

THE WORKER



Published by the Communist Party of Britain (Marxist-Leninist) No. 41 23rd Nov 1978 5p

COLLECTIVE BARGAINING RULES OK

General Council rejects Government request for pay policy face saver

THE SOCIAL contract is dead. The TUC General Council has stood firm on unfettered collective bargaining. Gone are the lingering remnants of trade union partnership with the Government over policies of wage restraint.

The General Council, at a special meeting on 14th November spurned a draft joint statement which had been drawn up by the TUC Economic Committee and the Government. The statement and an accompanying "guidance to negotiators" contained few physical shackles upon collective bargaining. But the spiritual message of the documents was clear - wages help inflation, so wages must be reduced. The General Council is a wiser body than before, and they threw it out.

By their rejection of a piece of paper commended to them unanimously by their Economic Committee, the general Council has shown that it is not prepared to be tricked into anything which might be interpreted by its members

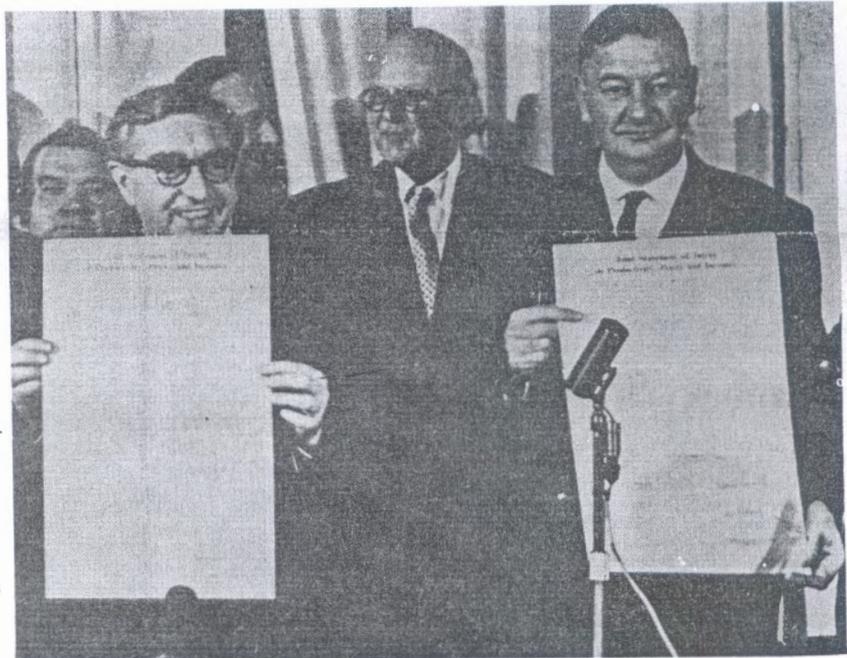
as a back door route to wage restraint - although those pleadings for acceptance stressed repeatedly that unions were free to disregard the TUC's guidance documents and that the TUC would not be vetting wage claims.

In addition, considerable anger was expressed at Healey's threats over the weekend to punish the trade union movement with more cuts and more unemployment and frequent reference was made to the punitive increase in minimum lending rate.

The rejection of the draft joint statement testifies to the growing movement of our class at all levels to reassert the fundamental functions of trade unionism, and working class democracy.

Never in Healey's experience had a recommendation of the Economic Committee been rejected by the full General Council. Yet it happened. Who says that the British labour movement follows any pied piper?

It is self-imposed restraint



SECRETARY of State for Economic Affairs, George Brown, and Chairman of the General Council of the TUC, Lord Collison, proudly displaying the Joint Statement on Prices and Incomes which they signed in December 1964. Fourteen years later the TUC has torn up such agreements with a Labour Government in favour of a return to collective bargaining.

from which the trade union movement has taken long to emerge. The slough of despond has been left behind. Collective bargaining rules.

Spanish workers oppose wage limits

SPAIN'S organised trade union movement is opposing the government's proposed 2½ per cent wage limit. The government is trying to hold wages below the 22 per cent level of last year's increase, and is being opposed by the Confederation of Workers' Commissions (CCOO) and the General Workers' Union (UGT), which together represent two thirds of Spanish trade unionists. Other demands of the employers are that the unions agree to the employers' right to sack 3 per cent of the workforce in all companies

of over 50 employees. This move to "job mobility" is part of the current application by Spain into the Common Market. The projected number of new jobs the government proposes to create is also way short of union demands.

