

# THE WORKER



Published by the Communist Party of Britain (Marxist - Leninist)

Feb 16th 1978 No6 5p

# NO RETREAT ON ENGINEERS' CLAIM



Engineers marching against the Industrial Relations Act. Organised workers have tremendous strength, but if we don't use it, we'll lose it.

## Contracting electricians

GOVERNMENT interference in wage negotiations is finding increasing opposition amongst contracting electricians, members of the EETPU. A deal was reached between the employers and the unions concerning the 1978 wage rate but after the intervention of the Department of Employment the employers used this as an excuse to back out of the agreement.

In response to this the union instructed its members not to start work on any new contracts unless the employer agreed to pay the new rate.

EETPU members in the north of England, however,

felt that not a strong enough lead was being given in pursuit of the claim and as a result a number of sites in the region downed tools, formed a strike committee and began organising flying pickets. In response to this there has been widespread support for the claim and the union executive have decided to make the action official. The dispute is expected to spread further, with over 1200 sparks in the Liverpool area already out and meetings being organised in various parts of the country to co-ordinate support and action against the Government's efforts to impose further wage restraint. (see article page 4)

IN THE SAME way that the miners' executive overturned the democratically-expressed rejection by the NUM membership of productivity deals, by introducing local productivity agreements for the sole purpose of undermining the miners' will to fight for wages, so the reduction of the engineers' claim for a national minimum from £70 to £60 by the Confederation of Shipbuilding and Engineering Union's negotiators could undermine the willingness of the engineers to fight.

The Engineering Employers' Federation has already offered £57 and for the CSEU negotiators to return to the conference table asking for only £60 is simply preparing the way for a settlement suitable to employers and Government. Workers cannot be expected to go to war for £3, so what happens to the 35 hour week and the 5 weeks holiday?

Now, will the power men also be hamstrung by productivity deals which will mean that they are buying a small wage increase for themselves at the cost of jobs which belong to the working class and are not

theirs to give away? That is what the secretary of the EETPU seems to be asking for, in spite of all his appearance of a new-found militancy. And that is what the Government will probably offer to buy off the power men and keep its 'guidelines' more or less intact.

Union leaders for 30,000 water supply workers are recommending acceptance of an offer within the guidelines in exchange for a promised review of grading structures.

What a series of defeats for our working class which has so recently declared its intention of returning to collective bargaining. No wonder Callaghan grins all over his face and says with a smirk: "The whole nation will be grateful that responsibility has shown itself."

That is capitalism laughing at you, fellow workers. The whole nation grateful that the vast majority of its people suffer an even worse decline in their standard of living? Workers showing responsibility in meekly submitting to the Government's yoke in the drive toward fascism?

And it is no use workers saying, 'We were betrayed by our executive; our leaders let us down. Our leaders are only there with our permission. They operate on no authority but our support. It will be no consolation to us machines as slaves in a fascist state to say it was all someone else's fault!'

Resolutions passed by the London South District of the AUEW on the subject of the engineers' claim express the only attitude possible to workers at this time. They urge the AUEW executive committee to pursue the national claim on a national basis. They call on all shop stewards and the entire membership to approach their employer and demand that the original claim be conceded in full. They urge the National Committee when it is reconvened to adopt a policy involving industrial action to win the claim in full.

This is a correct combination of guerrilla struggle on a factory to factory basis and a national campaign to oppose employers and Government on the broadest united front.

## Destroy capitalism to save steel

UNIONS representing 27,500 craftsmen in the steel industry have just rejected a package deal offered by the British Steel Corporation which includes a 9½ per cent increase in pay. The same offer has already been rejected by the Iron and Steel Trades Confederation.

The BSC's first offer was a paltry 6 per cent. The worst part of both the old and the new offer is the inclusion in the package, along with a wage increase, of measures for increasing productivity and for 'reducing

manning' by some 25,000 steel workers.

The AUEW General Secretary says that there should be some sackings all right but it ought to be the Parliamentary select committee on steel which has been accusing the BSC and the Government of minimising British Steel's losses and recommends even more closures and demanding than that proposed by the Beswick Report. The general secretary of the Iron and Steel Trades Confederation also attacks this select committee.

