



# DON'T LET THIS GOVT GET AWAY WITH MURDER

AS BRITAIN'S all to brief autumn dies away, the working class is squaring up for a long, hard winter. The working class is being assailed on every front - prices, fares, hospital closures, social services, jobs.

We have behind us some great victories, like that of the engineers; and an equally disastrous defeat at Leylands. We have behind us too last winter, with its sea of struggle which ended in the downfall of a Labour government . . . and the entrance of the Huns and Goths of the Conservative party, and with that the spread of doom and gloom in the labour movement.

We have now a Blitzkrieg conducted against us. As in the last world war, many believed at first that the juggernaut was unstoppable. Now ideas are beginning to change. You can see it in struggles which later may appear small and be forgotten, in fights like that of the Lambeth council workers, the steelmen at Corby - and most of all in the courage of the paraplegic defenders of Stoke Mandeville.

### Government worried

You can see it too, ironically, mirrored in the faces of the enemy. The Government is starting to become worried. They thought they had a mandate from the nation to destroy the nation; they were going to cut back public expenditure ruthlessly; they were going to deal with the scroungers, the misfits, the trade unions. But in their last Party Political Broadcast they could only resort to the feeblest of lies, namely, that there were not any cuts at all.

Even feebler was the constant sniping at the Labour Party, as if still fighting the last election. They actually think that if they can prove that there is no other way for capitalism to survive other

than by slashing down all social progress, then people will accept it.

### What we have, we hold

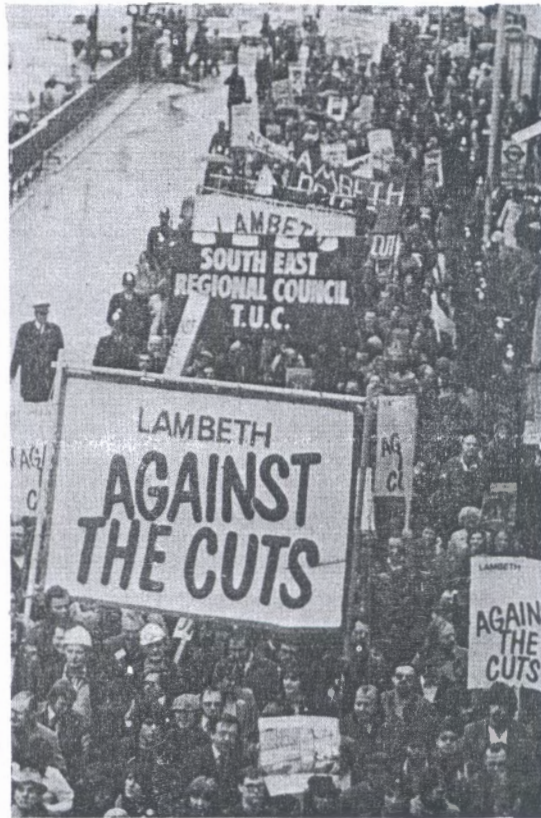
Yet what is happening now is that the working class, in its schools, in its factories, in hospitals and offices, on the farms and in the streets, is starting to say NO - we don't care about balancing your books, about paying your way in the world: what we have, we hold.

Against this background we enter our winter, our winter of discontent. There will be struggle every day, in all areas of our class, for wages, for schools, for health, for the independence of our unions. It will be done because it must be done. And it will be done by all, for all know that no one detachment, of miners, of firemen, whatever, will ride out to do battle like St George with the dragon and win while we applaud.

### Use union strength

Above all it will be done within our unions, for that is where our power lies, sometimes slumbering, but always there. We could all be giants if we had the conviction and the courage to recognize that power. It is a power which can ensure that we will leave the coming winter far stronger than we entered it - and far stronger than we did last winter.

Yes, it will begin as a winter of discontent, but will it lead to a spring of discontent as well, and a summer after that? Or will it turn from discontent into anger and hatred, into a rage of revolution? The employers, our enemies, know that it can - and frightened by that knowledge they unleash against us a counter-revolution, rob us of industry and health and try to turn us into dumb beasts of burden.