The Trade Union movement's resistance is part of a wider revolt against right-wing attempts to reassert the power they, in part, lost with Franco. King Juan Carlos has incurred widespread odium for his South American tour, when he supported

some of the most reactionary regimes, in particular Argentina. Popular anger has been directed against the sale of Spanish arms in support of these fascist regimes.

Portugal, as well, has seen a wave of strikes, involving 60000 workers in mines, railways and postal service, against the 20 per cent wage limit. Clearly, entry of both countries into the EEC, if it occurs despite all the opposition against it, will only bring the community further trouble.

Solidarity wins at Ford's

CONCESSION by Ford management on the productivity aspect of their offer made possible a settlement three times the size of Callaghan's 5 per cent.

The 57,000 Ford workers who have maintained an absolutely unbroken front against the employers in their eight week strike, have forced management to think again and again, since their first derisory Government-guideline offer.

There could be no clearer indication of the labour movement's flat rejection of Government pay policy and their af-

firmation of collective bargaining than the unanimous vote of Ford workers to back up negotiators with industrial action which they have maintained in complete solidarity.

The last stumbling block devised by Ford management was to tie part of the wage rise to an attendance scheme. But they modified this proposal by restyling it a supplementary payment scheme.

The Ford settlement of a 17 per cent rise must be accounted not only a remarkable victory for the workers but a considerable defeat for the Government.

Hua leads imperialists

WHY is the gang ruling China at the present time making such fervent efforts to remove any opposition to their despotic rule? Is their authority so tenuous that they have to indulge in the settling of old scores as they harass, arrest and murder those who fought for the right of the working class to maintain socialism in China? Khrushchev took several years before he finally announced the restoration of capitalism in the Soviet Union. The present Chinese clique is like a wild beast finding itself in a corner and hitting out viciously at all around.

It is no coincidence that all this is taking place in a country which made such great advances in socialist construction. Neither is it a coincidence that it is taking place at a time when the proletariat throughout the world is making new advances in its struggle against imperialist ideology, domination and exploitation.

A characteristic of today's upsurge in worldwide struggle is the leadership of the working class in the industrial countries and especially in Britain. It was the British working class that first wiped out the insulting theory that it had benefited from imperialist exploitation abroad, the crumbs theory, intended to belittle the working class and damp down its revolutionary zeal. It was the first to denounce the equally poisonous theory of the "three worlds" and restored the question of revolution to the agenda. That clarity has found echoes throughout the world.

In Britain the working class is challenging the bourgeois state. In Iran the Shah, friend of Callaghan, Carter and Hua, trembles as the people rise in revolution.

Humber Bridge threatened

CAPITALISM no longer cares whether the Humber Bridge is completed. That is the inescapable conclusion from recent disputes between the Humber Bridge Board (representing local government) and the various contractors.

Unfinished the Bridge would stand, "two vast and trunkless legs of stone... a colossal wreck", pointing the finger of accusation at "unproductive workers", blaming them for Humberside's industrial decline. All the more reason for us to insist the Bridge is completed, both as a tribute to our skills and as an important factor for our future.

Looking at the Bridge's chequered history, there has always been a marked lack of commitment to its completion on the part of Government, and a readiness to criticise workers for the contradictions involved in building a communications link between industrial centres (Hull, Grimsby, Scunthorpe) which are being decimated by factory closures.

A Humber crossing was first suggested in 1845, but a firm proposal for a bridge (at a cost of £1.75 million) came only in the 1930's, when Hull City Council complained that poor communications between the Humber's north and south banks were discouraging new industry. The then Minister of Transport, Hore-Bellisha, scrapped the idea because "of the overriding importance of the national defence programme." Guns before bridges! In 1946 local

In Nigaragua, the US installed puppet, fights for his life. The Vietnamese, having defeated the military might of the US, refuse to be dominated by their big neighbour, once socialist now imperialist China. In Albania socialist construction goes ahead in spite of constant threats and intimidation. In Zimbabwe, in Afghanistan, in Japan...

The imperialist powers are in disarray. Having lost in Vietnam, in Albania, presently losing in Iran, Zimbabwe, unable to contain their own working class, they see in the Chinese clique their best hope of doing what they failed to do with their armies, warships and napalm, with the threat of their atom, hydrogen and neutron bombs. The Chinese ruling clique are brazen enough to demand aloud what the imperialist powers dare not whisper - a Holy War in Europe to destroy the working class at the heart of the industrial world, the main danger to imperialism.

