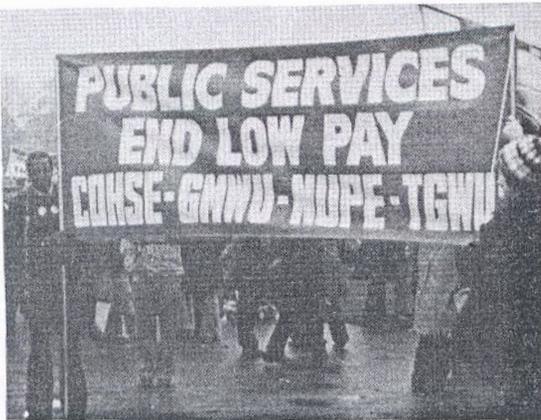




Our wages policy, not theirs ...

NO STOP-GO ON WAGES



Callous Labour Government is responsible for breakdown of the public services

PUBLIC SECTOR manual workers have shown, in the last two weeks, exactly what an 'essential service' means. It means precisely that. Industrial action has pressed that simple point home. Smug politicians have learnt anew that those who have contempt for labour in turn reap the harvest of contempt, turned back on them with a vengeance.

Members of NUPE, GMWU, TGWU and COHSE have co-ordinated a stunning campaign of strikes, overtime bans and working-to-rule to underline their importance to the quality of life. Only under capitalism would such vital workers be so badly paid. The Labour Government was warned that playing 'incomes policy' would just not wash this time, because the sense of injustice and consequent rebellion would overflow into militancy.

Public sector workers are among the poorest people in Britain. 500,000 public sector workers are paid £42.50 for a full week. Women workers account for a large proportion of this figure: very interesting, after 10 years of the Equal Pay Act. But women in the public sector would hardly want equal pay with male colleagues while the men fare so badly themselves. The demand is for £60 basic for all. An estimated 25-30 per cent of the lowest paid work in the public sector. Nearly all in that sector are below or just above the poverty line.

The Family Expenditure Survey shows that the number of 'working poor' doubled between 1974-76, while the Retail Price Index is known to understate the increase in living costs sustained by people like those who work in the public sector.

No surprise then that as we go to press 600,000 of NUPE's 720,000 members are engaged in industrial action. NUPE caretakers in Sheffield are currently on strike at 60 schools a day.

Minister of Education, Shirley Williams, has denounced such school closures as 'grossly irresponsible'. At the same time she has given the go-ahead in 1978 for the permanent closure, in England alone, of 77 primary schools and 13 secondary schools. The school caretakers' action is temporary, for haven't they been involved everywhere, with parents, teachers and children, in trying to stop school closures and improve education? Williams has no answer to that, nor indeed has Thatcher who, in 1972, cut education spending by £182 million.

Press propaganda has been concentrated on health service workers who do the best they can to care for the sick; workers whose vocation and penury are proverbial. A socialist system would laud the dedication of such people, would regard a properly financed health service as the jewel in its crown. Health service workers

have banned overtime, worked-to-rule and conducted lightning strikes. In some cases, management provocation has sparked all-out stoppages, a ploy to alienate outside support.

Determined ancillary staff have refused to clean or cook. Ambulance drivers are answering emergencies only, while laundries are on strike.

Social Services secretary, David Ennals, has of course condemned it all. In 1978, he underwent medical treatment twice in London hospitals, saying at the time how wonderful all the staff had been. Now they're 'threatening the lives of old people', according to him. What we do know, however, is more concrete. We know that 60,000 old people die annually from hypothermia, lack of body heat, because they can ill afford good food, power supply and warm clothing.

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"Times" challenged

ON MONDAY, January 29, at Number 10, Callaghan, in a desperate attempt to win approval and acclaim from Tories and others as a preliminary to entering an election, sought to woo the General Council of the Trades Union Congress and was for the third time rebuffed.

Since 1945 the battle has raged back and forth with the working class in its most organised form alternately attacking and submitting. From such as George Brown's Productivity Prices and Wages Policies to 'In Place of Strife' - from the defeat of Heath and the Industrial Relations Act to the Social Contract and to the direct bargaining of today. There has been a to and fro, acceptance - rejection, attack and passivity by workers and attempts by the Government to fetter and emasculate the unions.