Their attack is much too narrow. The only differences between the Labour Government, the BSC and the select committee are very minor ones of how fast to go about the run down of the British steel industry and how dishonest should they be in keeping their real intentions from the public. If Mr Boyd and Mr Sirs are really concerned about the future of the industry they will also have to attack Britain's membership of the EEC which implies a vast scaling down of British

(continued on page four)

## Tolpuddle Martyrs' celebrated fight for trade unions

### HISTORIC NOTES

THE Tolpuddle Martyrs were not 'canonised' until the centenary of their imprisonment in 1934, but their effect on the working class was immediate and far-reaching.

The Combination Acts had been repealed ten years earlier, apparently making unions legal. The ruling class, however, still begrudged that legality and sought to hedge it round.

Rural wage rates were low, in particular those in the Tolpuddle area which were lower than the rest of Dorset. In 1832 several farm workers including George Loveless, later to be the leader of the Martyrs, made a deputation to the landowners in protest at a cut in wages. They were unorganised and did not succeed. About a year later Loveless and other workers organised the Tolpuddle Friendly Society, deciding that the only way to defend themselves was to act together.

In February, 1834, six of the leaders of the new Union were arrested. The charge was of administering unlawful oaths, although their initiation ceremony was no different from that of other unions. The legality of this charge was extremely doubtful and relied on stitching together bits and pieces from

three Acts of Parliament.

The evidence was provided by two farm labourers who had joined the Society and it was neither consistent nor convincing. Nevertheless the six were



found guilty and sentenced to seven years transportation. Slavery would have been a more accurate description.

It was a rude awakening for

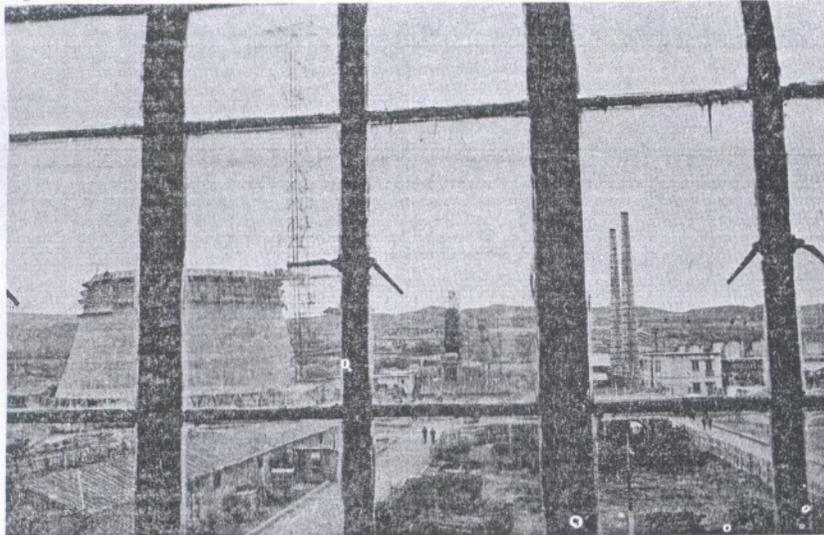
the working class. The right to organise had been won after much struggle, but obviously, without their perpetual vigilance and willingness to guard it at all times, it could be lost again.

Lord Melbourne, the Home Secretary, sensed this mood and thought that by imposing the maximum sentence and denying poor relief to the families of those transported, the working class could be scared into submission. He miscalculated. The immediate response was to organise for the release of the prisoners and to collect for their families.

The high point was a giant demonstration in London within a month of the sentences. The agitation continued right up to the time the men were eventually returned to Britain several years later.

Although the Martyrs for the most part ceased being active in the labour movement, the effect of their imprisonment and the fight against it had given a big boost to the movement. The right of the working class to organise had been protected and their organisations were to develop, culminating in the New Model unions of the 1850's.

Many of those active in the defence of the Martyrs followed George Loveless and his brother into the Chartist Movement.



Window on Albania: the construction of this new oil refinery at Ballsh represents a small part of the Albania people's vast plan for industrialisation in a society where the needs of the people are the driving force and the fetters of capitalist profit are relegated to the museum.

## Albania is transformed

THE economy of Albania goes from strength to strength, founded soundly on the basis of self-reliance and socialist planning. Already transformed from the backward agricultural country it was before liberation in 1944 into an agricultural-industrial country, she is fast changing the balance further.

In 1975 the volume of total industrial output was 97 times larger than in 1938; industrial production was approximately two-thirds of industrial and agricultural production, as against about 8 per cent in 1938.

