



VOTE OF NO CONFIDENCE IN THE COMMON MARKET

DAVID STEEL called it "disgraceful". Cabinet ministers said the voting figures were "derisory". They were talking about the poll for Britain's members of the European Parliament, where even the "gloomy" predictions by the European Commission of a 51 per cent turnout proved wildly optimistic. In fact, it was less than one third.

Nor was Britain alone in the unwillingness and refusal to vote. In Ireland just over half, in Denmark under half the population went to the polls. Even in Holland, where 90 per cent voted in the General Election there, less than 60 per cent took part-- and in the working class areas of Amsterdam and Rotterdam the figure was often one fifth.

The full results were not available as The Worker went to press: Britain had to wait on France, Germany, Italy and Belgium before being allowed to start counting. But the trend is crystal clear--a massive stay-at-home rejection of the EEC.

It was not laziness, nor apathy which kept people away from the deserted polling stations. For millions of workers it was a conscious decision to have nothing to do with the 'European dream'. And this is what the Establishment calls a disgrace.

On the contrary, we say it was extremely honourable. It was a first step towards wiping out the shame of 1975, when we accepted this European capitalist club in a referendum. Not to vote in these elections was the only action which workers could with integrity take.

The Common Market stands for destruction: for destruction of agriculture, fishing grounds, coal and steel; for destruction of people by unemployment; for destruction of the hopes and aspirations of a generation of young people; for the destruction of all democracy in Europe; and worst of all, for destruction by war in conjunction with NATO.

In our refusal to vote, we have begun to say no to this destruction. We have passed a massive vote of no confidence in the Common Market. With this behind us, we must all ensure that things advance, that rejection becomes the springboard for the demolition of the entire EEC edifice.

There must now begin and grow a massive campaign of civil opposition and where necessary industrial action, aimed at each and every manifestation of the EEC; a refusal to accept any decisions or dictates; a flouting of all instructions from Brussels, whether agreed in Westminster or not.

Our "representatives" in the European Parliament represent nothing and no one except the employers, industrial, financial and agricultural. The European Parliament is illegitimate. The Common Market is an alien body, built by and for the employers. It has no authority over us.

AUEW to act on national claim

TO THE ENGINEERS' demand for an £80 a week minimum wage for skilled workers and proportional increases for other grades, the best offer of the Engineering/Employers' Federation is £68 for skilled workers and £49 for others.

Unsatisfactory offer

There are also differences over the employers' insistence that no increases can take effect before the anniversary date of the last settlement.

The National Committee of the AUEW is meeting on June 12th to vote on the union's attitude to this unsatisfactory offer. There is no doubt that if the EEF really has said its last word the National Committee will opt for industrial action to back the engineers' claim.

In spite of massive unemployment, a shortage of skilled engineers is already being felt in many sectors of industry as a result of low pay. It is part of the general destruction of Britain's industrial base that vital workers like skilled engineers are neither being kept at their trades by adequate pay nor being recruited in sufficient numbers to keep up with this wastage.

No investment

The president of the AUEW said that there was a lot of talk about investment in British industry but unless there was investment in the skills of British workers, the engineering industry and Britain itself would go on declining.

Fight for schools in London

FOLLOWING the article in The Worker No 17, where the alternatives for the future of secondary education were discussed, the plans of the Inner London Education Authority for Hackney and Islington have finally been published.

As might have been expected, ILEA ignored the views of parents and teachers in the area that falling rolls in schools should be seen as an opportunity to make education better. Smaller schools, reduced class sizes and the maintenance of teachers' jobs would certainly be improvement.

The document tries, quite unsuccessfully, to argue an educational case for closing schools -- but it stands out clearly that education is the last thing they are interested in. Of course, this is a longed-for opportunity to cut drastically the education system. As the Education Officer has recently declared in public, Hackney and Islington are to be guinea-pigs in the plan to cut education in London and in Britain as a whole. An educated working class has become too expensive for capitalism in more ways than one.

The idea of keeping all schools

has been completely rejected and the only proposals put forward are those of amalgamations of two or three existing schools. In Hackney this will mean that out of fifteen existing schools only nine are to remain, three of which are voluntary schools.

Once more, the ILEA is enacting the charade of consultation with the teachers and parents. This time they are calling it 'mass consultation', but it will be the same as before -- not listening to the majority when they don't agree with ILEA plans and dismissing anyone who calls for all schools and resources to be retained as 'uninformed'. (After all, you must be very naive if you expect improvement!) In fact what this consultation amounts to is one public meeting in each borough when most people will not have even read the document, (it has not been even distributed to everyone concerned). Teachers and the schools will only have three weeks in which to discuss their submissions to the Education Officer.

Already however, at the Islington public meeting, held

at Highbury Grove School, on Monday 4th June a large number of teachers and parents have voiced their opposition to the ILEA plans. Recent public meetings in Hackney have demonstrated similar feelings.

Since we have known about the problem of falling rolls for eight years, at least, one would wonder at the undignified rushing through of the ILEA drastic plans if they really mean to give time to adequate consultation. Of course they have never really intended to consult in order to listen or change their plans -- they intend to cut education and they know the working class and teaching profession would never willingly acquiesce in their cuts. Bulldozing tactics are their only alternative.