'Guidelines'

In September 1977, as we have previously written in THE WORKER, the collective bargaining battle was regained in the resolution won at the TUC Congress; albeit festooned with absurd phrases - 'orderly return' and 'responsible bargaining'. At that moment also was the repeated effort to smuggle in the parallel utterance of 'guide lines' to neutralise the declaration for collective bargaining. The 10 per cent guideline was not accepted and nominally defeated in practice, first, in Engineering at Fords, 14 per cent and settlement, and at Metal Box, 17 per cent and settlement. In the ultimate, all wage settlements were greater than 10 per cent, but not much so. The attempts to set aside the clear decision for no more incomes policies and for straight bargaining was hampered, mostly due to confusions in the ranks and legacies of past errors.

Firemen

It was the firemen's dispute which set the pace, for though they did not directly break through on wages, they won the day when their dispute split the General Council of the TUC 20:19. This was not a victory for supporters of the Government or so-called moderates for peace and order, for turning away from the basic trade union task (improvement of wages and working conditions). It was not even a pyrrhic victory for the Government and supporters of wage freeze and wage restraint, but it smashed through the establishment front. Thanks indeed to the firemen!

At the 1978 Congress came a clear decision for the second time - unfettered collective bargaining, with foolish Callaghan parroting there and ever since - 5 per cent. For all the meetings with Government, Summer 1978 - Autumn 1978 and now, this last time January 1979, the plea for agreement, for submission, was rejected. At an emergency General Council Meeting, a committee report trying to evade Congress decision, was defeated.

But they will never give up, beware!

The evidence of the understanding of the working class is clear for all to observe in battles now being waged. No sector, public or private is untouched.

Beware villains

The new device by Government and supporters, cheered on by the Tory opposition, with judges involved, is to attack in another way. The hysteria around the lorry drivers' dispute, the prattle about secondary picketing, the call for secret ballots before strikes, the call for legislation on this and on picketing, the phrases 'Code of Conduct' and so forth is the new way to erode and destroy trade union strength. There was no call for a code of conduct on special force police picketing at Grunwick, nor is there a demand by the enemy for a secret ballot when unions make a settlement as at Fords.

The Trade Unions this time have thrown off their doubts and confusions about 'incomes policies', and are in action - the obvious outcome of years of restraint and vacillation. There must be no stop-go on workers' economic policies. Fight now to rectify past years and beware the villains, for they never give up!

The Week

WHILE the deterioration of British industry goes on, an all-party 'Defence' committee of MPs is toying (lethally) with a successor to the present British commitment to NATO, Polaris; this will be a multi-million pound 'development' similar to the American-built missile system.

The present four Polaris submarines nuclear strike is capable of killing around 15 million people and should remain an operational threat over our heads until 1993.

The Royal Institute of International Affairs' has predicted that the existing fleet would cost £6000 million to maintain until the 12 years are up.

War is a very profitable business for capitalism, especially the threat of war. It is time we took these deadly toys out of their childish hands, and threw the lot into the wastebin of history.

A THOUSAND Shetland sheep, one of only two breeds to feed on seaweed, and one of the oldest in the world, have been affected by oil after the Esso Bernicia crashed into a jetty at SuHom Voe. Many are dying. How long will the unique Shetland handicraft knitting survive when it depends on the near starvation level of crofting, which is more and more being forsaken?

THE AUTHORITIES refuse to divulge how many private telephones are being tapped. As the statutory or legal grounds for interference are nonexistent, the practice is being challenged in the High Court. Whatever the verdict, there can be little doubt it will continue. Chelsea Barracks, one of the main listening posts for the police, admits raising the number of listening lines from 23 to 77 in 1977, according to reports, while estimates of lines tapped in London alone are between one and two thousand.

AT a Hull meeting of the Workers Educational Association (WEA), a dockworker stated that the use of micro-processor technology would do to many sectors of industry what 'nationalisation' did to the docks, and that the redundancies caused (over 2000 since the mid-1960s on Hull Docks) were the work of capitalism.

AT least one MP is now worried that the broadcasting of Parliament is showing the whole world what a ridiculous farce bourgeois democracy really is, or to use his words, it is reducing it to the 'yaa-boo schoolboy level'. He said: 'The great need now is to maintain the authority of governments, irrespective of parties. One feature of our society is the breakdown of government. Broadcasting as it is now carried out helps towards that end.' In other words, what the Honourable Gentleman is saying is that the more we know about the way in which the capitalist state works and the more its true nature is revealed, the greater becomes the hostility of the working class towards that state. How very true!

