Civil Service pay - need for clarity

LATE last autumn the Civil Service trades unions reached agreement with their employer, the Government, on the restoration of the Civil Service Pay Agreement, which had been unilaterally suspended by the Government at 24 hours' notice in July 1975. The Civil Service Pay Agreement is the system devised by the Pressley Commission in 1955, whereby a special government department, the Pay Research Unit, investigates the rates of pay of workers outside the Civil Service. Its findings are used as a basis of negotiation between employer and trades unions for the necessary pay research.

The Agreement is not to take effect in 1978, however, as the Government has said there would not be time to do the necessary pay research. The true reason is not hard to find. Pay research would have revealed that a rise of 22-28 per cent would have been needed to restore relativities with workers outside the Civil Service. To counteract the effects of the wage-cuts of the last three years, the increase would have had to be of the order of 35-50 per cent. Such a flagrant breach of Mr Healey's 10 per cent is not acceptable to the employer.

Cont. on p.4

Permanent way forward

FORTUNATELY good sense has prevailed in ASLEF and the proposed one-day strike, which was about the wrong thing, has been called off.

The occasion of the strike was a bonus payment to ASLEF guards on, ironically enough, pay trains which had the effect of whittling down the pay differentials enjoyed by ASLEF drivers according to the British Rail's 1974 pay structure agreement. What ASLEF should have said from the start was 'Bully for the guards! We will now have a rise for all our members sufficient to reward us for our skills and service to the public and we will take whatever form of industrial action seems best to us in order to get it.'

ASLEF has done part of this. The general secretary has said that "It was right that the guards' pay deal should go ahead." Now let them get on with the rest of it. We support fully higher wages for greater skill but they must never be achieved by holding other workers back: only by being better organised to win what greater skill is entitled to. And since this inevitably means driving a pay train right through the Government guidelines, it is an advance for the whole working class.

Cont. on p.4

ENGINEERING WAGES

Negotiations with the Engineering Employers Federation affecting directly more than two million engineering workers and in an ancillary way more than half a million other workers have broken down.

THE ORIGINAL claim was for £70 plus a shorter working week, increased holidays and the like. Early in the negotiations, in an endeavour to secure agreement, the shorter working week and improved holidays were abandoned and the £70 minimum time rate, adopted by the National Committee, was dropped down to £60. At the last meeting the employers claimed that the highest they could go was £57, and £60 could only be agreed after such a lapse of time and such conditions that the offer was meaningless. They also wished to withdraw from the holiday agreement of time and a third pay and substitute some other average wage payment based on a normal 40-hour week without any incidental overtime. Their reason for this was that 'our demand if met in full would contravene the Government guidelines and the EEF were not prepared to expose their members to the risk of sanctions. They claimed that they had consulted the Ministry on the last proposals put forward by our negotiators and been told that they would transgress the guidelines and thus bring member firms into conflict with Government. Whatever the truth of this, it is obvious that the EEF never intended concealing anything at all. They have never required any encouragement from Government to reject the legitimate claim of engineering workers but they are delighted to be able to treat their rejection of this particular claim as a courteous obeisance to a capitalist government. This should be understood and we must learn the lesson of our past errors in respect to restraints on bargaining and social contracts we accepted to assist the Labour Government. That Government is now so arrogant as to bypass the TUC and the trade union spokesmen altogether. Once having wobbled and seduced them with invitations to Downing Street and private on-coins policy, now, treating them like microscroites no longer worthy of regard, it ignores them completely while making new and harsher demands on the working class. Instead of a policy of consent on wage restraint the Government has jettisoned all arguments and inducements and treats workers as so stupid that they have no choice but to go through the farce of consulting the trade union spokesmen. We ourselves in our abject ignorance will impose wage restrictions on ourselves and lower our own standard of living.

Thus the Government can play the dictator, rendering useless all our past struggles and the money we have spent in strikes -- which in many cases were not conflicts in defiance of the social contract.

Cont. on p.4

The Executive Council of The Confederation of Shipbuilding and Engineering Unions demands an immediate undertaking by the Engineering Employers Federation to honour the undertaking -- else by March 20th there will be a two-day strike and further action by decision of the GSBU Executive Council.
ONE DAY IN MARCH, 1917.