Today Albania independently exploits her ground and underground riches, while new branches of heavy processing industry are constantly being created. Albania processes oil,

copper, iron and a series of agricultural products, providing her own economy with raw materials, combustibles, electrical energy, spare parts, chemical fertilizers and other mass consumption and necessary goods.

Industry and agriculture develop harmoniously, giving priority to industry and the means of production as compared with consumer goods, so bringing about the transition from a mainly extracting industry to a heavy extracting and processing industry. Industrial production in 1980 as compared with 1975 will increase by 41-44 per cent. In 1980, as compared with 1975, production will increase about 62 per cent, light industry by 22-24 per cent and foodstuff industry by 23-25 per cent.

During Albania's 6th five year plan (1976-1980), the total value of industrial production will be the greatest value realised during the 20 years between 1950 to 1970. We in Britain can learn from Albania's example.

## Vietnam on border issue

ON February 5 the Socialist Republic of Vietnam issued a statement calling for negotiations on the border dispute with Cambodia:

'The Government of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam and the Vietnamese people once again reaffirm that their unswerving principled position is to resolutely defend the independence, freedom, sovereignty and territorial integrity of Vietnam and at the same time to constantly respect the independence, freedom, sovereignty and territorial integrity of Kampuchea (Cambodia) as well as other countries and to uphold the solidarity with the Kampuchean people, to make ceaseless efforts to rapidly settle problems concerning the relations between the two countries through negotiations.

'Vietnam and Kampuchea are

## Imperialism in Africa

IT IS the US and Soviet arms that have kindled the fire in the Ogaden deserts; it is the two imperialist powers which want to use as cannon fodder the African peoples of Somalia and Ethiopia. Each imperialist power tries to 'justify' its own interference in the Horn of Africa by the interference of the other.

The imperialists use their rivalry as an argument to exercise together the right they grant to themselves to be international gendarmes, to make the law in every part of the globe and to make the peoples pay the bill.

The USA and the Soviet Union are giving an even more international character to the conflict in the Horn of Africa through the aggressive pacts they manipulate - NATO and the Warsaw Treaty - as in the recent meeting in Washington of representatives of the USA, the German Federal Republic, Britain, France and Italy to 'co-ordinate' their policies in the Horn of Africa.

Behind the aim to dominate the countries of the Horn is the aim to dominate the main entries in the Red Sea and Indian Ocean, control the vital routes for the supply of the Western World with oil and the sea routes connecting the European part of the Soviet Union with the Far East.

## Liverpool meeting

AT a public meeting held recently in Liverpool, the speaker drew attention to the danger facing our class in this situation of destruction of industry. "... As well as more corporate legislation we are being encouraged to participate in our own downfall via 'industrial democracy'. Part of their plan to run down our industry requires us to offer no resistance, hence the attack on our unions." The speaker underlined the importance of making our unions do the job for which we built them. This, a defensive role (like fighting for maintenance of standards of living) becomes an attack on our rulers when they cannot survive without us accepting less.

## THE WEEK

PERSONAL wealth averages out at £27,000 per family according to a Whitehall study. The trouble is that wealth is so unevenly distributed in this country (the top 10 per cent own 60 per cent of all wealth) that a simple division of total wealth by total inhabitants creates an illusion of prosperity in the middle. And so you get the extraordinary figure of £27,000.

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THE Soviet Navy has become a long-range armed force for the first time, according to Admiral Sergei Gorshkov, commander-in-chief of the Soviet fleet.

'Our country today has a strong ocean-going navy which can reliably safeguard state interests on the high seas.'

Is this the new policeman of the world?

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TEACHERS have been sending messages of support for the NUT's firm stand on its 12½ per cent wage increase. More messages are needed however. Hamilton House has not yet been swamped.

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VOICES have recently been raised in self-righteous indignation in the media and Parliament over the scandalous lengths of hospital waiting lists (almost 600,000 and still rising). What do these hypocrites expect, when hospitals are being closed and massive cuts made in health spending - a course of action they supported from the start as being 'necessary in the national interest'?

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THE Government has recently revealed that the number of deaths from stomach cancer caused by asbestos rose by more than 40 per cent between 1970 and 1975. Minimum safety standards have been tightened in recent years, but workers will continue to die unnecessarily until we replace the thirst for profit by a proper consideration for peoples' needs - under socialism.