Hence the open door policy of the economic penetration of German, US and Japanese capital. Hence Britain's readiness to sell its most sophisticated weapons and aircraft to China. Gone are the days of self reliance and balanced economic development.

Building a chain of Hilton-like hotels by US firms throughout China and promoting tourism is the policy by which the ruling clique will tie China once again to the imperialist economic system, which is the other side of the coin to their attacks on the Cultural Revolution, its leading elements and in particular Mao Tse Tung.

Mao Tse Tung said that the alternative to socialism in China is fascist rule. Once again he has been proved right.

councils proposed building the largest single span bridge in the world, at a cost of £6.4 million, but it was ten years before the Ministry of Transport agreed to firm discussions with the bridge-designing firm of Freeman Fox. In 1959 Parliament passed a Bill for a £13 million bridge and set up the Humber Bridge Board to run it. But again, Government showed extreme reluctance to get on with the job, and it was not until 1966 that anything more was heard, when Barbara Castle, as Minister of Transport, used a promise to back the Bridge as a vital vote-winner for Labour candidate McNamara in the marginal North Hull Constituency.

The go-ahead for building was finally given in 1969, at a cost of £23 million, following a report by the Central Unit of Environmental Planning, which painted a picture of great population and industrial growth in the Humberside area in the last quarter of the century. Humberside was to be a major development area of two million people by the year 2000 (compared to its current figure of 750,000). Today, both local and national politicians pour scorn on this report and blame it for 'misleading' them. How absurd, they say, that anyone could ever have believed the future could hold progress and prosperity!

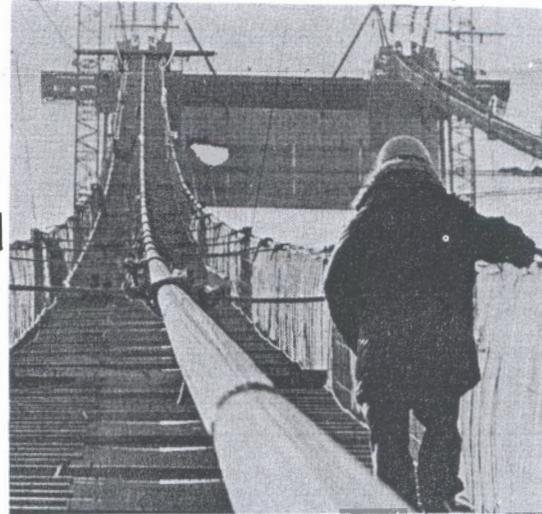
Contracts were awarded in 1973 to a consortium of three British bridge builders, each with a long record of world-wide experience.

Chickens come home to roost

QUITE a few whores, pimps, black marketeers and corrupt merchants who are the legacy of southern Vietnam's forced exposure to a decade of US 'civilisation' are still fleeing the country rather than face the rehabilitation programme which has already reclaimed many, many more of them for decent citizenship in a socialist society.

But although the countries of the 'free' capitalist world do everything possible in terms of lying propaganda to lure these people away from Vietnam, they do not want them when they do run away. While the countries who prompted them to flight haggle over who has to take them in, the people are left to welter in the sea in their leaky, overcrowded boats, a prey to disease and starvation. But, of course, in that condition they are even better propaganda.

The tragedy is the children who are being deprived by the greed, corruption and biased ignorance of their parents from a good life in a socialist country. The sores and sickness which are the present plight of these unhappy waifs will not be the only disfigurement with which life under capitalism will mark them.



(Photo: Hull Daily Mail)

However, problems soon hit construction. Inaccurate test borings in the South Bank clay led to disaster, with the steel drums which underpin the foundation towers sinking into the mud.

By the end of 1976 the project was 100 weeks behind schedule, and the cost had risen to £54 million. Tony Crosland was quick to seize on the engineering difficulties faced in building the longest single span bridge in the world, to castigate the project as a "white elephant" in an area of declining jobs. A Hull University economics 'expert' chipped in with a classic of reactionary wisdom: "I always maintain that if there'd been a need for a bridge, the Romans would have built it". Such thinking was unpalatable to Humbersiders who still want a future for their region. A scapegoat had to be found. And one was instantly produced - the cable-spinners.

The key job, once the towers on either bank had been built,

Zimbabwe

DURING the debate at the UN on the situation in south Rhodesia, the delegate of the Peoples Socialist Republic of Albania said: "The fascist clique of Ian Smith in Rhodesia is continuing for years on end to suppress and massacre the people of Zimbabwe and has undertaken grave acts, provocations and aggressions against various African countries. It has enjoyed and still enjoys the constant support of the imperialist powers, particularly of US imperialism, which see it as a tool to oppress the people of Zimbabwe, to plunder the natural resources of Rhodesia and to turn that country into a stronghold of neocolonialism in the region of southern Africa."