Workers from all over Britain joined the Lambeth Council Demonstration against the Cuts. Photo: Mark Rusher (IFL)

## Making war on people - at home and abroad

THE WORKERS of Britain are becoming increasingly aware of the open class war this Government is waging against them. Closely linked with this all-out attack is the war the Government wages against the people of Zimbabwe, Ireland and, indeed, through NATO, against working people everywhere.

At Lancaster House the Government, having gone through the motions of seeking agreement among "all parties concerned", is moving rapidly forward "legitimising" the Smith-Muzorewa regime which has been carrying out massacres of people in Zimbabwe, Zambia and Mozambique throughout the talks. An enabling act for proceeding with what amounts to recognition of the present murderous administration in Zimbabwe and lifts sanctions is already on its way through the House of Commons.

While the Government cuts back everything for the welfare of the working class in Britain, it increases expenditure on the armed services for continuing the occupation of northern Ireland and the harassment and murder of Irish people.

The Government's protests about the amount Britain has to pay for its membership of the EEC is merely dust in our eyes to conceal the fact that it supports wholeheartedly this cartel of European capitalism for exploiting and defrauding the working people of Europe.

The EEC is simply the economic wing of NATO, the military alliance of which flourishes nuclear weapons and threatens mega death to workers anywhere who try to challenge capitalism's right to go on exploiting them.

We have but to add up the deaths of British people, represented by the closures of hospitals, the cuts in fire services and every other department for preserving or enhancing life and by the increases in expenditure on arms, truncheons or anything which can be used to kill or maim.

This is a Government of murderers.

## Disabled patients tell Prentice : 'We have had enough.'

LAST WEEK fifty severely paralysed people wheeled themselves into two hospital wards and declared them both occupied and open. Two padlocked their chairs to the doors to prevent them from being closed.

The action was an angry response to the Buckinghamshire Area Health Authority's plan to close twenty-five beds at the Spinal Injury Centre at Stoke Mandeville Hospital. All the demonstrators have been patients in the Centre, and owe what independence and mobility they have to the exceptional quality of its care.

Within hours they had won, at least a breathing space. The Area Health Authority was thrown into such confu-

sion that the meeting called to confirm the closure ended up deferring it, and has placed the final decision back on the shoulders of the Government.

The Spinal Injuries Centre is a unique unit dealing mainly now with accidents and virus infections. But it was for its patient, pioneering work with those maimed by war that Stoke Mandeville became known throughout the world.

That same week poppies appeared in the streets, a reminder that many people still suffer the physical agonies of war (including two thousand paraplegics from World War I). Yet the Thatcher Government continues to close hospitals and increase military expenditure.

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## The Week

THE US Pentagon was very quick to advertise the blunder which made it seem that the US was under nuclear attack and almost launched bombed-up B52s in retaliation. It is part of US imperialism's rule by terror to keep the world aware of the possibility of a nuclear holocaust by mistake.

A NATIONAL claim by university technicians has been met by the answer that no funds are available to meet any increase. It has been suggested that the matter should be referred to the Clegg Compability Exercise, showing how such machinery can be used as a waste bin for claims.

HUA GUOFENG in backing an aggressive British-US imperialist bloc against the Soviet Imperialists compared the situation with the united front movement against fascism before World War II. As the PEOPLE'S VOICE of New Zealand points out: "Not only was that situation entirely different but the great Marxist-Leninist Stalin never tried to strengthen any imperialist power during the united front movement. He never welcomed imperialist exploitation of the Soviet people. He never fussed and fawned over imperialist leaders, royalty or revisionists." No wonder Stalin never got the favourable treatment in the British press Hua got on his recent visit.

IN a judgement that would make Solomon green with envy, the Employment Appeal Tribunal ruled recently that dismissing an employee because she is expecting a baby does not amount to sex discrimination 'because there is no male equivalent to a pregnant woman.'

THE GLC is still keen to hold the Olympics in London. Since there is little prospect of London having the space or finances to accommodate the teams from abroad, one can appreciate the Government's wisdom in allowing in the South African rugby team so that very few countries would participate in Games held here.

