workers at a factory in Kirkby, near Liverpool, have been fighting to save their jobs. Twice, once under the name of Fisher-Bendix (part of the Thorn Electrical Group) and again under the name of I.P.D., the workers have occupied the factory. Thorns had the factory and equipment virtually given to them because it was a development area. The workers occupied to prevent Thorns clearing out lock, stock and barrel. A solution was found and Fisher-Bendix became I.P.D. producing fruit-juice instead of tumbler-dryers.

It was not long before this firm too was in trouble; this time after a second occupation a new solution 'nationalisation' with a dose of 'worker participation'. Benn said, 'It is a quality of the British people to work as hard as necessary.' He omitted to say who was going to get the



## KEITH BLACKMAN LTD. TOTTENHAM LONDON

This firm, a subsidiary of GEC, sacked a shop steward of TASS on a most spurious charge of taking wastepaper out of the company without permission. A blatant case of victimisation.

The membership marched out of the gate and back in again with their shop stewards into the office, past astounded security guards. For two mornings the TASS membership repeated the operation with the works unions pledging support in the event of the police being called in.

Consternation and chaos reigned amongst the management, so much so that the Group Director of Personnel was called in. It was decided that 'in the interest of promoting better industrial relations' the steward should be re-instated with full continuance of service: Unity is Strength.

## SHIPBUILDING AND SHIP-REPAIR

A claim for substantial pay rises and an increase in the annual statutory holidays from seven to twelve days, was lodged with the Shipbuilders and Repairers National Association on February 26th. Obviously the settlement will be in line with the claim already made for engineering workers generally. While the claims are for increases on the minimum basic rate, this affects holidays and the calculation of piece-work prices, etc.

It will be up to the lads on the shop floor to fight for increases for all on top of what they are already receiving.

## FORDS

Already a fifth of Fords' 55,000 manual workers are to go on short-time working.

8000 men at Dagenham, 2700 at Southampton transit van plant, 400 at Halewood and 150 at Enfield.

The Company, without the agreement of the unions, is taking the opportunity to force through its long-held desire for three shift working by 500 Dagenham maintenance men

benefit of the hard work.

At I.P.D., the management structure is exactly the same. The presence of a few union members on a board means only that in future times of trouble, short-time, redundancies, etc., it will be the job of these union men to go and announce to their fellow workers the worst and probably to make excuses for the management.

The workers at Kirkby have fought long and hard to maintain the basic right to work and should be commended for it. They have not just sat back passively. But the question must be asked: What has been achieved? This question must be asked of the class as a whole, what will be our response to the continuing attacks of the ruling class and how long will we continue to fight merely to achieve a short-term solution within the present system instead of the fight to smash that system completely,

# Women Under Socialism

Where in the world is equal pay for equal work to be found? Where are the creches, childcare centres, the nurseries for every child? Where do women receive maternity leave plus shorter hours and full pay throughout the early years of their children's lives? Where are there guaranteed jobs for women returning after a childbirth?

Where indeed? In Albania & China these rights have been won, the economic basis on which the full emancipation of women can be achieved.

## China

Even in Socialist China the national policy of equal pay for women had to be fought for by women in each locality. In a village near Peking the workers were putting in claims for the number of work-points per day they thought they had earned, and a meeting discussed each workers merits. Men usually claimed the maximum - 10 - and women never went above 7½. They did not have the skill and experience, said the

men, and they did not do the same work. No woman could lift a tractor's diesel engine single-handed. However the women pointed out that such comparisons of skill and strength were unfair and that in attitude to work, effort and contribution to the collective, they often won hands down. Thus they achieved their right to equal pay.

## Confucius Gets the Electric Chair

Old ideas die hard. Chinese women textile workers had to walk 15 kilometers a day to tend the machines, and wanted a mobile chair. The factory's machine shop was busy on more important equipment, so the women decided to make the chair themselves. Five minutes after starting, the women had broken a month's supply of saw blades. The men laughed. Confucian ideas like 'lack of talent is a woman's virtue' were still rife. But the women insisted they would learn from experience, and seven months later Confucius was spinning in his grave and the women spinners sat proudly on their mobile chairs.



Albanian women enjoy complete equality in job opportunities, conditions of work and pay.