No more illusions about monstrous role of the British Army

A BOY of sixteen was killed in Ireland last summer. An everyday occurrence in that land! But this boy's death was said at the time to be his own fault! Everybody in Ireland is said to be a 'terrorist' when it comes to dealings with the army.

He was killed by curiosity, like the proverbial cat, when he went to have a look at a cache of arms found near his father's land. His father, like the good citizen he was, reported the find to the police. The boy was killed by the two soldiers waiting in ambush. The satisfaction of knowing that his killers, both members of the Special Air Service (SAS), are to be brought to

trial will not bring him back.

At the time the army claimed that the boy pointed an Armalite rifle at the soldiers waiting in an ambush. The soldiers were only defending themselves as usual, when they shot him dead.

It now turns out that the boy's body had three bullet wounds in the back and the weapon which so terrified experienced soldiers into action did not have the boy's finger-prints on it.

The trial, if it ever comes off, will be interesting, and the sentence more so. The British Government denied for as long as it could the existence of the SAS in Ireland. They had to, for the peoples of the world know

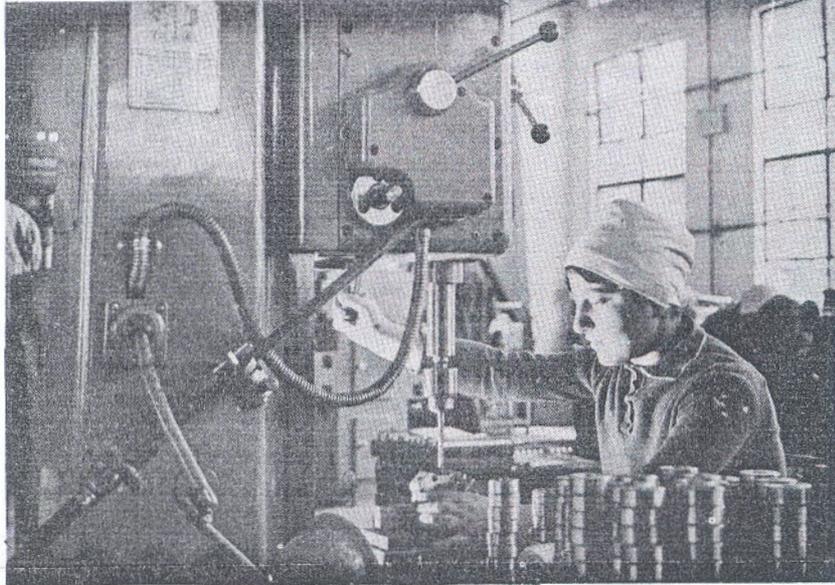
the savagery of that force and shudder at the very name. Their activities are even frowned upon by the most reactionary, but it is not the fact that the SAS perpetrated this crime that is the important thing. It is the fact that it was done by an army of occupation—an army at one time welcomed as the "defenders of the people".

The Irish people can be in no doubt where their interests lie. They have seen armed troops escorting strike breakers recently and the events of Bloody Sunday have again been remembered.

We in Britain must do our bit for our Irish comrades. We must get British troops out of

there and make the revolution in Britain that will shake the world. We have seen the troops many times being called the "defenders of the people" in our own land. It is the troops, who have learned many skills in the streets of Belfast and Derry, who are supposed to have defended the sick and the injured when ambulance men withdrew their labour.

The working class in both lands are the only defenders of the people. It is only action by the working class which will free us from those who murder and exploit us. We should have fewer illusions about the army on both sides of the Irish Sea.



In Albania, as in any socialist country where production is for people's needs not profit, there is a shortage of labour. Everything is done to enable women, one half of the working class, to play a full and equal part in production. (photo: Albanian Telegraphic Agency)

Albania magazine hails workers' action in lifting wage freezes

AN ARTICLE in 'Albania Today', a bimonthly political review published in Tirana, salutes the courage and determination of the proletariat in its mass action to demand work, to lift wage freezes and to annul anti-working class laws, as the deepening crisis of capitalism intensified its exploitation of the people.

'The general crisis which has the capitalist-revisionist world in its iron grip goes on deepening with each passing day. There is a slump in production everywhere. Millions of workers are thrown into the street. In the United States over 8 million are unemployed, in Britain over 2 million, in France over 1.5 million, and in Italy 1.8 million under the age of 23. Prices and taxes are rising at unprecedented rates. In the United States the annual rate of increase in the prices of foodstuffs is 18 per cent, in Italy all prices are up by 14.1 per cent, in Sweden by 13.9 and in Denmark by 13.1.' Price inflation is capitalist wage robbery.