The women of Petrograd (now Leningrad) streamed out of their homes and shops and took to the streets in a mighty demonstration, workers and soldiers alike. They marched in such numbers and with such determination that not even the tsarist troops and police dared interfere — and some of them even joined.

The slogans of the marchers, heard far and wide, were proclamed: "Bread for our children" and "Our husbands back from the trenches!" And as they marched through the streets of Petrograd they chimed the Tsarist revolution.

That day was March 8, 1917. And the occasion was International Women's Day.

The first Women's Day had taken place ten years earlier, in America. Then, socialist women had marked the day down as one of struggle for women's rights. Even before Europe the idea was taken up in 1910 by the International Conference of Working Women. In response, International Working Women's Day was celebrated throughout the world on March 8. And Clara Zetkin, who was later to become a famous leader of the World Communist Party, the proposal, which was accepted, called for a day which was to be "an international day of struggle to be organised around the question of women's rights. A proposal was put forward by Clara ZetkinGerman by women of all countries! Organise a united prolerian front in the struggle against those who are plundering us! Down with the parliaments of bourgeois states which say no! Away with the inequalities suffered by working men and women! We will fight alongside men workers for the triumph of world communism!" (From a speech in 1910 by Alexandra Kollontai, the first Bolshevik Minister of Social Welfare.)

Yanks out

36,000 British workers and their families, on housing estates near Newbury, are to be the first casualties of the current NAO reorganisation. United States planners, with the full support of NAO, now hope to establish more air and military bases in the area.

Greenham Common Airbase near Newbury, which has been used to provide new housing and is in fact a key area in the West Berkshire housing policy.

Staff and students at Bristol Polytechnic have won the first round of their strike against cutbacks in the building programme.

THE WEEK

COFFEE, for months almost unobtainable in the Soviet Union, reappeared in shops this week at more than four times its old price. Volodya also went up, by 100 per cent. The increase was due to higher world prices, said the comrade admission that the Soviet Union was "embezzled in the capitalist world of thieves."

The attempt by the Government to use racist anxiety as a pretext for banning Black people has gone unscathed. The Reading Forest branch of the National Union of Students has condemned the ban as "infringement of the right of equal treatment. Unions and the public freely to express their views on their legitimate interests."

The Manpower Services Commission has been given £160 million to further stimulate established traditions of education and training. According to the announcement, the shortsightedness of the scheme cannot give the impression that the Government has any attempt to encourage black people in this country to do the work to which they are more suited.

The TOC wants more tobacco to improve the working conditions of black people. Every year approximately 500 people die from tobacco in England and Wales. The Government's view is that no firm assurance action can be given because of public expenditure data.

"There is no housing problem. It's just a money problem. By those who can't afford it!"- heard in the Balmain Berwick.

AFTER more than four months of talks between the Belgrade conference of the Non-Aligned and Cooperation Europe is groaning to a halt. Called to review the working of the Helsinki agreements on "security, cooperation and human rights" in Europe, the 35 nations concerned is expected to end this week with a brief non-co-4nspirement agreement to meet again in Madrid in two years' time. The much-expected peace move.

THE WILSON COMMITTEE, which is investigating the question of immigration, has employed a firm of accountants to look into the reasons why certain firms are refusing to accept British workers. They have come up with the startling conclusion that they decided to change the rationale on the basis of the expectation of profitability. Would anybody then like to invest money in a business that employs numbers like adding up the committee?
**EDITORIAL**

EDUCATION has become a focus of major contradictions running through British society. The fight of teachers for more pay has suddenly surfaced with a vengeance. The confrontation with regard to the discontent of London teachers threatened to spill onto a national stage the government hastily convened an emergency meeting with the leaders on teachers' pay. The outcome was a few extra pounds, a few extra anomalies, threatened to spill onto a national stage if they did so talked in pious tones of the importance of the teaching profession. Such professional responsibility was worthy of a proper salary.