## EAV BACK TO WORK

The occupation at Educational Audio Visual, London (reported in the previous issue of the WORKER), is now over. Three weeks after the occupation began, agreement was reached around a plan guaranteeing continued employment until the end of April, with consultations to take place to determine whether redundancies can be avoided.

An important feature of the struggle as it progressed was the solidarity of the NUJ in support of their fellow union members in the EAV chapel. Support from within the book publishing area, where many are threatened with redundancy was also of great encouragement to the occupiers.

A complete victory was not won. Indeed, those who took part in the struggle knew that under capitalism there can ultimately be no job security. Nevertheless, gains were made, not least in experience.

## Merchant Seamen

### Hull

Merchant seamen at present get £27.28p for 40 hours, work a 7-day week and get £4 threshold. Their average pay is £56 for a 66 hour week.

Their union, the National Union of Seamen, have recently put in a pay claim for an increase of 80% (if threshold is included, 100% if not.)

The claim states that they should have a 5-day, 40 hour week with a basic rate of £40 for 40 hours, improved overtime pay and a cost of living clause. The owners, who are considering the claim, will be meeting the Union on April 10th. Last week merchant navy officers submitted a claim for a rise of 40%.

# Notes of an Engineer

We have seen the industrial murder of London, with the closure of many large and small industrial workshops. The State has encouraged the employer, by monetary incentives, to move out of London, the theory being the creation of jobs elsewhere. We are aware of the facts. In towns throughout Britain there have been complete closures and many redundancies. The aircraft industry was once a flourishing industry which produced aircraft second to none throughout the world. We boasted a first class transport system at one time. We recall the drastic cuts made at the time of Beeching, the redundancies in the Power Industry, Electricity, Gas and Coal, and currently the closures announced in the Steel Industry. Without doubt there would be other closures and redundancies not mentioned here in the food, shipping, light-engineering, machine-tools and service industries.

Resistance to these sackings took many forms. We had the mass meetings and demonstrations, marching with flags and banners. Debates in the House of Commons, and meetings with government ministers. We have workers who have operated a sit in. Attempts have been made to form factory co-operatives, pleas have been made to the captains of industry for other countries to come here and run our industry.

The employing class were aware of the dangers involved in their actions. They knew that capitalism could not be controlled and welcomed the assistance from the social democrats, the Labour Party, with their 1965 Redundancy Payments Act. This Act was designed to take the fight out

of our hands because sackings were envisaged. Without doubt this has blunted effectively the struggle for the Right to Work in past years. Today the situation has changed; capitalism is in crisis, the issues before us are sharper; workers are finding out that money is no alternative to work.

We currently have the threat to steel workers' jobs in Ebbw Vale, South Wales. This valley at one time was a mining valley but they closed the mines and steel became the industry in the valley. The local MP Michael Foot, a Social Democrat minister in the government, tells these steel workers to accept the decision to close the works in the valley, with a promise of taking other industry there. The question has to be asked, "Where will this other industry come from?" for we are faced with closures and redundancies up and down the country.

The national media continue to propagate the idea that wage increases will bring unemployment. Prior to the war of 1939-45, wages were a pittance and, as is well known, we also had mass unemployment. Since the end of the war our class has been confronted with wage restraint in one form or another. Alongside wage freezes we had the attack on jobs already mentioned.

We take note of the forecast of stockbrokers, Phillips and Drew, that unemployment will rise to 1½ million by March 1976. This is estimated to represent some £300 million increased unemployment benefit, £300 million redundancy payments, and £200 million loss of income tax revenue.

In the USA unemployment reached the highest figure since 1941 at 8 per cent, with 7 million out of

work and 3.8 million on short time. In West Germany the figures are 6.1 per cent, a total of 1,154,300 unemployed. These statistics are the face of capitalism to the world.

The struggle for work has been the struggle of our class throughout its long history. We have fought in a limited fashion against an employer who created redundancies and closures. We have yet to fight the employer as a class. Great courage and tenacity have been shown throughout the country by workers from time to time. Some 25 years ago the Amalgamated Engineering Union led by Reg Birch, now Chairman of the Communist Party of Britain Marxist-Leninist, at the policy making body of rank and file engineers, carried a decision to fight for the Right to Work. The need of the working class to fight for this right today is of no lesser importance.