'We are witnessing today,' says Comrade Enver Hoxha, General Secretary of the Party of Labour of Albania, 'fierce class clashes between the working people and capital and its state power. The class struggle of the proletariat and other oppressed social strata has assumed so great proportions both as regards the number of participants and its sharpness that the present period can be com-

pared with the most critical periods the bourgeoisie of the capitalist countries have ever gone through!

The article points out: 'The different reformist and revisionist theories on 'popular capitalism' and 'class harmony', 'joint participation in the management of production' and 'revolution in management', and others of this kind pursue only one aim: to undermine the revolution, to preserve the bourgeois order of oppression and exploitation through some 'structural reforms'. The modern revisionists are fiery champions of these theories.

'In the capitalist-revisionist world the new revolutionary developments confirm the conclusions of the 7th Congress of the Party that objective conditions are maturing more and more with each passing day, that the cause of the revolution and national liberation of peoples is not only an aspiration and perspective, but a problem posed for solution.' In the centre of these revolutionary movements stands the proletariat whose force is becoming evident in the great class battles for liberation from savage capitalist oppression and exploitation. Neither violence of the bourgeoisie, nor demagoguery of the modern revisionists about the 'peaceful road', nor the sermons of the advocates of the 'three worlds' can put down this struggle.'

Fewer trawlers and fewer fish

THE LATEST survey by the British Fishing Federation of the state of our deep-sea fishing industry reveals some alarming figures. In the last four years the number of deep-sea trawlers operating out of British ports has been reduced by more than two hundred. The economic dislocation and resulting unemployment this has caused, especially in those areas long connected with the sea, and dependent on it for much of their livelihood, has been particularly severe. Among the places most affected have been Grimsby, Milford Haven and Hull, now the base of the entire British freezer fleet of 39, where the number of ships handling fresh fish is down from 54 to 8.

A similar malaise is now affecting the entire British fishing industry, the malaise of capitalism. For a long time now the Labour Government has been using our fishing industry in an attempt to buy better conditions for our continued membership of the EEC but the European capitalists impelled by the internal contradictions of capitalism are bent on depleting fish stocks as fast as they are building butter mountains and filling wine lakes, all in the pursuit of profit. The rejection of conservation methods represents the desire to destroy totally our fishing industry.

Understand the world in ferment

IT WOULD be obvious even to the most casual observer that the world is in ferment. As struggle mounts, is it sufficient for us to catalogue the events in order to understand them?

This was the question raised by the speaker in the first of the public meetings organised by the Communist Party of Britain (Marxist-Leninist) this year.

Iran seems to grab our attention from all sides. Its significance is that of people unwilling to accept fascist despotism and facing up to our leaders' maintenance of the Shah. The class nature of this struggle cannot be denied even with its national democratic figurehead. A tear to a Kerevsky but still no Lenin.

Not far away the Shah's mate, Sadat, has got the jitters. Camp David's 'Peace in Our Time' has become a blueprint for war in its conspiracy against the people of the Middle East. Can Sadat's instability be solved by an agreement with Western imperialism? The Shah thought so.

It would be simple to add further to the list - Rhodesia, Namibia, Germany, France, Spain - all have the characteristics of class struggle but where is the link between them?

There may well be 'Great Disorder in the Heavens,' but there is also disorder in our camp. The International Communist Movement which was set back by the Soviet Union has now suffered a further defection by China, even more sudden and with greater rapidity.

In search of allies, China has given the 'Kiss of Death' to the bunch of losers it has for its new friends, Nixon, Shah and Pol Pot. For its old friends it has sought destruction. The attack on Vietnam, in its attempt to encircle and isolate the country, is undisguised aggression. Thankfully Kampuchea has broken out of the grip of the new Chinese regime in a search for peace and security.

Throughout the world there is the desire for change in need of a Marxist-Leninist leadership, but how is this to be met? Have communists learnt from the experiences of the international working class? Sadly no. Communist parties, have sought understanding through 'blocs' - for or against the 'Three Worlds Theory'. Even when the calculated destructive nature of the theory is recognised it is still impossible to build unity through mere opposition to it.

Editorial

THE VIGOROUS effort of the organised working class in Britain to implement their demand for collective bargaining has raised class struggle to its highest intensity for a very long time. Because the issue is the right of the whole working class to have some say in the price put upon their labour power, the struggle involves workers along the entire class front, in both private and public sectors - factory workers, transport workers, nurses and health workers, journalists and dustmen.