Subsequently, the employers have turned things much to their advantage. They have manufactured unemployment, saying that the shortage in the numbers of teachers was a result of the impact of technology on the teaching profession. This professional responsibility was worthy of a proper salary.

We don’t need you anymore," they say.

The teachers, to their credit, have not been cowed. In a beautiful example of guerrilla struggle members of the National Union of Teachers have undertaken sanctions at their place of work, designed to show that teachers, if they want to, can make things very difficult for the employer. It is often suggested by the faint hearts that we have little "industrial muscle." But with services in every community and large numbers of workers dependent for their attendance at work on normal arrangements for their sons and daughters, ferment amongst teachers can have a devastating effect. What entrenched is that the strike and employers most, however, is that teachers would transform their thinking and turn their full fury against a Labour Government that seeks to impose 10 per cent, a Conservative "opposition" that would like to impress the team, and say "Down with all capitalist government!" To re-introduce a form of the topic of union debate has been "pay and the teachers' organisation." When the music is cancelled and the pugilism re-introduced there is no longer the same question of the very order of things. There needs to be more clarity. The announcement that the strike and employers must do most must not be confined within those 10 per cent limits, not be confined within those 10 per cent limits.

EETPU Solidarity wins out

A GMB of 15 EETPU electricians employed by S.W. Bligh of Challock and Leatherhead at British Steel, at Nuneaton, decided on time to join the fight to get their 1978 wages agreement into effect.

Early in January, the shop steward pointed out the management that if the new rates would be paid as agreed, the two men would be paid a wage.

The management made some attempts to weaken the shops' resolve and also to have the workers from other sites. The shop was quickly declared a closed shop and those electricians were turned away from the site. Subsequently, two men were declared redundant while others were made redundant on other sites. The shop resolved this to be a false redundancy but were unable to prevent the redundancies being carried out.

The electricians later, management approached the shop stating for a return to normal working and to have the agreements complete their contract. They informed that if the electricians could take place if they paid the new rates, backdated, and immediately re-instated the two victimized workers. This was agreed and the two men returned to work the next day and were paid for the days they were absent.

The shop returned to normal working but were approached by management to work more electricians. The shop felt that the closed shop policy would completely.

The employers referred to the introduction of nationalised local council within the EETPU. The employers refused and the introduction of labour hired from a local contractor was agreed with the exception of some union apprentices. The union apprentices were turned away making their "full" union application forms useless.

**NCB Productivity Schemes are dangerous and divisive - reject them**

WHAT has been the result of the introduction of productivity schemes into the pits for the miners? The introduction of the productivity schemes has been followed by the impression given by the press concerning the schemes, the miners and the miners who fight to maintain the construction of their union and the control of their own destiny.

The diversions created by the schemes are welcomed by the employers and the two sides are involved to local disputes mainly connected with who gets what the percentage of the bonus, the total unity of the miners is eroded. By talking to many miners now involved in these schemes in the West, a coalfield TUC worker observed that relevant issues yet to be brought before the public, one of the most crucial being the safety aspect of the pits. The targets for productivity are still relatively low but are creeping up rapidly. This is making increasingly longer hours. Periodically during shifts the ventilation officers have to go down the tunnels to check for gases. Since the miners now are operating the schemes, this essential job has been made even more difficult, with face workers arguing that they will lose money if the conveyor belt has to be stopped even for a few moments while the readings are taken. This naturally leads to workers squabbling amongst themselves and general unrest on any shift.

As one miner commented, "It is only a matter of time before a major accident occurs on the workings of the miners themselves."

To sow the seeds of disunity everywhere, the government has also recruited the old elite of the face-workers, who are the only ones who have never been laid off. In the majority of today’s pits the rubber miners were given the job of a skilled technician with a marred improvement in working conditions. Consequently there is growing resentment against the face-workers by the surface workers, the latter working the same hours for a small percentage of the bonus. This disparity sets us against men, pit against pit.

With the miners bravely existing in trying to sort out the anomalies the employers are getting away with, they are causing the local coal industry, by publishing literature of productivity targets to all pits, the "unproductive" pits are under increasing pressure, and this is quite like in local government targets - usually because of geological factors. Closures of such pits under a reorganisation, are inevitable! A just policy for the miners, a Labour Government in power.