QUESTIONS in the House, calls from Thatcher for the BBC to put "its house in order", Anti-Terrorist Squad detectives to investigate. All because of allegations that a Panorama team filmed IRA Provisionals in control of a village. Listen to all the fuss. Nobody has mentioned yet (and why would they?) that if Panorama wanted to they could film the British Army and police training in model villages in England learning how to seal off civilian areas. Training takes place every day of the week. Why no fuss about that?

## Historic Notes

In the winter of 1911 two schoolteachers, a married couple, T.G. and A.K. Higdon, arrived in Burston. They were confirmed socialists and had been deeply involved in attempts to organise agricultural workers

The couple had been transferred to Burston on account of their success in organising farm labourers at Wood Dalling. Tom Higdon had been working for several years organising the farm workers of the county into union branches and had captured the Wood Dalling Parish Council for the workers. Because of this a trumped-up charge was brought against Mrs Higdon which resulted in the transfer to Burston.

Undaunted the couple continued their work. Mrs Higdon refused to be subservient to her school managers and helped her husband organise new branches of the Agricultural Labourers' Union. Once again Tom Higdon led the labourers in capturing the Parish Council.

Early in 1914 another charge was brought against Mrs Higdon. It was of unjustly caning two pu-

## Dismissal of teachers at Burston arouses the nation

Both parents and children refused to accept the decision of the Norfolk Education Committee. Pupils, encouraged by their parents, refused to attend the school and instead attended lessons daily on the village green. They were taught by the Higdons.

Fines were imposed on the striking children's parents, but money was raised by sympathisers at meetings in Norfolk and neighbouring Suffolk. Burston villagers supporting the Higdons were deprived of their glebe land by the local vicar, who was chairman of the managers of the Higdons' former school. Three glebe tenants were evicted from their cottages by the vicar. All this aroused great indignation

amongst trade unionists throughout Britain and the issue became a national one. The Agricultural Labourers' Union and the National Union of Railwaymen gave valuable support to the strikers. The National Union of Teachers eventually came round to giving its wholehearted support to the villagers.

The extent to which the working people of the country rallied to the cause was remarkable. The NUR organised meetings in London which were addressed by the Higdons, some of the pupils and their parents. Trade unionists everywhere knew that the Higdons had been victimised for their trade union work, political beliefs and activities.

The widespread publicity given to the Burston School Strike by the trade union movement enabled enough money to be raised for the construction of a new school on land granted by the Parish Council - which was of course, controlled by Tom Higdon and his supporters. Some money came from abroad.

The School prospered throughout the twenties and became a

focal point for British trade unionists. Older pupils at the school, as part of their education, were taken to trade union meetings. This emphasised the unity of the school with the struggles of the exploited everywhere. Meetings were held at the school in support of the Bolshevik Revolution, for Russian Famine Relief and to protest at the execution of Sacco and Vanzetti. There can be no doubt that it inspired rural workers throughout Britain to fight against the injustices imposed upon them.

The school continued to operate into the 30s. It was not closed until Tom Higdon died in 1939. It still stands and is used as a community centre. It serves as a memorial to the courage and determination of the Higdons and the heartening solidarity between the villagers and British trade unionists.

An excellent account of events at Burston is contained in B. Edwards's book "The Burston School Strike", available from Bellman Bookshop - price £2 plus postage.

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Japanese workers demonstrate against war on October 21, International Anti-War Day, at Iwakuni City in Yamaguchi Prefecture. They are holding up placards which read: "Oppose militarist restoration!", "Oppose aggressive war preparations..."

## 10-year decline in British diet

WHILE the EEC burns its mountains of 'surplus' food, the British population suffers a decline in food consumption. The consumption of bacon and lamb, for example, is down 25 per cent. The absolute decline in the British diet can be seen in the per capita consumption of animal and vegetable protein which dropped from 52.5 grams per day in 1970 to 31.9 grams per day in 1977. And in a decade when we have been eating less, the export of food from Britain has risen

The EEC and its CAP destroys the food we produce. It also tries to destroy our ability to produce food at all. Britain is the most efficient milk producer in Europe and we have to pay for that efficiency. British farmers pay 3 p per gallon of milk produced or 60 million pounds per year to the EEC to keep their system of milk production. Although Britain is efficient in producing milk, we are only 68 per cent self sufficient in producing milk products. The EEC forbids Britain to manufacture more milk products. In 1976, a brand new multi million pound butter manufacturing plant was closed so that we could import EEC butter.