"Ian Smith's recent visit to the USA is the most vivid proof of the close ties and collaboration between his clique and US imperialism."

The Albanian delegation condemned the intensification of the rivalry between "imperialist superpowers", including the Soviet Union, seeking to establish spheres of influence in Africa and to put liberation movements at the service of their expansionist policies.

The Albanian delegation declared its support for the just struggle of the Zimbabwe people and once more expressed the profound conviction of the Albanian people and Government that the Zimbabwe people will win genuine freedom and independence.

was to spin the vast arcs of cable from which the roadway will be suspended. The cables are made up of 37 parallel strands of wire, each containing 404 quarter-inch wires. The contractors expected the job to be finished by July this year. To date only a third of the cables have been laid. The men complain that they are working in hazardous conditions for a mediocre wage. Strung out along a catwalk hundreds of feet above the Humber, they spend nine unbroken hours in the wind and rain. There are no lunch or tea breaks, and nowhere to sit down. Toilet facilities are the river below. In bad weather the wind whips the wires around like knives, and there is constant danger that even through protective gloves, their hands will be gashed by the wire joints. The accident list is phenomenal. No wonder the emergency alarm (which immediately suspends all work) is frequently activated.

For all this, basic pay is

THE WEEK

HARWELL scientists have shown that lead from vehicle exhausts, which affects young children particularly, is two or three times more readily assimilated than was thought. But the Minister of Sport, no less, invites us not to worry. The Government will reduce neither the lead content of petrol, nor the number of vehicles. One scientist specialising in pollution was concerned that the report might be altered before publication.

* * *

IN SPITE of recruitment drives and pay increases, entrants to the armed forces remain below the Government's targets. Better still, applications for premature release are on the up. 130 naval officers applied for release in 1976, compared with 199 in the corresponding period this year.

* * *

HERE'S how the European parliament debated the proposed new monetary system. They spent an hour debating tinned pineapples and degerming maize, and then awarded themselves a 5-hour lunch break. When the debate proper started, it was so late that Roy Jenkins left for Brussels, and all British MPs bar two or three caught early planes home for urgent business at Westminster. Of 189 members only 30 were in at the close. Then the vote was adjourned to another day.

* * *

NORTHERN Ireland is not just a training ground for the British Army. Of £6 million of EEC grants for training, £4 million will be used in Ireland, in a pilot scheme to wreck the existing education system by setting up a Government sponsored alternative. The money will go to Government training centres for the under-eighteen - a social experiment along the lines of the Manpower Services Commission, on a captive population.

* * *

THE BBC cannot carry out its schedule of new programmes. The reason: "Acute shortage of trained staff." Due to low wages, say the Association of Broadcasting Staffs, the BBC "are losing trained staff faster than they can recruit them."

£1.08 to £2.75 an hour, giving an average take-home pay of £100 pw. The men say management targets (35 to 40 wires per shift) are impossible, and that on a calm day only 27 are feasible. The employers claim that on the Bosphorus Bridge in Turkey the workers did do 40 per shift. Presumably Turkish workers were 'persuaded' to care less for life and limb.

Last month the Humber Bridge Board threatened to suspend payments to the contractors unless work was speeded up. After hurried talks with the Department of the Environment a solution was patched together. The media are making much of the fact that, because no special road system is planned on the South Bank, the travelling time to London will not be cut, ie the Bridge is a 'dead duck'. This misses the essential point - that the Humber Bridge, the 'dream of centuries', is a key factor in any future industrial rejuvenation of Humberside itself.

EDITORIAL

BRITAIN, one of the poorest countries in the EEC, is well on the way to becoming the largest single contributor to the European Community budget. And all so that mountains of farm surpluses can be piled up on the Continent and the Soviet Government can continue to receive cheap British-subsidised butter.

So unbalanced has the whole EEC structure become from Britain's point of view that instead of regional handouts to revitalise run-down industrial areas which were advanced as one of the main reasons for joining the Common Market, Britain is having to cough up vast sums to enable Europe's rich and inefficient farmers to sell food cheap to other countries. This situation will get even worse when Portugal, Greece and Spain come in with their agriculture to be supported as well and when monetary union fastens the imbalance around Britain's neck as a permanent liability.