Class struggle of such intensity and pervasiveness is a moment of truth for society, a time of standing up and being counted. We can look about us and see just where everybody really stands on this question of whether workers are to have any say at all in their standard of life or whether they must accept whatever pittance capitalism values them at.

Workers already involved in the struggle, workers like the miners and teachers who are about to be involved in the struggle and workers generally who support those in struggle because they realise that in this war every battle is being fought on behalf of the class as a whole have never been clearer about their stand.

The media men cruising from lorry driver picket lines to hospital picket lines looking for scabs to report or put on the air or, at least, for workers who can be bullied into doubts about what they are fighting for have been singularly unsuccessful. Over and over again we have heard striking workers put their case with absolute clarity and conviction.

Only the other night two pickets outside a hospital in London were challenged with the usual question of how they could justify actions which put at risk the health of children and the old. They answered immediately that it was the Government putting at risk the health of the entire working class. Who had closed down dozens of hospitals? Who kept old people in misery during their last years because the NHS could not afford to do 'non-essential' operations? Who threatened to cut back the health service even farther if workers did not drop all claims and accept the low pay a capitalist government was prepared to give them? Keeping the wages of health workers below the poverty line was precisely how the Government was destroying a health service capitalism does not need and cannot afford.

Excuse

A remark frequently heard these days by those siding with the capitalist ruling class is: "Oh we have every sympathy for the low paid but we can't sympathise with the methods they are using." That is the excuse down the ages of those who are prepared to feel sorry for the miserable and oppressed as long as they do not take any steps to change their situation.

The capitalist politicians are falling all over each other in their eagerness to mouth anti-working class sentiments. Callaghan and Williams shout: 'Everybody, go cross a picket line!' A hysterical Thatcher screams over a pop music programme: 'If it's confrontation they want, by God, I'll give them confrontation.' And an opportunistic Steel says, in effect, since we're all identical in our attitudes to workers, why don't we band together and attack them on the basis of a united front?

Having vindicated our right to bargain for wages, having smashed the Labour Government's pay policy, what next? We have to go on struggling. We cannot stop. Ultimately there is no place to stop short of complete victory - except abject submission.

The scenario for the immediate struggles ahead has been written by our success in reasserting through our unions our right to have a say in the price of our labour power. We are now going to have to fight to save education and the health service which Healey has already threatened to destroy as a punishment for our wages victory. We are going to have to fight to save the industrial base of Britain in which our working class is rooted and which capitalism uses now merely as its major recruiting centre for the huge reserve army of unemployed.

Unemployment is one of their main weapons for weakening our wage struggles. We are going to have to fight to save Britain itself which we made and they will tear down, by submergence in Europe or devolution here, in order to tear us down, the organised working class.

In fighting for these things we are fighting against capitalism because these things are incompatible with capitalism's survival. Every struggle takes us closer to the time when we are no longer fighting for these things under hostile capitalism but building them on our own socialist foundation.

Farm workers must fight low wages

FARMWORKERS have recently achieved wage rises averaging 13 per cent, bringing the minimum basic rate to £48.50. This is a great improvement of the farmers' original offer of well under 5 per cent, but a long way from the workers' claim of an average £80 basic wage.

The pattern of a meagre offer on the employers side and only a slight compromise in response to the bold claims from the

farmworkers is becoming a familiar one at the Agricultural Wages Board, and this problem must be faced by the farmworkers' union - NUAAW.

One solution was found by the NUAAW members who took strike action at two Experimental Horticulture stations, and by over 500 farm workers who demonstrated at the Agricultural Wages Board meeting in early December.

Capitalism's regime condemned by mounting rubbish



Capitalism produces piles of rubbish in a double sense. It forces the council workers who do the dirty job of removing rubbish to go on strike as the only way of getting a decent wage. Also, because capitalist production is for profit and not for the needs of people, it prostitutes the skills of workers to turn out rubbishy goods with built-in obsolescence which are a terrible waste of the world's resources.

(Photo: Sun Art Library)

Fightback crucial to save water industry

"WE AREN'T ruining the country, we're keeping it going" - so said a shop steward after manual workers employed by the South-West Water Authority had voted at a mass meeting to join the one day stoppage on January 22nd. And who can argue with that? The British water worker provides a greater proportion of the population with connection to public water services than in any other country in the world.