We have been able to be self sufficient in potato production since World War II, yet British

farmers are fined if they produce too many potatoes. We import 20 per cent of our potatoes. We also import 70 per cent of our sugar, yet beet is plentiful and easily grown in Britain.

The CAP has an even more degenerate plan for British agriculture - the Mansholt Plan. The consequences of this for agriculture are as disastrous as the consequences of D'Avignon Plan for steel. Its aim is to maintain profits in agriculture by "structural reform."

The language of the Mansholt Plan is the language of redundancy, 'training or re-training of farmers', 'creating jobs outside agriculture', 'encouraging the cessation of farming activities and the reallocation of farm land'. Britain will be and is being hit hard by the restructuring of the Mansholt Plan. There is a ban on investment in milk production and grants to encourage dairy farmers to either slaughter dairy cows or switch from farming to something else. Danish pig products have flooded the British market so we pay higher prices and see our pig industry destroyed. Fisheries are also under attack. The withdrawal of subsidies to ship maintenance and the influx of subsidised fish from Norway add to the disintegration of the fishing industry.

## Mr Ky tells Durham students about Vietnam

MR KY LE GIAI, Charge d'Affaires from the Vietnamese embassy, recently came to the North East to talk to students on the Boat People and life in Vietnam. He spoke at several colleges, among them Durham University. At this meeting he described the continued war of aggression against Vietnam, carried out in turn by the French, the Japanese, the French again, the Americans and now the Chinese.

The Americans had dropped 14 million tons of bombs on Vietnam, leaving behind them three million unemployed, 800,000 orphans, 500,000 prostitutes, 300,000 war invalids and thousands upon thousands of drug addicts. Added to these problems four million people in the South were illiterate. Moreover, Vietnam suffered from natural disasters in the three years 1976-1978.

The floods and typhoons resulted in massive loss of rice crops and were quickly followed by the Chinese invasion which caused social and industrial ruin in six northern provinces. Ethnic Chinese, who account for 1.2 million out of a population of 50 million, were being persuaded to leave by the Chinese, and in a situation where Vietnam was being attacked by China, these people naturally felt unsafe about staying.

Throughout the period since liberation in 1975 there have been in addition to these problems large numbers of people who had been dependent on American aid for their livelihood. Many of them had had very easy lives in banking or perhaps in distribution of goods and after liberation when this aid stopped the only work for them was in the rebuilding of dams and clearing of destroyed agricultural land, work which they found intolerable.

Mr Ky outlined the above in order to explain the exodus of "the Boat People". One would expect harsh words about those who did not want to stay and rebuild their homeland, but no, the Vietnamese Government is very

upset that they leave, not simply because they need the skills and manpower, but also because they feel sad that the refugees cannot cope with hard work.

There are provisions for these people to leave, but the Government can only allow them to go once a recipient country has been found. The boatloads that we hear about are the result of profiteering sometimes by government officials, and these people are being unmasked and punished.

Much that the embassy's representative said allayed the fears of those present at the meeting in Durham that the Vietnamese were harsh people. Religion, for instance, is not banned, and the constitution allows freedom of religion. Mr Ky Le told the meeting that a Vietnamese cardinal sits in Rome. He also told us about one of the problems left by the Americans - the half million prostitutes. These women have to be rehabilitated, given a skill and returned to their villages whilst ensuring that no one from their home town knows about their past.

It is hard to convey how the Vietnamese manage to combine absolute determination to control their own country with such a gentleness of attitude towards those who do not wish to stay in Vietnam.

## Circuses but no bread

THE OCCUPATION of the US Embassy in Teheran has nothing to do with the struggle against US imperialism in Iran or the Middle East. It is a pure act of gangsterism perpetrated by a regime eager to cover up its inability to meet even the most basic demands of the people of Iran. Instead we witness a clerical fascist order comparable only to the Inquisition in Spain in the Middle Ages.