Even staunch supporters of Britain's membership in the EEC have had to let out bleats of protest - like Callaghan at the Lord Mayor's dinner. But this is a mere sop to outraged public opinion. The following day he stressed his full support for this capitalist cartel.

The CPB(ML) forthrightly opposed Britain's entry into the Common Market from the moment it was first proposed. The EEC was never anything but a combination of capitalists enjoying precarious power and wanting to strengthen themselves against the working class in these west European countries.

That is why, when those pretending to be socialists urged that the EEC was a good thing for the working class and that it might join with some completely fictitious entity called the "third world" for the benefit of all, we were able to expose them as crypto capitalist agents. The EEC, like NATO, COM-ECON, ASEAN and all the other pacts and treaties of capitalist powers, can never be other than hostile to the interests of working people. Against all capitalist groupings we set proletarian internationalism, whose base is the organised working class in every country, and whose capital is any country, like Albania, where the working class enjoys state power.

There was not a majority in favour of entry to the EEC in the referendum. Now even more people have come to understand what a shabby capitalist trick on them the EEC is. What was supposed to ensure employment and rising standards of living has been used as a means of vastly increasing unemployment and lowering standards of living - and blaming it all on somebody else.

Even such a supporter of Britain's membership of the Common Market as THE FINANCIAL TIMES has to admit that "the European Community is not popular with the electorate and the Labour cabinet itself is deeply divided".

This resistance must develop from a negative protest at capitalism's destructive acts to save itself into a positive demand for the end of capitalism altogether in socialism.

Assault on the homeless

WE MAY know that at least ten thousand sleep rough every night in London and countless others in other major cities. We also know that over a million properties stand vacant, more than enough to house all the homeless. We know, too, about the scandal of the sale of council houses. The latest Shelter report submits that all this is not inevitable, but is wilful and deliberate neglect by the government. The government refuses to administer the law (Homeless Persons Act 1977) which it enacted. In particular, by refusing to accord legal status to the Code of Conduct of this legislation, the government is abetting local authorities in their "cruel disregard of the law".

The report highlights something as important as the statistics: the callous and inhuman attitudes towards people which is the philosophy of "housing" provision. At present councils may house the homeless in temporary accommodation yet retain powers to evict them whether or not they have alternative accommodation. Tenants in general cannot appeal against a council's decision to evict. And the council itself has sweeping powers, since it is both judge and jury, to categorise tenants as "intentionally homeless", in which case it can evade any responsibility towards those it has turned out. Take for example the couple who were adjudged "intentionally homeless" because they had left rented accommodation after the wife,

who was pregnant, had been assaulted by the landlord. Or again councils will prevent tenants moving to better jobs by classifying them as "intentionally homeless": after quitting council accommodation in one area they are disqualified from it elsewhere.

These and many other instances add up to a picture of cruelty so petty that it is hard to imagine any motivation for it. But as Shelter says it is a "blatant, calculated resistance to properly implementing the law". The government and its local government agencies are the biggest single employer in the land. They show a truly capitalist indifference to people's needs, and positively value the suffering they cause as a means to achieving a political end - demoralisation and oppression. The spiteful upward hike in the mortgage rate for 4 million home owners is a case in point.

Anyone who doubts how wilfully they pursue the strategy of putting profits before people, can study the government's attitude towards Leeds University's provision for students. 98 houses were bought for students to rent some years ago, for £200,000. Now that they are worth four or five times as much, a newspaper report claims that the University Grants Committee has written to Leeds with the following ultimatum: to sell every one of the houses and return the proceeds,

Attack on nursing skills and training as Government ignores Briggs report

A TWENTY-FIVE per cent drop in the intake of student nurses last year was announced by the Department of Health at the end of October. On 13th November, Ennals, Minister of Health, claimed that there had been a 40 per cent increase in the number of student nurses this year. Few will be disposed to believe him after his outrageous claim that hospital engineers were responsible for patients' deaths. But suppose it were true, will the situation change for the better?

Take one hospital, Edgware General, in Middlesex. From the early seventies there was a decline in student nurse numbers, particularly as a result of the cut in the intakes from three to two a year. As the hospital, unlike several others in London, escaped

closure, the numbers in each of the two remaining intakes were increased. No restoration of the third intake. No increase in teaching staff, in educational facilities or accommodation. No solution to the deliberate shortage of trained staff. Apprentice nurses are employed on wards where there is no one to teach them the skills of their profession. They are held responsible for patients' lives because there is no one else available. The failure rate in examinations took a sharp turn upward in the early seventies. If there were a 40 per cent increase, what of the skills of those who scramble through the exams?