Since all teaching posts in the schools to be amalgamated will be declared vacant and the teaching staff of the two or three schools will have to compete for the available jobs, the ILEA obviously hope teachers will be too busy cutting each other

Down with NATO! U.S. bases off British soil!



Communist Party
of Britain
Marxist-Leninist

Save our N. Sea oil

FORTY-FIVE per cent of Britain's oil is exported. And so buses are cancelled, trains don't run, industry is closed.

Instead of requisitioning oil for our own needs, the government is asking all consumers to reduce consumption by five per cent.

ALL consumers? Are the fighter planes on the military bases short of fuel?

They enter into discussion with the oil companies about the possibility of diverting a little more British oil into British industry. And some people have the stupidity to declare that rationing is the answer! We demand that our oil be used here in Britain to supply our own needs.

The capitalist rationale for the export of the British high grade light oil is that it pays for the importation of foreign heavy oil to power such things as the electricity generating stations. This argument completely ignores the possibility of altering such equipment so that it can burn light oil products.

We denounce the criminal profiteering of British Petroleum, operating the gigantic swindle of exporting oil on taxpayers' money. Capitalists alone reap the rewards.

Historic Notes Farm workers strike-1913

AT THE START of this century, the fertile peat soils of the Ormskirk area in Lancashire were intensively cropped to supply the huge markets of Manchester and Liverpool. Intensive farming demanded a large labour force and the local farmworkers realised that their wages and conditions were poor compared to better organised urban workers, so a large number joined the National Agricultural Labourers and Rural Workers Union.

In May 1913 the farm workers presented their demands: an increase of 4 shillings on the basic wage of £1-00, sixpence an hour overtime and a half day on Saturday from 1 pm. All the farmers conceded was a 2 pm stop on Saturdays.

Confident of their strength a strike was called on June 23 - just as the hay harvest commen-

ced. The timing of their action hit the employers hard and the hay was only harvested by the farmers and clerks from Liverpool. The striking farmworkers were not worried if their picketing was primary or secondary only that it was effective. Groups of pickets were informed by cyclists when hay wagons were on the move, and despite police protection many loads were turned back or simply scattered over the road.

Good timing and effective picketing put the strikers in a strong position and support from industrial unions led to a swift victory. As well as donating money to the strike fund, Liverpool trade unionists gave much practical help. Dockers prevented scab labour arriving by ship, while transport workers blocked non-union goods. The final

blow came from Ormskirk NUR, who threatened to black all farm produce. The farmers conceded defeat after only two weeks, the final settlement forced a 2 shillings rise, sixpence an hour overtime and the 2 pm stop on Saturdays.

Present-day farmworkers will no doubt keep such examples of their union's history in mind as they begin to prepare their campaign for the 1980 pay claim. The claim of £100 minimum wage and a 35 hour week was introduced at a May Day rally in Ipswich. It is encouraging that the claim is being considered in good time, indeed action committees all over the country are planning possible industrial action. Strong organisation coupled with solidarity from urban unions will be as effective today, as it was in 1913.

Profits rose by 220 per cent in the most recent quarter over the same quarter last year. The quarterly profit, after allowance for tax, was £281 million. And we are to go short for their benefit.

The government states that its international obligations are more important than our welfare. It will continue to export to the USA (BP has acquired a large stake in a

USA oil enterprise). The US whose capitalist economy squanders oil both domestically and in its vast military set-up; the US, economically so backward that its nuclear power stations don't work and are virtual atom bombs; the US which has its own reserves of oil but demands as of right the lion's share of the world's resources.

And the British government

panders to this, as it panders to the so-called needs of other capitalist economies. We see the whole of the British economy being submitted to the needs of alien capital. Typical is the proposal by Veba, one of West Germany's largest industrial enterprises, that they will step up investment in Britain provided they receive more of our oil. To hell with that!

Unctad: capitalism pretends to be something else

THE FIFTH UN Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD 5) in Manila has recently finished its month-long gathering of 3000 delegates from 119 countries. Posturing, rhetoric, uneasy and opportunistic alliances all featured. For all the talk little concrete came out of it, although certain demands had been presented to the "developed countries" from the self-styled Group of 77 "underdeveloped" countries.

There were demands for a lowering of tariff barriers "to provide a more liberal market for their export products" PEKING REVIEW (May 18) was sweet enough to explain. Apparently protectionist measures in a country like Britain hinder the export of manufactured goods from developed countries. "It goes without saying that this is utterly unreasonable and should be put right" (P.R.). Raw materials should attain such prices as to ensure "profitable prices", China continues. Finally, the economies of the developing countries have suffered from fluctuations in the international money markets and they demand change.

It is truly ironical that the Chinese government, which claims to be "opposed to the attempts of monopolistic capital to control and exploit them"

should only this month have received £5000 million in credit from Japan for industrial projects to be established using Japanese companies. Where's the "independence and self-reliance" there? Hasn't the Chinese government recently been encouraging native capitalists from pre-revolutionary days and returned their wealth.