The Iranian regime has its own imperialist aspirations in the Gulf. They revive an old battle cry, "Down with the Shah" to stifle a new one "Down with the Ayatollahs."

# Editorial

IMITATION is the sincerest form of flattery. The CBI's first national conference, on the pattern of the TUC, is the employers' tribute to the effectiveness of the trade union movement. If you can't smash them, try copying their type of organisation yourself!

This conference took place when business confidence was at its lowest ebb for years, and, more importantly, when collective bargaining has secured considerable gains for the organised working class. Not only have many sections of the labour movement been able to check the degeneration of living standards and the erosion of skills brought about by the imposition of pay policies; but also, given a lead by the engineers, many other unions are now fighting for the quality of life by demanding a shorter working week.

The CBI reckons that if the TUC could represent the will of trade unionists in ratifying the restoration of collective bargaining, which has bitten deeply into profits, then their national conference could represent the will of employers, counteract the effects of collective bargaining and restore profits to their normal fat, over-ripe state. Hence the setting up of a strike fund which is simply an insurance policy employers can take out against financial loss due to industrial action.

## Coercive legislation

The confidence of employers has been so shaken by the success of wage claims in both the public and private sector, by the victory of the engineers and of the print workers against the Times Newspapers that their main form of attack is to call on the Government to hold the arms of the trade unions with coercive legislation... while the employers bravely take a swing at them. Hence the vote to outlaw "the closed shop" in an attempt to make 100 per cent unionism illegal, and the strong backing for the Government's legislative programme for weakening the unions' capacity to fight for the preservation of jobs, skills and industry itself.

Because the employers look to the Government to cripple the unions they cannot criticise the Government's dependance on what is called a 'free market' to reduce real wages, by massive doses of unemployment and inflation, instead of enforcing a restrictive wage policy. If that takes too long Margaret Thatcher has not denied there might have to be an emergency pay freeze. Of course, weakening or destroying unions in the name of maintaining a 'free market' is the method of fascism. It is what the Ruhr barons paid Hitler's bully boys to do.

## Two moralities

The real reason why the CBI can never be like the TUC is that they are founded on two absolutely contradictory attitudes to life, two entirely different philosophies. The principle of trade unionism is that individuals modify their own self interest for the good of the collective, they make sacrifices in the present for a better future for the working class as a whole. The principle of employers is still the capitalist dog-eat-dog rule of every man for himself. A clear illustration of these two principles at war with each other and of which, in the long run, one must win out was provided by the engineers' strike. Workers may act selfishly, like employers, with disastrous consequences as at Leyland; but they don't have to. Employers can never act unselfishly, like workers at their best, because it would fly in the face of the whole capitalist ethic and break the mainspring of the system, which is simply self-interest spuriously elevated to an 'eternal truth of human nature'.

## Lords move to put more gags on Press

LORD WIGODER introduced a Private Members Bill into the House of Lords last summer, the intent of which is to restrict the freedom to report ongoing court cases. At present a defendant or joint defendant can request reporting restrictions to be raised. But the proposed new law would remove this right from the defendant(s) and place it entirely in the hands of the presiding magistrate.

The effect of this would be to gag press reports, prevent aid being mobilised for the prisoner, and effectively place the proceedings in camera. It is not unknown for magistrates to deliberately place defendants in custody for over 12 months in certain cases just to remove people from circulation. When they are found innocent at a later date, this detention period is classed as one of the 'unfortunate' but antiquated aspects of the legal profession.

Similarly, there is the trick of making cases subjudice so no press reporting can occur. This is well known in the Leeds area, where numerous fascist attacks on trade unionists have occurred. Even when fascists have been arrested and charged, yet never brought to trial (certain cases are outstanding for over two years now), the cases are deemed subjudice and therefore no reporting of the details is permitted.

The Justices' Clerks' Society, the people who advise lay magistrates, are in bitter opposition to the proposed bill. It is their belief that the law is already too far down the road of secrecy. Likewise we as trade unionists must realise the threat of this grubby piece of legislation and oppose it vigorously.