The Briggs Bill, about which Ennals was speaking in parliament holds no hope for nurses, midwives or health visitors. The

Report, published in 1974, recommended an improvement in teacher - student ratio in nurse training from 1:30 to 1:15. No mention of this in the Bill. Its thrust is to establish a joint council for nurses, midwives and health visitors. This merger of three distinct professions is a dilution of the special skills involved.

It is also claimed that the Bill would fulfil the need for "positive manpower planning", which means more redundancies for trained staff, at a time when thousands of qualified nurses are unemployed. The Bill will be opposed by nurses, midwives and health visitors alike, who have no interest in this capitalist legislation, and have said so through their professional associations. They will not allow this destruction of skills.

White-collar claim at Ford

ALTHOUGH the magnificent struggle waged by the hourly paid workers at Fords has received all the publicity, another group of Ford workers is preparing for battle.

The white collar workers have made a similar claim to that of the hourly paid, and have received a similar offer. In their case, the Attendance Payments Plan (APP) and its penalty clauses are an even greater threat to living standards. Currently, a staff worker can take up to three days sickness without a certificate and without loss of earnings. The APP brings this to an end by requiring a med-

ical sick note to guarantee payment of bonus for only one days illness. The APP is open to differing interpretation or abuse, since the staff do not have to clock in.

The Company has also offered an incremental salary scale to give 'guaranteed' progression from bottom to mid-point of the salary grades. However, after admitting that the mid-point of the grade is the average salary paid by its competitors for similar work, Fords insist that it should take eight years to achieve this by progression. The Company has also refused to reduce the working week from 37½ to 35 hours.



Teacher transfer a recipe for rundown

DEVON County Schools Sub-Committee wants to transfer teachers on the pretext of new staffing scales. These would 'end the anomalies' in the 955 primary schools.

There are three things to be said:

1. The hypocrisy of the proposals. The sub-committee has had to recommend £400,000 expenditure next year on an early retirement scheme, as some teachers will be 'reluctant' to move schools.

2. The proposals themselves are a rejection of educational

advance. The results of a recent survey presented to this same sub-committee show that Devon children in the 7½-8½ age group have a higher standard of maths than children in other parts of the country, and also that real progress has been made in raising reading standards over a similar age range. Yet rather than improve County staffing levels generally, to equal those of the best schools, these would lose most under the axe of the new staffing scales. Obviously, individually higher levels arouse higher expectations generally,

and as such the proposals are nothing more than part of a strategy for running down the education service. How long until new 'anomalies' arise at lower standards? Mere population distribution can create these anomalies but we must always adapt ourselves to the worst standards, not the best.

3. Add to these the division over who will get early retirement or be transferred and the Devon County Schools Sub-Committee proposals take on the air of a well planned attack on education

Government immune to health and safety

THE HEALTH and Safety at Work Act (HSWA) applies to all employers, except the biggest in the land, the government itself. Crown employers - principally the Civil Service, the NHS and Education - are immune from prosecution.

The doctrine of Crown immunity is feudal in origin. As well as the TUC, the Health and Safety Commission, even the Lord Chancellor say it should go. But like the Official Secrets Act, it will not go.

Not only this, but the government is refusing to fund the Act. The cost of any organisational or physical changes arising from the Act will have to be accounted for by making compensatory savings elsewhere. This will lead inevitably to further cuts in services, public spending,

employment.

This has been roundly condemned by the unions involved, particularly in the Civil Service.

Even if the Act were implemented with anything approaching good faith, there is the problem of a factory inspectorate which will have to cover a further 8 million workers, yet is not given the staff to do this.

The government has produced a reform of health and safety on the cheap, throwing more work on the Inspectorate with no increase in staff and resources.

A recent pilot study carried out by the Health and Safety Executive Inspectorate in the NHS shows compliance with safety standards in the Health Service to be abysmal. Civil Servants are at risk. Not all work in offices, but in indus-

trial establishments and ports.

Teachers, too, are in a particularly invidious position under the act, which requires them to take "due care" in their role of being "in loco parentis". Indeed, the whole question of how far the Act tries to shift responsibility from employer to employee must be uppermost in all minds.

The trade union movement will have to fight to ensure that the legislation is the step forward it is purporting to be, by insisting that any beneficial provisions be applied, and the money forthcoming. Above all the trade union movement must rally to the aid of the Inspectorate. Inspectors and unions have marched hand in hand since the 1830's. The partnership must be strengthened, not destroyed, as the government would wish.