Our fight in Britain against closures and redundancies must be developed to fighting the employing class, capitalism. This way we will win. We have the experience and the courage, we have a Marxist-Leninist party who, being of the class, have knowledge of the enormity of the problems we are faced with. The British working class know that we cannot achieve the Right to Work until we are prepared to take on the class enemy, capitalism.

The struggle for work is part of the struggle against capitalism. The year 1975 is a year of decision for our class. Powerful forces oppose us; capitalism will not die peacefully; fascism is the alternative to workers' revolution. Many lessons have been learnt. This time the fight for work will be while we still have jobs. The employers are facing an employed army today, as against an unemployed army of pre-war days.

# DEEDS NOT WORDS IN SOUTH AFRICA

News to everybody, not least black South Africans, is the racist South African authorities' announcement of 'detente between blacks and whites', and much fuss about the 'freedom' and 'independence' of the nine Bantustan homelands in Azania. 'Freedom' and 'independence' means political power administered by Vorster-appointed white officials, and freedom for white police to enter the homelands and make arrests at will. Freedom of movement for blacks is restricted, and there remains only the freedom to eke out a living on the barren 13% of South Africa's territory allotted to the homelands, or to become a wage slave for South African capitalism at starvation rates.

Yet the noise about detente is a good sign. It means that the South African regime is seriously disturbed by the staggering victories won by the people of Guinea-Bissau, Mozambique and Angola, in their struggle for national independence. Black South Africans have already shown in struggle that they know the

# Child Labour Education or Slavery

"From the apparently harmless newspaper rounds to backstreet factory work, illegal child labour still exists in Britain today." So states a recent DHSS report on child employment.

The report reveals that there is a massive cover-up regarding children employed in prohibited jobs - such as window cleaning, paraffin delivery, work in heavy industry, in hotel and restaurant kitchens, pubs or betting shops. The increasing exploitation of child labour is common knowledge to all local authorities.

The truth is that the British capitalists, cutting back on adult labour, are trying to exploit the cheaper and less organised labour of our children.

We must oppose our children being exploited in order to supplement the family income.

We must demand for them education - not slavery.

real meaning of freedom and independence, for which they are fighting. No amount of bleating by Vorster can disguise the oppression of his regime, or prevent the growing unity of the black South Africans and their taking up armed struggle.

# BLOOD MONEY

A drug which would normalise the lives of haemophiliacs is being denied them on the grounds of cost. Two drug firms imported 10 million units of Factor VIII, a blood extract which supplies the element whose absence from the blood prevents clotting.

Regional Health Authorities could not afford to buy the drug, which is expensive, and so the drug firms began to re-export the Factor VIII. The Department of Health then bought 500,000 units which it re-offered to the Regional Health Authorities at the same price as before. In case anyone might misinterpret this move as an attempt to relieve the suffering of haemophiliacs a DoH official was quick to point out just whose health they were concerned with. "It was certainly not purchased for the exclusive benefit of haemophiliacs. It may have been to promote goodwill towards the drug firms." Not only does this mean that people are still unnecessarily liable to become crippled through internal bleeding, but also there is a great expenditure to be made both on constant medical attention and social security payments etc. Still, the profits of Serological Products and Travenol, the companies concerned, have received a shot in the arm. Meanwhile 500,000 units of Factor VIII deteriorate on the shelves of the Department of Health.

# Is All Class Struggle Revolutionary?

A large and thoughtful audience packed the Bellman Bookshop on February 21st to discuss the question, "Is all class struggle revolutionary?". Two speakers, both prominent in the trade union movement presented the case.

The first speaker began by quoting from Marx's *Poverty of Philosophy*. "Economic conditions had first transformed the mass of the people of the country into workers. The combination of capital has created for this mass a common situation, common interests. This mass is thus already as a class against capital, but not yet for itself. In the struggle, of which we have noted only a few phases, this mass becomes united, and constitutes itself as a class for itself. The interests it defends become class interests. But the struggle of class against class is a political struggle."

According to the speaker, the British working class had finally constituted itself as a class for itself when it created its revolutionary party, the CPBML.

In the absence of the Party, which placed before the working class the principal task of making a revolution, the politics of reform would ultimately prevail in the everyday struggles of the working class. Lenin dealt with this question in his book, *What Is To Be Done*. It is the task of the Party to transform these everyday struggles into a struggle for revolution.