# Fight against the destruction of Britain

## THE STATE OF BRITAIN/Education

THE STRIKE by Avon teachers on 15th November, demanded and secured by mass meetings of members of the National Union of Teachers all over the county is more than a protest at the atrocities committed against education by the Government and its Local Authority. It is a declaration of intent to take up the responsibility for education which successive governments have abdicated.

The action is an expression of the union's aspirations for progress which can only be achieved if there is an advanced education service, innovative and ready to meet the needs of the future.

There can be no illusions about the battles ahead. They will be protracted, complex, requiring tactical ingenuity to win. But the greatest requirement is conviction in and commitment to the whole service and the union. Then the strength will be found to fight future attacks.

Most importantly, the growing involvement of members must be expanded and deepened in order that they may act as a union in practice as well as in name. The union is its members, no more or less, and by participation will they determine future events.

Some notable successes have already been achieved - the 'finding' of £1 million by Avon, the dropping of revised holiday dates, and the end of the attempt to dismiss compulsorily scores of teachers. But there is still much more to win: the retention of school meals, transport, nursery education, jobs, schools themselves - all will need to be fought for.

This strike should be regarded as a real contribution to National Education Week - part of the struggle to save education for the future.

"OCCUPIED in Defence of Education" read the banner outside the Polytechnic of Central London this week.

In response to a National Union of Students call for action against the raising of tuition fees over 50,000 students demonstrated all



## THE STATE OF BRITAIN/Health

"HANDS OFF our health service!" and "Save our Hospitals!" These were the slogans that dominated the recent Gravesham, Kent, demonstration in support of the NHS. Organized by COHSE, it drew together many trade unionists from both within and outside the health service. Following a call from the local Trades Council, a wide range of workers turned up to support. Cooks, paper workers, cleaners, teachers all realize clearly that the defence of the NHS is a fight that all must take up if the recent devastating attacks are to be thwarted.

On the same day, the so-called "Health Minister", Vaughan, had the effrontery to accuse another health service union, NUPE, of being responsible for "hardship and deprivation caused to the old, sick and disabled last winter." And he went on to warn that any major improvement in wages would be followed by an immediate cut in services. Such is typical of the care the ruling class has for the people of Britain.

## WEST GLAMORGAN CUTS FIGHT GAINS STRENGTH

SIGNIFICANT victories have been won against West Glamorgan County Council, who have announced a cut of £3.5 million in the education budget. Adult education classes have been restored, as has free school transport, due for cutting on December 3rd. The cause, in the latter case, was a strong parent-teacher-pupil demonstration through Swansea on October 23rd.

The success of these as yet cursory encounters serve as a morale booster to those unions either preparing or as yet too timid to enter the battle.

Industrial action is to be taken by West Glamorgan Fire Brigades Union against the Council's decision to close a barely six-year old station at Briton Ferry, and to staff the station at Portadane with part-timers, proposals which will mean the loss of 40 jobs.

Warnings from the West Glamorgan branch secretary of the FBU that the closure of the Briton Ferry station will "put lives at risk" have been echoed by the National Association of Fire Officers.

over the country and more than 60 colleges were occupied.

The increase in tuition fees is one form of the cuts in the Government's attacks on higher education.

The increases would bring the cost of an arts course to £2000 a year, of a science course to £3000 and medicine courses to an astronomical £5000. These figures have been calculated as representing the full cost of the courses.

The Government's attack on education is partially masked by the massive increase in tuition fees for overseas students on whose enrolment many courses and even whole colleges depend. This situation is a legacy of British imperialism.

But students will no longer be diverted into defending foreign students from what seems like a racialist attack. The attack is on our whole educational system and our campaign has to be one of uniting the NUS for a determined fight to save higher education from Government destruction.

BRISTOL POLYTECHNIC is a prime example of the results of years and years of cutbacks in education. Only 3 phases out of 7 have been built which means we have no engineering, printing or sports facilities or accommodation. On top of this the Poly's budget has been reduced by over £1 million in the last 5 years. Inevitably the result is the erosion of educational standards.