Nationalised redundancy

BRITISH shipbuilders want to cut its labour force for merchant shipping by a third in the next three years, a loss of 12,300 jobs. Unanimous and total opposition to any yard closure was declared by the Shipbuilding and Engineering unions. The Bollermakers will implement an overtime ban.

The Government even had the insolence to say that one option was the total closure of all merchant shipbuilding in Britain, with the loss of 25,000 jobs. The present proposals are a preliminary to 14,000 further redundancies in marine engine building and ship repair.

As one of the convenors said: "All the options are unacceptable. There has been a creeping paralysis as far as labour relations are concerned.

We will fight."

Capacity will be reduced from 632,000 compensated gross registered tons to 430,000 cgrt in 1980-1, with an expansion to 530,000 cgrt in 1982-3. Fat chance.

Nationalisation has been the signal for concerted destruction. A unified wage structure is in the unions' interests, but the Government is offering a derisory £80 for skilled workers, £70 and £62 for semi and unskilled. The total cost to the wage bill will be under 5 per cent and some will have no wage increase for two years.

The Shipbuilding Unions' total rejection of these proposals has frightened the employers, who are uneasily aware of resistance to shipyard closures in all industrial countries.

Social Workers fight on

THE NALGO social workers' action spreads, with members in Islington, London, joining in, and Surrey social workers beginning a work-to-rule. We received this heartening report on action in Newcastle.

"NALGO at their 1977 national Conference required local negotiations to replace the existing cumbersome national framework, along with remuneration at a level above Labour's wage limits.

Newcastle social workers struck on 14 August. The blow was such that the Labour council, so proud of its history of "a high priority for social services expenditure", lost all power of speech, except the word "no".

When a motion for return to work was put before a full branch meeting, over a thousand members, the largest attendance ever, ensured the motion was hammered.

Picketing of the huge T Dan Smith Civic Centre has continued on a 24-hour basis. Support from other trade unionists has been excellent. NUPE, to which 20 of the strikers belong, has refused to drive wagons across the lines. Computer maintenance

engineers have also refused, while postal workers have not delivered mail. Now the 24-hour picket has cut off oil supplies. As soon as the usual arctic winter sets in the Civic Centre must close completely.

On 7 November Gateshead colleagues joined in. A weekly "Strike News" has been produced. Two mass rallies have been held in Newcastle, with marchers from all parts of the country and various local unions showing their solidarity.

Perhaps the most important aspect of the strike is the increasing class consciousness of those involved. Support for NUPE's wage claim, for the Garner Steak House and Ford disputes has been readily forthcoming. The workers have lost their belief in the Labour Party, two of their slogans being "A Labour Council with no Conscience" and "We care - Do Labour?" Nothing daunted by the Council's limited command of English, the social workers who by trade are nothing if not persistent, are forcing the Council to learn the words "We give in"

Journalists work to rule as IPC stalls

SOME of Britain's top-selling magazines may soon be off the newsagents' stalls if a work-to-contract and campaign of non-cooperation by 550 journalists at IPC Magazines continues. Threatened titles include *Woman*, *Woman's Own* and *Woman's Weekly*. Already, *Woman's Realm* has been suspended indefinitely from the middle of December.

Magazine publication schedules are planned many weeks in advance so the action which began on October 18th takes some time before its effect is felt on the streets. Altogether, sixteen magazines have been suspended indefinitely at the time of going to press. Eventually over eighty

titles could be hit.

The dispute has arisen over a most modest claim for a "house agreement" covering extra payment, flexible hours and procedure over closures and mergers. What has incensed all journalists is that IPC has simply not been prepared to put any money at all on the table.

The IPC journalists, members of the National Union of Journalists, are beginning to see that the size of their claim bears no relation to the importance of their fight. The issue is no longer one of pennies but one of a management determined not to negotiate with its workforce.

One feature of the dispute

has been the increasing determination and solidarity of the journalists. The action has snowballed to such an extent that the journalists are now treating their non-cooperation guidelines as the minimum they wish to do. Journalists on the top-selling *Woman* and *Woman's Own* titles are now beginning to refuse to let their editors even see material that has been blacked.

The journalists know they are no longer playing at industrial action, and the threat of a lockout is growing. The mass meeting of the chapel takes place on November 23rd. They will have to decide then just how far they are willing to go to assert their rights.