The second speaker elaborated on this point. He showed how the Party had been a crucial factor in recent times whereas in the absence of the Party, workers had opted for the "easy", non-revolutionary road, or had wasted their energies in fruitless endeavour.

He spoke of the miners who conducted within two years two brave struggles for wage increases, and then sent a delegation to the TUC Congress in 1974 which seconded a motion to accept the social contract.

He spoke of Fine Tubes and said that some judge the revolutionary content of a strike by its

duration. But this was a strike initially sound, which eventually became a disastrous lockout because the men did not know when to retreat.

He spoke of the revolutionary impetus given by the women machinists at Fords in 1968. The Party had been instrumental in transforming a demand for re-grading into a demand for equal pay. But subsequent struggle on the question has been sluggish and a substantial differential still divides off a vast section of women workers.

The appearance on the battlefield of new sections of "white collar workers" was of enormous importance. But he warned that it would be futile for them to merely emulate their industrial forerunners. The general struggle must be advanced to a higher level.

The Party had been instrumental in ensuring the success of the struggle against the Industrial Relations Act. For the first time the working class had paralysed capitalist law itself.

Meanwhile, the struggle to release the Shrewsbury pickets had degenerated from defence of

the right to picket to a demand for release on "humanitarian" grounds. "One should not hold the over-simplified view that economic slogans are reformist while only political ones are revolutionary. There may be political slogans with a reformist character and economic ones carrying a revolutionary content".

From the floor a speaker raised a question which had long puzzled her, "Why do workers choose such 'crumbs' for their leaders", and cited some well-publicised Trade Union figures. The answer offered was that workers will choose a known renegade when they wish to avoid a struggle.

Other speakers refuted the notion that the working class can do no wrong. But the class has a basic incorruptibility and a fine history of struggle. "Is all class struggle revolutionary?" Potentially, yes. Without the Party, no.

## IMPERIAL TYPE-WRITERS

On January 18th the management announced to workers at the Hull and Leicester factories that they would lose their jobs in five weeks on February the 21st. This led to reports being written by the union and a team of management consultants, to demonstrations in London and calls for support from other trade unionists.

On February the 20th the company sent the workers a letter telling them they had a paid holiday on February the 21st. The workers saw this as a ruse to prevent occupation. 250 workers turned up on their 'holiday'. The gates were locked but 70 workers climbed over the fence and demanded the keys from the security guard and let in the rest. They installed themselves inside, producing their own heating and electricity. Three 8 hour shifts have been organised, the gate chained and a pass system is in force.

When asked how long they aimed to stay, the T&GWU convenor replied "as long as is necessary to keep the factory open". And added that they were fighting for the right to work.



Typical factory occupation

The management in a typical example of divide and rule, refused to pay their final weeks wages to 650 workers until papers could be obtained from the offices. When the Action Committee gave permission for this, the management refused to pay until the occupation was ended. Despite the attempts of Labour M.P.s to play off Hull against Leicester workers, and the management's desire to use 'staff' against shopfloor, the occupation is united and solid.

### IN BRIEF

Denis Healey tells British workers that their wage increases will lead to inflation and worse, mass unemployment. Healey knows better. On return from his visit to China in 1973 he described that country (where workers are in power) as having... "No unemployment, no price increases for twenty years, no income tax, no drugs. No betting, no pornography. Health, self-confidence and hard work. Above all, a sense of common purpose and dedication to a common cause... China presents a mirror image to the West, with all the values, achievements and shortcomings reversed."

When a state "amnesty" was announced for those immigrants who had entered our country in contravention of the racist 1971 Immigration Act, some were tempted to trust their fate.

But of the 1500 who have so far declared themselves, only one third have been allowed to stay. Far from liberating these people from "blackmail and harassment" another bridgehead of state interference and control has been forged.

## THE INDUSTRY BILL

Basic agreement between all parties in Parliament seems to increase in direct ratio to the amount of energy they expend in disagreeing with one another. This principle was well illustrated on 17th and 18th of February when Labour's Industry Bill was given its second reading in the Commons. Messrs Heseltine and Benn donned their traditional costumes - Mr Benn to 'regenerate' industry and to make it 'accountable' to the 'community' - Mr Heseltine to save 'free enterprise' from the dead hand of bureaucracy.