When rights are no longer rights

RECENTLY a picket, picketing a company supplying United Biscuits, was served with a temporary injunction from the High Court to prevent him from picketing. In granting the injunction, the judge said: 'The picket was unlawful since it was too far removed from the dispute.' We know who is really the better judge of that. However, the judge went on: 'It has to be presumed that Parliament does not intend to legislate to bring about its own destruction.' A clear admission of why our rulers are worried - that we may just take all of that power which we let them wield. We may as well say 'when is a right not a right? When Parliament is threatened by it?'

The employing class and their agents know that the present situation is class war. They at least are under no illusions about what is at stake. So should we have no illusions either.

Those of our fellow workers who conclude that unions have too much power and that strikes are bringing the country to ruin have not the class clarity which the ruling class has mustered. It is the ruling class which originate such accusations precisely to confuse and divide us. Be sure, our employers know what it means when we occupy their factories. Let us realize too, it is but one step removed from occupying our country. Revolution is the key by which we can cease having to keep fighting for a living year after year.

Indeed the total length of water mains and sewers in this country would circle the earth about 11 times! For this they number among the lowest paid members of the community and have to see their skills wasted as cut-backs prevent the standard of service being maintained or extended. Recent actions have shown that water workers are not prepared to let this decline go by unopposed. An analysis of the current state of the Industry proves that such a fightback is crucial.

In 1974 the Water Industry was effectively nationalised by the Conservatives (who says the parties are different?). The resources and powers of over 1,800 separate private and public bodies were transferred to 10 new regional water authorities. The old water units were massively in debt and needed a lifeline. So the hotch potch answer was the new regional bodies - free to administer themselves (except when government intervened), and to be entirely self financing (including inheriting all the old debts).

The result has been a massive state encroachment into the Industry's affairs while at the same time shifting the debts onto the public and using this as an excuse for avoiding too much public expenditure. A recent White Paper sees the next step as the taking away of even the nominal independence of the regional authorities with the formation of a National Water Authority. The State is obviously only part way along its plans to control the Industry; a control that can only spell further decline under the guide of "the need for a national strategy," etc. The retiring chairman of the National Water Council, Lord Nugent, pointed out three crucial areas where technical and financial restrictions could have catastrophic results.

The purity of drinking water is taken for granted in Britain but in a sophisticated industrial environment new and unknown dangers are ever threatening and can only be kept at bay by constant vigilance with monitoring and

research.

7 per cent of our inland rivers are still classified as of poor quality or grossly polluted and that figure includes some major blackspots and the figure is a good deal higher for estuarial and coastal waters. These pollutions can only be cured by the construction of major new works.

The assets of the industry are getting old. The size of these assets is reflected in the estimated cost of renewal - £18,000 million. It is essential that a satisfactory programme of inspection and renewal takes place if widespread dilapidation of supply and sewerage mains is not to occur.

Rather than facing up to these tasks the response of the state has been to subject the industry to unparalleled public expenditure cuts, 30 per cent in real terms even after allowing for an intended 17 per cent increase over the next five years. Equally the financial structure of the water authorities has meant massive debt financing with over a third of their income going on interest payments alone.

Some might say that the undoubted high level of proficiency of the industry in fact shows that capitalism can work. However what is true is that like with all the industrialised advances made in Britain they were made in spite of capitalism, only taking place as long as they were profitable and entirely dependent on the exploited skills of the workforce. 'Certainly it was always relative advance - relative to what would be possible when socialism was the economic regulator.'

Capitalism can't escape the truth that a nationally integrated water strategy is the only way to organise our water resources. But equally they wish to deny British workers the chance of getting their hands on it. So they nationalise, shift debts, rundown and generally hamper the potential. Water workers will have to ensure that this bleak future is avoided and must develop their own national strategy to save the Industry.

'Times' workers challenge management's duplicity

(continued from P.1)

Public Services

Capitalism is the cause and Ennals is for capitalism. We know also that under Ennals' stewardship the hospital waiting list in England and Wales has passed the 600,000 mark. The current strike will add another month of waiting for people who have already been waiting for up to five years in some cases. Is it also not the case that in 1978 120 hospitals were named as those that would have to close, that will help the waiting list a lot.

The director of the dialysis unit at Hull Royal Infirmary has warned hospital workers that kidney patients can last for only 10 days without dialysis. In the event of such an emergency such patients will be attended to, more than can be said for the 3,000 people who will die in 1979 because the NHS cannot afford enough kidney machines. And Ennals still tries to justify the cuts.