Miners must now realise through their own example the disastrous consequences of their own actions. It is up to us to be lost to confirm that the productivity scheme is the last weapon of class war against the miners’ unity and strength. The whole working class in Britain needs that unity.

"Higher Education into the 1990’s"

In its most recent pronouncement on the future of higher education in the document "Higher Education into the 1990’s" the Department of Education and Science shows just how far Government has moved away from the Robbins’ principle of having a robust system of higher education. It shows that the Robbins’ principle is to become no more than another section of the Robbins’ principle which functioned mainly to create a public debate and to stipulate the minimum requirements could be filled by unemployed members from local branches of the TUC. The employers are getting away with it is to create a public debate and to stipulate the minimum requirements could be filled by unemployed members from local branches of the TUC.

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**US miners’ vital ballot**

In the US, the largest coal strike (encompassing 140,000 striking miners in a ball on March 6) was still raging as this issue went to press.

"If the strike were to drag longer, it would mean a wage increase of $2.40 an hour, an end to the three-shift system and a wage of an extra $0.05 per ton of coal.

"The strike was not really about a bonus, but about whether the miners' union was to be severely weakened in its capacity to fight for its members' wages and conditions. By this agreement the employers were going to win the right to discipline leaders of 'unofficial' strikes and workers who protest the closed shop policy would be fired.

"If this could only be said to be a victory of the miners, it was a victory of the miners in a very long battle."
Cont. from p. 1 : Civil Service pay

needed for clarity

so there will be no pay research this year.

The pay proposals have been accepted by most of the Civil Service unions with remarkable exceptions of the Society of Civil and Public Service, whose members, with the 22-28 per cent, and the Civil and Public Servants Associa-
tion, which has demanded 14-14 per cent, the others are 9-10 per cent.

Is this because of a belief that, with the resignation of the Pay Agreement, all in-
justices will be rectified in 1979? First, this assumes that the Agreement will go into effect in 1979. But it will.

A government that has once got away with breaking an agreement last year can do so again, can it? Within two months of the announcement that the Pay Agreement had been restored Mr Healey was calling in another Independent Committee. In January that "No government can avoid having an incomes policy, it is a fundamental of our own employees are concerned..."
The Pay Agreement of 1979 may therefore, prove an empty promise to secure compliance in 1978.

"humble memorials"

Even if it does go into effect next year we can guar-
ance that the workers concerned will not work, and that a sense of superor-

ity was no substitute for decent pay and conditions, i.e., that they were also part of the Working Class, and the most far-reaching and courageous of the fight for Civil Service trade unionism - a struggle still not won today in many other countries. In the pamphlet we have one of the most organised
civil services in the world, and there may well have been no "office" in the country from which workers were able to say "no" to the boss. But whether the vacuousness of the public sector was the model in wages and conditions, the rate of pay research, will lead.

decrept apparatus

And why should the private sector be regarded as the most "humble"? If the public sector is a "humble" society with a spark of reason and subnormality, what Marx called the greatest class in the history of mankind, what Marx called the class, where is the sense of values? If parity with other workers is the limit of our ambition, will we accept parity in defeat as better than winning? I say, "I don't mind dying in the gutter if others are doing so"? Surely, equally, that is the point to which Priestleyism, the ideology of pay research, will lead.

The justification put for ward for this procedure is that it achieves "fairness" for a few accessoried above what were known as "humble memorials" to an empty promise to secure compliance in 1978. This is an absurd fiction. First, under capitalism there is no fairness. Are there a "large number of chains for s slaves"? Wages are the price that bind a wage-salarier, which is what we all are white collar workers. There is more than one alternative of faith of all of us. The idea that there is no difference, "fairness". The idea that there is no difference, "fairness". The idea that there is no difference, "fairness". The idea that there is no difference, "fairness". The idea that there is no difference, "fairness". The idea that there is no difference, "fairness". The idea that there is no difference, "fairness". The idea that there is no difference, "fairness". The idea that there is no difference, "fairness". The idea that there is no difference, "fairness". 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