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A STUDY carried out in 12 states of the USA has found that children of migrant farmworkers are having to work illegally out of economic necessity. Many begin work by the age of four, and usually leave school to work full-time at the age of twelve.

In four states studied, more than 80 per cent of the children were working illegally. In any case, Federal child labour laws allow children aged 14 and over to work in agriculture. There is nothing 'super' about a power that has to exploit children!

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THE papers have had a field day covering the hunt for 'Dr Death' - a man masquerading as a doctor who drugged and then robbed a number of old people. One cannot help drawing a parallel with all the Labour politicians, who, under a guise of 'socialist' policies, have attempted to perpetrate similar acts against the whole working class for years!

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## EDITORIAL

THE Government has defended its blacklisting of firms exceeding the 'guidelines' and its extra-legal practice of punishing them by withholding export credit guarantees, employment subsidies or government contracts.

"We must keep employers from paying workers too much money," the Government spokesman says, while the chief spokesman for the CBI remarks that: "It isn't, of course, so much a question of employers' wanting to pay out more money in wages..."

We must not let the ludicrous spectacle of a government apparently trying to restrain impetuous employers from showing their workers with extra cash keep us from appreciating what this incident really means. It is another straw in the wind showing us how far British capitalism has proceeded along the road to fascism.

The firms which have made concessions to the strength of organised workers in the course of collective bargaining are still inhabiting the capitalist world of free enterprise and bourgeois democracy. The Government is saying to them, in effect: it's too late for that. Capitalism can no longer be defended on that basis. The working class is too strong and the capitalist class is too weak for class struggle, in the form of collective bargaining over wages, to continue. Henceforth the Government will fix wages as it fixes rates of taxation and levels of public expenditure.

Does that mean a change in the basic nature of the capitalist system? It does not. The profit motive is still the only guide to investments and financial dealings and characterises the operations of state industries as well as private. Individualistic self-seeking greed is still the only arbiter of conduct. All that has changed is that the capitalist forces in Britain have had to become incorporated to meet the challenge of the best organised working class in the capitalist world. The government which used to be the 'executive committee' of the bourgeoisie is becoming a command headquarters for all-out attack on the class enemy - the British working class. Firms that accede to workers' demands have to be treated as deserters.

### Fight for wages

What is interesting to note is that capitalism in a country like Britain where it originated and flourished as an internal development, now, in the absolute decline of capitalism, has become very like the bureaucratic capitalism into which the socialism of the revisionist USSR and eastern European countries has degenerated.

What marks this particular intervention into industrial relations by the present Labour Government is that it no longer pretends to be a defence of this or that bastion of the capitalist economy 'for the good of the nation as a whole': it is an open attack on workers and their standard of living for the good of capitalism.

Under these circumstances the bickering about the blacklist in the House of Commons between the two major capitalist parties has to be seen as a petty argument about tactics between two generals about the best way to defeat an enemy, the working class, on whose destruction they are mutually agreed. And a Gormley has to be recognised as a fool or a knave, or both, who out of allegiance to one of these vicious, indistinguishable generals of the bourgeoisie tries to lead an important section of the working class into perpetual bondage.

The fight for wages is the only freedom we have. We must take as our most serious responsibility as workers the fight for wages wherever we are with all the united strength we can muster. It is not just a fight for wages: it is the fight against fascism. It is not just a fight to defend our standard of living under capitalism - it is the fight for socialism.

## Smash the State - biggest asset stripper in Britain

THE recently revealed Government "blacklist" of companies deemed unclean because of their audacity to steer even ever so slightly from the corporate path is another reminder of the stranglehold of the State in today's Britain.

The State cannot be neutral between classes so the only question for workers is, 'In whose interest does the State work?' Experience is the best teacher and workers should have learnt that the State in a capitalist country serves only the capitalist ruling class. Now as capitalism declines, the State is used by it as a major plank for the destruction of Britain.

Firstly, the State is easily the largest employer and that is no position of weakness from which to act. Central Government directly employs 2.3 million and indirectly controls the 3 million employed by the various local authorities and the nationalised industries' 2 million workforce. These public sector workers now account for

7.3 million out of a total British workforce of 24.7 million. 'The Economist' recently pointed out that furthermore the trend is for the State to draw more and more workers into the public sector at the cost of the private arena. Between 1974 and 1976 while 800,000 jobs were lost in the private sector, there was a gain of 900,000 in the public. Obviously workers under the control of such a powerful State are more vulnerable than elsewhere. How many employers own an army, navy and air force?