Under capitalism, the offer by Lucas workers to produce the kidney machines goes unheeded. There is not sufficient profit in kidney machines, much more in missile production.

We should not forget the water workers, on strike already in parts of Yorkshire, Herefordshire, Glamorgan and the North East. Others in Exeter and the West Midlands have joined them this week. Dustmen and road workers are out all over Britain.

The hysteria in parliament and the press is having little effect as far as the mass of public sector workers are concerned. A productivity deal has been offered at a cost of 60,000 jobs, but negotiations would not wear it. It is typical of capitalism - very low pay or slightly better low pay, mass redundancy and declining services. The system is intolerable, but if we vote for Labour, Tory or Liberal we vote for more of the same.

AS THE lock-out at Times Newspapers enters its ninth week, it is clear to all that the management have grossly miscalculated in trying to bludgeon the unions into accepting their 'plans' for the papers. The dispute has already cost the company millions, but the number of agreements signed with the unions has remained at 19 out of 65.

Although characterised by the phrase 'new technology', something more fundamental underlies the dispute: the pursuit of profit. The use of new technology provides, on the one hand, higher productivity, on the other, redundancy and deskilling, both of which increase profits. At the same time, union organisation is weakened, which also provides an opportunity for greater exploitation of the workforce.

In the stance adopted by management up to now, it is obvious that they want to destroy the power of organised labour within the company once and for all. Whether this is done by redundancies, disputes procedures, or new work practices (including new technology), the result would be the same - higher profits, and a workforce ill placed to claim its 'share'. The fate of FOCs, who represent the focus of union activity within a section or chapel, is an example of this attitude: they have been allowed virtually no role at all in the new plan.

The two main unions at the centre of the dispute, the National Graphical Association and NATSOPA, have taken the principled stand of refusing to negotiate under duress. In fact, it is a euphemism to describe the talks which have taken place as 'negotiations', because the management have conceded practically nothing up to now.

It is not surprising that the unions, in turn, have found the management proposals for wholesale sackings and revised working conditions

unacceptable. Although the number of SLADE members involved in the dispute, for instance, is comparatively small (only about 50), the management proposals affecting them are typical.

A quarter would lose their jobs. Those who remained would work extra hours to cover for those lost, being transferred between shifts and sections as required, and taking an effective wage cut in the process. NATSOPA, while suffering similar wage cuts, would stand to lose nearly half its members affected. And this on a paper with low pay by Fleet Street standards.

Nor does the management's perfidy stop here. By declaring a suspension of publication it has effectively debarred the locked-out workers from drawing unemployment benefit - they are not 'unemployed' - or from receiving redun-

dancy payments - they have not been 'sacked', nor, indeed, are they on strike. Similarly, a few would be entitled to supplementary benefit. In fact, the dispute affects many hundreds more print workers, like the Sun Printers at Watford who print the colour supplements. But naturally no 'establishment' voices 'have been raised against this form of 'secondary' pressure by management.

So, it has fallen upon the individual unions to provide totally for their members. The Newspaper Section of SLADE London Branch is donating £5 a head per week, while the rest of the branch is giving £1 a week. The NGA is making available £100,000 a week for its 563 members under notice.

Despite this pressure, and management's carefully orchestrated and expensive advertising campaign (costing

£65,000 on one day alone), the unions are united and firm in their resolve. A statement by the NATSOPA Ad Hoc Committee has pointed out that Hussey has 'succeeded in uniting all NATSOPA chapels on a scale never thought possible under normal circumstances.'

The Times NUJ chapel's morale is higher than it has ever been', said its FOC. Although it has signed a tactical interim agreement with management to avoid receiving notice, it has been turned into 'a confident, united and very determined collection of men and women' by the management's duplicity and machinations.

Not surprisingly, the only people to show any pride in the papers and the skill going into their creation are the workers themselves. This spirit has led them to successfully produce two newspapers of their own: the TIMES CHALLENGER and the SUNDAY TIMES REPORTER, through which they are stating their case.

What will happen next, however, has been subject to much speculation. Ideas have been floated for forming a workers' cooperative, or nationalisation; but such schemes are inevitably rendered problematic by the advertisers who provide a large part of the cost of production, and thereby indirectly affect editorial policy. The DAILY HERALD closed, not because of low circulation, but because capitalists were not willing to support it through providing advertising revenue.

Nevertheless, sale of the group, or even closure, remain distinct possibilities while the management sit and ruminate about what to do next. Many of the workers have made it plain that they would rather see the papers close than sacrifice their dignity and skills to a rapacious management, who can no longer be trusted to honour even existing agreements.