Recently the students unions stated very strongly in angered voices that we have had enough. Direct action was the only choice otherwise the Director and Avon County Council would continue to ignore our pleas. The message was clear on the implications of the cuts in education - that there is no future for the working class if the educational basis of progress in society is being destroyed today. If our ability to produce wealth is being denied, how can there be any future at all for us?

What is significant is that at last as students we have proved to ourselves that we have the strength to win the battles - as long as we remain united and remember that the battle is for the future of Britain. It is the only way we will survive as an educated working class.

Students across the country feel pride and dignity again, now that we are standing up for the principle of "Save Education". No more apologising for our existence saying, for example, "we're privileged" - who's privileged when it comes to the Government attacking the working class.

# Firemen gear up for new pay battle .....and continue their fight to keep the fire service safe for Britain

THIS NOVEMBER is a good time to reflect on what has been won in the fire service over the last two years, and what is needed now.

The pay agreement that followed 10 weeks of strike action beginning November 1977, gave firemen 10 per cent then and subsequent rises in November 1978 and 1979, designed to equate pay with the "upper quartile of male manual workers", plus a reduction from 48 to 42 hours per week (only implemented this year).

This final phase - the 'big one' - gives 20.45 per cent - hardly more than the 1978 phase. With

inflation at nearly 20 per cent our problems are far from over. The figures may have been cooked, but it is clear that those of us who hoped we could rid the fire service of all capitalism's injustices at a stroke will have to think again. What is also plain is that far from having paypackages somewhere up in the "upper quartile of male manual workers", we are almost back where we started.

Annual Conference 1979 instructed the Executive Council, on successful completion of the present agreement, to work to maintain fire service pay as a minimum

of the upper quartiles... few would argue that it has been a successful completion. Firemen have suffered from 2 years of comparability. We won these increases in 1977 - since then we have been without a pay rise.

Amidst the disappointment of the settlement there are tentative calls to reintroduce overtime working (we are at present one of the few unions to have a fairly rigid ban) and wholtime retained firemen (who would be paid for answering calls when off duty). Why don't we all take a part-time job....?

THE CUTS in fire brigade budgets, as part of the Government strategy of destruction, extend from loss of standard and specialist appliances to corner-cutting on fire regulations and training, loss of jobs and even whole stations.

Nowhere is it more apparent than in cuts in our fire brigade budgets, that an attack on our service is an attack on the welfare of all working people. When you consider that the calor-type gas canisters in widespread use act like high explosive bombs during fires, or that everyday polyurethane foam, in nearly all furniture, releases cyanide gas when it burns, and in burning at 800 degrees C causes such a massive build up of heat that a whole house can be aflame in minutes, the need for training and prompt action becomes obvious.

The diversity and potential of fire incidents today is so threatening that they demand increased specialist training and appliances, not the opposite. Britain's fire regulations help prevent disasters such as the recent hotel fire in Spain, in which many lost their lives, but the recent Woolworth fire in Manchester dramatically shows that regulations need to be further improved.

To oppose these cuts we must be clear on all their forms. Are

we to say that only if our jobs are directly threatened will we resist? In Devon Fire Brigade, for example, about eighty per cent of the budget goes on pay. To make five per cent cuts then means knocking a quarter off the supplies budget. Of course brigades just will not be able to make twenty-five per cent savings on equipment - this means jobs are bound to be affected, and anyway substandard equipment threatens all our lives. As it is, most brigades work with inferior equipment, as compared to available alternatives, and if there is not the money for adequate training facilities then eventually more firemen put out the job, and can't do the job themselves at risk in carrying adequately anyway.

We must recognize how cuts in the past have created the present situation. Most brigades are under strength - this is because of restricting on spending in the past. To say that wiping these vacant posts off the payroll is only a paper cut is absurd - they should have been filled, and if they never can that is a job lost to the community. We should follow the lead of our General Secretary in declaring opposition to all job losses, not just direct job redundancies.