Teachers claim 25 per cent increase

THIS MONTH the National Union of Teachers floated the figure of 25 per cent for its salary claim for 1979-80. It has pointed out its opposition to Government pay policy and its spokesmen declared that to reject the claim would be a "recipe for disaster."

The membership has now an earlier than usual opportunity to shape the direction of the salary claim which is to be settled by next April. Conference policy consisted of two main planks: firstly, increases for all teachers to

improve their real standards of living and secondly restoration of the external salary relativities established by the 1974 Houghton Committee. Strategy should rest solidly on the first plank which unites all teachers and the whole labour movement. The second is fraught with dangers.

'Relativities' is at best a tactic. As a strategy it is dishonest and cowardly. Would teachers want the same as civil servants if it was discovered that these had fared worse than was thought?

Pleading of a special case and acceptance of a committee of enquiry, to do the Union's job for it, was a sign of weakness that the Government seized on in its onslaught on education and the profession of the last four years.

The salary fight of last year shows the strength of organised teachers united. They have now the figure of 25 per cent before them. That this is to be a common percentage increase must be made clear from every school and branch.

Leyland - Adventurism and Opportunism

FOR THE third time in the last two years, a section of Leyland workers has suffered a setback. The toolmakers' strike, workers at SU Carburettors, and now Drews Lane strikers being forced to return is cause for a re-think. And the lessons can be learnt everywhere.

Opposition to Labour Government dictat on what we will and what we will not be getting in our pay packets is, at this time, the main point of contention between trade unions and capitalist government, backed by employers. The question for us is not just why we oppose such an imposition but how; what should our tactics be?

It is wise, when negotiating with an employer, to know what the workers we represent will do, and, just as important, will not do. In negotiation we can win the argument but still the employer can be adamant. That is when the fight really begins.

The original Ford reply to the workers' claim was so arrogant that mass walk-outs occurred before meetings were held and while negotiations were at an early stage. This was correct and was supported by negotiators, for it underlined what they had been saying. Ford workers have made a real impact in setting the current national mood of defiance, but the apparent spontaneity was preceded by good organisation that made the militant response possible. Not so at Leyland.

Leyland workers have suffered thousands of redundancies, with all the demoralisation that entails, so that unity in action of most sections must

be considered: a battle royal if redundancy is threatened. The feeling at Drews Lane, for a better pay deal, is fair enough but for 3500 men to strike while the other 124,500 do not, leaves the more militant section vulnerable. It means that any strike that does occur company-wide leaves Drews Lane tired already, in fact a "revolt" has occurred there already.

It also underlines the separation that must exist between the 200 shop stewards who represent over 100,000 workers at Leyland, who supported Drews Lane strikers, but who could not bring in the workers they represent to back Drews Lane. If the stewards are clear, such clarity must predominate amongst the workers or the shop stewards' committee becomes a bureaucracy, unrepresentative and potentially cut off.

Michael Edwardes, BL's Chairman, has in recent speeches made clear his intentions to make 7000 workers redundant in return for a pay increase, while attempting to

cut off the "militants" from shop floor support. The Leyland workforce is under attack and must act, united, against that threat. BL management has not accepted trade unionism at the company, but trade unionists there must return to first principles if they are to beat management intentions. The closure of Speke No 2 plant is a recent reminder of such opportunism.

Speke workers on Merseyside, an unemployment black-spot, accepted redundancy pay: very shortsighted. Now BL wishes to close its factory in Southall, with a loss of 2500 jobs. Latest reports suggest that rather than fight closure, the Southall workers want a substantial pay increase. This suggests higher redundancy payments next June rather than resistance. You can "take the money and run" but where do you run to, particularly as 500,000 manufacturing jobs have gone from London in the last fifteen years. If the Ford struggle showed the positive power of workers, Leyland has shown the negative.



The Speke No. 2 plant which no longer operates.

Bookshops



Bellman Bookshop, 155 Fortess Road, London NW5
Main Trend Books, 17 Midland Road, St. Philips, Bristol
Brighton Workers Bookshop, 37 Gloucester Road, Brighton
Northern Star Bookshop, 18A Leighton Street, Leeds
Basildon bookstall Tues Fri Sat Marketplace
Liverpool bookstall - every Saturday at Paddies
Market, Great Homer Street, Liverpool
Hull Bookstall - Old Town Market, Saturdays 9.30-4.00

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

"SOCIALISM IN ONE COUNTRY"

Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, London WC1.

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

'The Worker'

155 FORTESS ROAD, LONDON NW5
 6 months £2.50 (including postage)
 1 year £5.00 (including postage)

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