Secondly, by the growth of nationalised industries the State has under its control all the crucial industries in Britain. The major nine public corporations which account for 85 per cent of the net output of all public corporations in Britain are Coal, Gas, Electricity, Steel, Post Office, Rail, Freight, Airways and Buses. These account for more than one tenth of our GNP and nearly a fifth of our total fixed investment. As suppliers they occupy a dom-

## Wage fixing always means inflation ... A short history of Government 'cures'

THE capitalist class, through its Labour Government, has effectively declared that never again can workers fight for higher pay or shorter hours without directly taking on the capitalist state.

The reasons given are all too familiar. They claim inflation is caused by pay rises "forced on us by powerful trade unions", so wages must be controlled by the capitalist state - for our own good, of course! Even the briefest study of the history of wages and prices in this country shows such an inflated claim to be a barefaced lie.

When drafting their policy, the Labour 'thinkers' must have had in mind that time in our history when their apparent ideal, state control of wages, was in operation; the 18th century magistrates had power to fix a maximum legal wage. (Today it's done without even the legality!) These magistrates, employers to a man, and not renowned for sympathy or generosity, did allow wages to rise by approximately 50 per cent between the years 1500-1600. This seems generous until you realise that prices rose by 400 per cent in the same period. How would Labour economists account for that, a 50 per cent pay rise = a 400 per cent price rise?

Trade unions, it is claimed,

are 'the main cause of inflation', so it is only reasonable to suppose that, while the Combination Acts were operative, prices should have been stable. In fact, we find that in the first 2 years of the Acts, 1799-1801, prices rose by 50 per cent.

The period 1750-1815 is noteworthy: magistrates' power to fix wages lingered on, trades unionists were numbered in only tens of thousands, yet inflation continued apace; a period of great state control. In the next period, 1815-1814, when trade unionism grew to be a mass movement, prices fell. How, would Labour economists explain that away, especially when the 1814-18 war years, a paradise of government wage fixing and when trade unionism was difficult, was characterised by price inflation on a hitherto unknown scale; prices (not pay) doubled during those four years.

No economist has claimed that the deflation of the 1920's - early 30's was caused by wage reductions, rather the reverse was true. Falling prices provided the excuse for a capitalist counter-attack on wage rates. Capitalists have never said "wages have fallen so in fairness we must reduce prices", rather it was "prices have fallen so must wages".

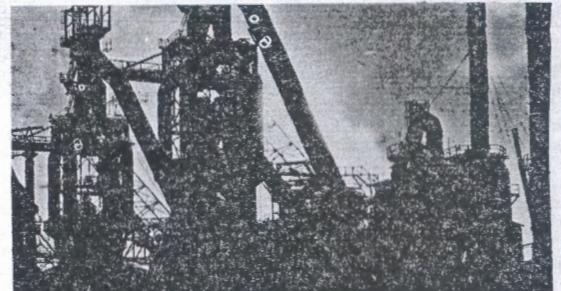
During the first nine months of World War II, prices rose by 30 per cent, without any wage rises! Strikes were again illegal - which did not stop them - while the government took the role of wage fixer, always fixing after, and lower than, the steep price rises.

Since the war the working class has had its fill, both of government wage controls and concurrent inflation. It is clear from these examples that those claiming that the organised working class is the main cause of inflation are hard put to find proof. State intervention, and attempted control, has not reduced it - the complete opposite seems more likely! In these same historical examples, the ruling class attack on organised workers has been a near-permanent feature; the Combination Acts, Defence of the Realm Act, Emergency Work Order, Industrial Relations Act and all the incomes policies have been passed against trades unionists, and will come from that same capitalist source until we ditch our reformist approach, woefully inadequate given the threat we face. Although the excuses have differed - war against the Kaiser, against The Third Reich, war on inflation - the effect is always war on our class.

## Steel - self reliance and the wages fight

THE debate about the British Steel Corporation's 'losses' is much more than a question of money. It is ideological. The crucial point is not that the BSC has deliberately been forced into an impossible financial position, or that the workers are expected to suffer the consequences, but that the performance and importance of steel production should be measured solely in terms of money for profit.