## STRUGGLE FOR STEEL SHARPENS

BRITISH steelworkers have submitted a substantial wage claim in a climate of further cutbacks and plant closures. While 10,000 people marched in protest at Corby against the proposed closure of the steel works, Welsh steelworkers were being told that the British Steel Corporation (BSC) would use the threat of more closures to keep down wages.

The Iron and Steel Trades Confederation claim that every year since nationalisation the pay hopes of 50,000 Welsh steelworkers have been thwarted by the BSC's repeated references to losses and lack of profits.

The union points to the fact that BSC had no difficulty finding an extra £148 a week for its chair-

man, Villiers. To justify his own increase the chairman argues that he is paid the rate for the job and states "If anyone did not take the rate for the job they must be nuts."

The steelworkers are adopting the attitude of the chairman and demanding that they too are paid the rate for the job. The union members must treat the claim seriously and pursue it vigorously. It is true that losses and lack of profits have kept back wages. The steel unions have not used their combined strength effectively to increase wages and prevent job loss. Many jobs have been sacrificed "to make the industry healthy" but despite massive reductions in manpower the BSC still claims to be in dire straits.

The Worker has frequently referred to the severe cutbacks in British steel output while imports of steel have soared. In Britain a large market for steel exists. British steelworkers are being denied access to that market. We are denied access to our own market through agreements made by international monopoly capitalism.

What applies to steelworkers applies to so many other workers. In the motor industry, shipbuilding, textiles and electronics British workers are denied access to the home as well as foreign markets. The prospect if capitalism defeats us is too depressing to contemplate. We cannot adopt the stance of spectators at our funeral.



Steelmaking at Shotton is definitely to end if the British Steel Corporation has its destructive way. But the fight to save Shotton and its more than 6000 jobs is far from over. Our picture shows Shotton workers demonstrating in London in January, 1973. (Photo: Press Association)

## DYERS UNION LEADS CAMPAIGN AGAINST TEXTILES CANCER THREAT

THE NEWSLETTER, the paper of the National Union of Dyers and Bleachers, recently carried an article which highlights the risks which thousands of workers must face unnecessarily in earning a living. A recent test case has been won in a claim for industrial sickness benefit for bladder cancer caused by benzidine-based dyes. The former textile worker and factory inspector concerned in the appeal case proved that he could have been exposed to dyestuffs which contained benzidine at a level which is now regarded as being unacceptably high.

The NUDBTW has obtained information from studies

carried out by the American National Cancer Institute that indicated that a cancer-causing potential exists on exposure to benzidine-derived dyes. Another American body dealing with safety in industry recommends that three widely used benzidine-based dyes - Direct Black 38, Direct Blue 6, Direct Brown 95 - be handled as if they were human carcinogens. The report lists almost 300 synonyms for the three names listed above.

The union has long insisted that these particular dyes are cancer-inducing and urges workers who may have handled them before 1967 to contact their doctors.

Since 1967, the amount of

free benzidine allowed in the dye has been limited to 1 per cent. However, the union does not believe that benzidine can be safely handled at all in dyestuffs used within the textile industry. It is therefore calling for a world-wide ban on all benzidine-based dyes and for medical examinations for all textile workers who may have been exposed to such dyestuffs.

It is significant that it is the union which is having to fight for an elementary right - not to be exposed to danger at work - and that internationally, the campaign is being waged by the International Textile, Garment and Leather Workers' Federation.

## Bookshops

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

## Public Meetings

All meetings start at 7:30 pm unless otherwise stated

### LONDON

Fri Nov 23 Britain's future solely Bellman Bookshop  
in the Working Class NW5  
 Fri Nov 30 \*Britain in the '80s, Conway Hall  
an Industrial Wasteland Red Lion Sq, WC1  
 Fri Dec 7 Fight cuts now, Fight Lower Hall  
for a Socialist Britain Lambeth Town Hall  
Brixton

### OXFORD

Sat Nov 17 \*Students Into Class Lindsay Room  
8 pm Struggle Balliol College  
Broad Street  
 Mon Nov 26 For an Industrial Cowley Community  
8 pm Revolution Centre

\* These meetings will be addressed by Reg Birch  
Chairman, Communist Party of Britain (Marxist-Leninist)

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