The TIMES Challenger

The voice of print workers and journalists

The establishment of The Times Challenger is a step forward in the struggle for the rights of print workers and journalists. It is a newspaper which will be owned and controlled by the workers and journalists themselves. It will be a newspaper which will be free from the control of the capitalist class and the state. It will be a newspaper which will be free to speak the truth and to fight for the interests of the workers and journalists.

Glasgow papers abandon direct input proposals

The Glasgow papers have abandoned their proposals for direct input. This is a victory for the workers and journalists. It shows that the capitalist class is unwilling to give up its control over the media. It also shows that the workers and journalists are not willing to accept such a deal.



Who fights for press freedom now?

By DENNIS MACHAN, president, National Union of Journalists

The press is under attack from all sides. The capitalist class is trying to control it. The state is trying to control it. The workers and journalists are trying to fight back. Who will win? It depends on who fights for press freedom now.

SLADE view

The SLADE view is that the workers and journalists should take control of the media. They should not be controlled by the capitalist class or the state. They should be free to speak the truth and to fight for the interests of the workers and journalists.



Mr Bennett on the Press

Mr Bennett, a member of the press, has said that the press is under attack from all sides. He has called for the workers and journalists to fight back.

'Challenger' Conference

The 'Challenger' Conference was held in London. It was attended by workers and journalists from all over the country. They discussed the situation and decided to take action.

Dunlop workers in fight to keep their jobs

THE fight is on to stop yet another closure on Merseyside. This time 2,333 workers at Dunlop's Speke tyre plant are being threatened. The company blames the recession in the tyre industry, but the rundown condition of the premises show this to be false.

As at both Plesseys and Leylands not all workers were initially threatened with loss of jobs. At Speke the belting and sports division will remain. Parts of Leyland did not go down the road, yet less than a year after 3000 jobs disappeared 500 of those remaining are on limited time. And at Plesseys 800 jobs are to go within the next 90 days with the added threat that any opposition will mean the closure, totally, of the plant. Although not explicitly stated, this is the implication of Plesseys terms, with the conditions that are part of the deal. Anyway they are only talking of keeping the factory open in its present form for a further 3 years, thus proving that partial

closures, and an unsuccessful fight against them, only put off the evil hour for those remaining.

The tactics of closure are also being established. First comes the 'leaks' in the media. These are proclaimed to be 'groundless rumours' but then after the announcement comes the effort to achieve the closure without any trouble, which also has the aim of splitting the workers. In the case of Dunlop a few jobs will be saved in the Scottish plant of Innishilling if they accept work from Speke. Also comes the threat that extrajudicial redundancy payments will be reduced if the rundown is not carried out smoothly. This pattern has been established locally at Plesseys and British Leyland.

However, Dunlop workers have declared their will to fight. They recognise that their own position is relatively weak. Much depends on other workers in the Dunlop empire, and on dockers and tanker drivers, blacking

all Dunlop goods and refusing to deliver fuel supplies. In this light, a 6-point plan of action has been adopted by the workers.

The redundancies will not come into force until April 19, but a determined and united workforce inside the plant is much more of a threat to the company than a determined, yet dispersed, group of workers outside. Capitalism seems to learn from past battles. But the workers' past at Dunlop has had its successes. The unity that was established on June 9, 1972 with the Pirelli workers in Italy shows the way forward.

One of the ironies that also arises during factory closures is that the redundancy payments, as well as the expenses of the physical removal of plant and raw materials, paid for by government grants, are in fact paid for by workers themselves through their taxes. We are in the ridiculous position of having to pay for our own destruction!

Public Meetings

London	All meetings are at 7.30 p.m.	
Feb. 9	Pay policy smashed: What next?	Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, Holborn.
Feb. 23	Devolution and the EEC: whose benefit?	Conway Hall
Mar. 9	Out with the Labour Govt.	Bellman Bookshop 155 Fortress Rd, N. W. 5.
Cambridge		
Feb 15	Defend The Right To Strike 8:00pm, International Centre, Gwydir Street.	
Oxford		
Wed. 14th February	Our Trade Unions, our decisions	
Wed. 21st February	Seizing the Assets All starting at 8.00 p.m., Cowley Community Centre	
Reading		
Feb 22nd	EEC, Devolution and Parliament. 8.00pm AUEW Hall, Oxford Road.	

The Worker

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