Is the value of our work to be judged by the fiddled entries in an account book? Do we work our lives away solely to emerge with a cash surplus for someone



else? Or do we want the industry for the real and useful products which it can provide the nation? Further, do we agree that as

soon as technological advances are made, existing highly efficient plant and work is to be suddenly denigrated as a drain on resources, and ripped out for scrap at huge cost?

At the present time steel workers have rejected a government offer of a pay rise which will be more than compensated for by 25,000 redundancies. If the government win at British Steel, more will be lost than a rise in pay for some workers. The iniquitous and corporatist pay policy will be strengthened. The dehumanising and destructive philosophy and practice of the cash nexus will win another political victory. The grip of capitalism around steel's neck will be allowed to remain unchallenged.

The picture, then, is one of power and growing power at that. And it is a power that is being used. Wage freezes, black-lists, closedowns, cash limits, etc are not coincidence; they are part of capitalism's attempt to use the State for its very survival. Yet this for workers is an encouragement. They have forced capitalism from ruling in the old way. And now in the growth of the State they have living evidence of the superfluous nature of capitalism. But still capitalism survives to profit.

That is to our shame! NO to any more incorporation into this State! YES to our independence and through that the revolutionary road to a working class state!

Certainly fighting for wages will not save the steel industry. Nor will the fight against redundancy. But they are the foundation without which there can be nothing. Higher wages may spell financial 'disaster' for the company - but in no way does it affect the ability of workers to use plant to produce steel. Fighting for wages, and for jobs must be the prelude to seizing the industry for socialism. This battle must be won.

The background to the present state of the British Steel industry will be given in the next issue.

## Class sizes are crucial for both education and our safety

THE recent accident during a chemistry lesson in a South London school highlights the pressing need for radically smaller classes in practical subjects. Only in this way will adequate supervision by a teacher become a practical reality rather than the pious hope it inevitably is under present conditions: for who can keep a watchful eye on as many as 30 pupils engaged in potentially dangerous activities?

Teachers have always shown a concern for safety in schools but recent cheese-paring governments have made their task even more taxing. The onus for safety is increasingly being laid at teachers' doors by additional safety regulations, but at a time when the money for buying essential materials (including safety equipment) is being cut: thus safety measures are being both stipulated and ignored by local authorities. Although large quantities of many chemicals should be stored in special brick-built buildings away from the main school buildings, authorities

often won't supply the money to put this into practice. Because of lack of funds, safety glasses (which should be used by all pupils and staff when heating or using any substance likely to spit) are not always available.

Moreover, there is increasing pressure on teachers of practical subjects to ensure that children take an active part in the lessons, rather than watch demonstrations. For example, the Nuffield Science curriculum emphasizes the importance of children verifying the truth of experiments for themselves. Such curriculum aims are laudable but they should only be carried out in conditions that render them both practicable and safe.

In many schools there are practical classes of 30 or more children yet in some technical colleges when there are more than 8 students in a practical class (using very similar equipment to that used in schools) an extra teacher is provided. Some more 'enlightened' authorities accept 20 as a 'reason-

able' size for domestic science and heavy craft classes. It is time that teachers and parents made all authorities see the light! Now is an ideal time for united action on class size for falling rolls should ease the pressure on school laboratory and workshop space. The "Education Standards" memorandum to be presented to the NUT Conference in March recommends "that guidance should be given to divisions and local associations on the question of class size in practical classes". Teachers must set their sights far higher. We must demand a class size maximum of 15 in practical classes (along with a maximum of 25 in all ordinary classes).

This, coupled with a determined fight against all cuts in education, is the only way of ensuring that the quality of education will not only be maintained and improved but that the education provided will be safe.

In classrooms there is neither quality nor safety in numbers.

## Technicians reinstated

FOUR members of COHSE employed as plaster technicians at the Bristol Royal Infirmary were re-instated in their jobs on February 6 after being sacked for going on strike in protest at portering duties. The employers had threatened to bring in scab labour, but such was the support for the technicians by trade union representatives at a Trades Council meeting that the employers backed down and took the men on again. There is to be a work-study team report on the situation, and the technicians have established a stronger position for bargaining in defence of their skills.

## Steel (from p1)

Steel to fit into capitalism's strategy of a huge steel complex in the Ruhr.

This means, of course, that these two trade union leaders and anyone else who wants to save the British steel industry to meet the needs of people in a self-reliant Britain can accept no target narrower than the capitalist system itself. (See article p. 3.)