What turns this poor farce into feeble tragedy is the fact that so many in the audience remain spellbound by what is in reality no more than contemptible political melodrama.

The avowed aims of the Bill are, according to Mr Benn, 'to reverse the long decline in British manufacturing industry', to inject 'national' and regional interests into company decisions and to expand so-called 'industrial democracy'. The chief instrument for this process is to be the National Enterprise Board (NEB) - a state holding company with powers to use tax payers money to buy shares in companies in need of cash.

Predictably Mr Heseltine made

a great fuss, describing the proposals as "... a cataclysmic decline in the possibilities of success for the free enterprise system." However, that disagreement between Labour and Tories was more apparent than real, emerged when it was revealed that the Conservatives had spent £2 million per day (£730 million per year) in hand-outs to companies, whereas Labour's NEB would only receive an initial annual budget of £700 million. John Davies, former Minister for Industry, then confirmed that there was underlying agreement on the whole issue by stating that everyone in Parliament accepted the need for government cash for industries such as aircraft, shipbuilding, machine and tools etc., and for ailing firms such as Ferranti.

Typical of much of the 'double think' implied in the language of Labour's recent legislation, the Bill, it is claimed, will save jobs, 'regenerate' industry and introduce public accountability.

The opposite is, of course, true. The Bill merely legitimises the role that successive governments have adopted in handing to capitalists money gathered from workers in taxation. Far from 'regenerating' industry, the NEB, in reality, seeks to prop up ailing capitalism far from saving jobs, it is the NEB which will now decide who will be made redundant; and as for 'public accountability' - far from the NEB representing the 'public interest', it is we the public - those of us who work in the firms in question and whose wages are being used to prop up capitalist 'enterprise' - who will have to be 'accountable' to the new employers - the NEB!

What makes the Industry Bill so pernicious is not so much the squandering of tax payers money nor the strengthening of ties between government and the monopolies; neither is it the creation of 'private' fortunes at 'public' expense. These are all well known features of capitalism.

The poison lies in the bogus language and philosophy of 'participation' democracy and 'job security' via which trade unions are to be legally drawn into the creation of NEB 'planning agreements' and other company policies. The Bill constitutes a legal invitation for us to exchange hard-won rights and positions for seats on the board and promises about the future - promises which in honesty we know to be worthless.

### CIA Activity in Britain

Elliot Richardson, nominated by President Ford as the US Ambassador to Britain, promised Congress recently he would review operations by the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) in Britain. If necessary, he would recommend reductions in the number of Agents here.

He also told the Senate Foreign Relations Committee that he would make a special effort to be informed of CIA activities in Britain to try to avoid possible bypassing of normal communication channels.

The Committee Chairman, Senator John Sparkman, said he had received complaints that the CIA was overstaffed in foreign countries, and that there was a large contingent in Britain.

### Escape from Colditz

Students at Bristol Polytechnic are in a militant mood to halt the transfer of courses to the new purpose-built campus site at Coldharbour Lane on the outskirts of the City. The site, known to students as 'Colditz', has fallen victim to the education cuts of successive governments. Originally planned as the largest purpose-built campus in the country, sections of the project have been whittled away. The Centre for Educational Learning, Student Health Centre, main hall, sports centre, and student villages have all been 'deferred', some perhaps for ever. Plans for laboratories in the engineering block have been withdrawn. The site, which is very isolated, is at present served only by one bus; next September 1750 off-site students will have to travel to the site daily.

At a recent mass meeting, the students decided to oppose the move, until demands for a restoration of the cuts are met. Lecture and canteen boycotts are to be organised, with pickets of the Local Education Authority and Governors' meetings. From September next, there is to be a total boycott of the Colditz site.

The militant mood of the students, and the growing support for the demands from the staff, promise a hard time for the authorities if they try to force students into Colditz against their will. As one law student put it: "When the poly promised us these facilities in their prospectus, they made a contract. Now they've broken their contract."

## BELLMAN BOOKSHOP

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March	14th	The Dastardly Role of the Revisionists
"	21st	An Organised Working Class not Terrorism
April	4th	The Ideology of the Working Class Does Not Match Its Capacity for Struggle
"	11th	International Contradictions and Their Effect on the Working Class
"	18th	New Tasks of the Working Class and its Party

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