## Road hauliers drive through Government guidelines

LAST autumn West Midland lorry drivers, members of the T. G. W. U., secured an increase of 15 per cent, against a background of Government pressure. Since that date this has been repeated in various areas of the country reaching the stage now when it is estimated that more than 50 per cent of Britain's road haulage firms have had to concede increases outside the Government's guidelines.

## Workers force Government to back down

THE Electrical Contractors Association has been giving as an excuse for breaking this year's pay agreement with the electricians the fact that the Department of Employment had said the bonus scheme infringed the Government guidelines and sanctions could be applied.

The general secretary of the EETPU has issued a directive to all contracting electricians saying that their shop stewards should approach the employers to get the new wage structure implemented, and, in the event of the employers' refusal, to inform the local EETPU official so that action could be taken.

On February 3rd at a mass meeting of 1,000 electricians at Central Hall, Liverpool, addressed by their trade union officials, the electricians decided on guerrilla action to make employers of the Electrical Contractors Association honour the pay agreement. Members of EETPU employed by the contractors Haydon Young, Linacres and Holliday Hall and those working on the ICI site at Redcar, were directed to come out on official strike while other

electricians would return to work and apply maximum safety precautions and a work to rule.

Holliday Hall tried to get an injunction against the EETPU's calling its members out on strike and this was refused by a High Court Judge. In an appeal against this refusal the Department of Employment was represented by Silkin who said that "it is not now and never has been the policy of the Government that it should take any action with the intention or consequence of causing a breach of contract or other legal obligations." He then went on to insist on the Government's right "to place its contracts in the manner which, in its view, will best serve the national interest."

Holliday Hall taking this to mean that the company could honour its pay agreement withdrew the appeal.

In other words, the Government will use sanctions to bully employers into resisting workers' pay demands whenever the Government can get away with it. Workers have to see to it that the Government does not get away with it.

## Leyland management repudiated by workers

THE NO. 2 Plant of British Leyland at Speke in Liverpool has now been on strike since the mass meeting of all hourly-paid employees on the 21st November, 1977. During the course of the dispute numerous meetings have taken place between the senior shop stewards and the trade union officials of the AUEW, the T&GWU and the EETPU, and management at local level in a bid to find a formula for a return to work.

This effort has been thwarted to a large extent by the policy of the T&GWU of using the conciliation section of ACAS, which led to the ridiculous spectacle of the unions sitting in one room with the management in another, while as ACAS official ran back and forth between the two. This of course is no way to negotiate.

While the talks were in progress, management were able to use the media of television, radio and the newspapers, to give the impression that they were continually offering a compromise solution to the dispute. This was, and is a total distortion of the truth. There was, and still is, as far as the workers are concerned, the Protected Earnings Plan agreement, with its mutuality clauses still intact. Although management entered into this agreement with the union in 1972, they have now decided not to operate the mutuality clauses of the agreement. However, the machinations of management have been in vain, the resolve of the work force is still as strong as ever and they now

have the additional strength of the Combined Shop Stewards Committee of British Leyland.

At a recent meeting held between the national trade union officials and the corporate level management, a formula was agreed to as the basis of discussion at local level: that the Company re-affirm the continuance of the PEP Agreement, recognise that an Ad Hoc Agreement should be negotiated at local level with a view to providing the basis for a return to work to allow for the continued operation of the plant and attempts will be made to reach such an agreement quickly.

At a meeting on February 8th it soon became apparent that the local level management were not prepared to operate the spirit and intent of the formula, as they were still insisting that the two track speeds be agreed before a resumption of work took place, that the shop stewards would not be involved in establishing labour and that the labour force would be mobilised in accordance with the company's priorities. The trade unions rejected this attitude.

On February 9th the shop stewards committee of the No. 2 Liverpool plant were informed that the dispute now in its 13th week had been made official by the major union involved, the T&GWU. Recognition of the dispute at a national level will strengthen the resolve of workers to protect their agreement and backed by the Combined Shop Stewards will deal a body blow to decimate British Leyland.

## Books, pamphlets

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## PUBLIC MEETINGS

WORKER readers are invited to the CPB(ML)'s London meetings listed below. The meetings will take place on Friday evenings at 7.30 at Bellman Bookshop, 155, Fortress Road, Tufnell Park, London, NW5.

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