Estimates in the FINANCIAL TIMES (May 31) put the amounts returned to some individuals between £300,000-£900,000.

All in attendance at UNCTAD 5 referred to independence - but which of those countries is self-reliant, the guarantee of independence? Which of them are engaged in socialist construction? In which of those countries are worker and peasant in control?

Yugoslavia, for example, has received a loan of £396 million from Grindlay Brandts, British merchant bankers, for steel development. So Yugoslavia moves further away from self-reliance and independence. China, incidentally, admires the Yugoslav "self-management" system but it looks as if the likes of Grindlay Brandts are doing the self-managing in Yugoslavia. Interesting, isn't it, that British steelworks are being closed down, causing thousands of redundancies plus increased steel imports?

Turkey, with a third of its

provinces under martial law, has received the "aid" it wanted from the International Monetary Fund. In addition, more is coming from the USA, some of which will go on military aircraft, for Turkey is a member of NATO. Turkey has received the treatment UNCTAD 5 favour but the people there are confronted by near-fascist rule.

Egypt has received huge "aid" from the USA recently. That would please UNCTAD 5. Egypt, noted for the wealth of its entrepreneurs and the poverty of its people, has just purchased Mig-19 fighter aircraft from China. Just what the people need. China, too, is in the market for more modern Harrier jump jets and will pay £1000 million for them, or rather the people will have to pay for them.

UNCTAD 5 is all about capitalism, no more no less. It seeks not socialism but a "New International Economic Order". But the impression put about in this "North-South" dialogue is that all in the rich developed countries are rich and all are poor in the poor undeveloped countries.

But in Britain, for example, 7 per cent of the population own 84 per cent of the national wealth. Britain is characterised by low wages, low investment and prices we cannot afford. The lorry

driver, the nurse, the engineer, the journalist, the teacher and the docker - are they all rich? Not rich, but organised in our unions unlike countries such as Taiwan, Hong Kong, South Korea where capital, foreign and domestic, is now invested because unions are illegal or not-existent. There is a rundown of our industry, unemployment and growing poverty in Britain, but we are told that to fight for our jobs is reactionary and chauvinist. And Nigeria has import controls, but that's alright?

Doesn't the Group of 77 countries, founder members and proponents of UNCTAD, contain all the oil-rich countries? If people in those countries have miserable lives to look forward to, they must deal with the feudal sheikhdoms along with domestic and foreign capital, in order to be free.

UNCTAD 5 represents the white, black and brown faces of capitalism. It is internationalism, the bourgeois variety. We're not too partial to King Hassan, reactionary ruler of Morocco. But the phosphate miners, bank workers, railway workers, postmen, teachers and health workers of Morocco, all of whom have been involved in strikes for higher wages since last autumn, they're our people. Haven't we also had to go after higher wages lately?

Turkish workers march against martial law and dictatorship

HUNDREDS of workers were killed and many houses and shops ruined during massacres perpetrated by fascists at the end of 1978. Following this, martial law was declared - initially in 13 provinces, including Istanbul and Ankara, and subsequently in 6 more provinces. Today martial law still prevails in 19 provinces in Turkey.

Despite the attempts by its propagators to portray it as progressive, democratic and anti-fascist, the people simply see what is going on around them, and

recognise the real class nature of the moral law - it is an open fascist dictatorship. All democratic mass organisations have been closed in the provinces under martial law; all strikes and resistance by workers is forbidden; employers have declared lock-outs in many enterprises and hundreds of workers have been thrown out. Meetings and demonstrations by any workers are forbidden. Repressions on the Kurdish nation increase.

Meanwhile the ruling class of

Turkey load the consequences of the deepening crisis of capitalism on the shoulders of the people. Taxes and prices increase. The government raised the prices of many basic goods. The Turkish lira was devalued. The wages of workers were decreased and the minimum wage kept at its lowest level. The basic prices of agricultural goods remained lower than past years.

But anti-fascist struggle develops and expands day by day - against the economic and open-

ly political attacks. The mass protest actions all over the country on May Day were one clear example of this - involving more than 100,000 people in 30 cities and towns. Celebrations, marches and demonstrations of any kind were forbidden throughout the country on May Day. But the people organised illegal demonstrations in many of the cities under martial law, including Ankara, the capital, Adana, one of the most important industrial centres, and Gaziantep.

The Week

WORLD spending on arms runs at £200 million a year, 70 per cent of which is accounted for by NATO and the Warsaw Pact. The world arms export trade, rising at a yearly average of 15 per cent at the beginning of the decade, has in the last 5 years been rising at a frightful 25 per cent per year. Of this, the USA accounts for 47 per cent, France 11 per cent, the UK 4 per cent, so that these three members of NATO alone represent nearly two-thirds of world arms exports.

MARGARET THATCHER, who is putting the clock back to Cold War anti-communism, exults in her nick-name "the iron maiden". Considering her feeling for the forces of law and order she might better be called the "pig-iron matron."

THE AUEW has attacked the closure of Prestcold's two Scottish factories with the loss of 900 jobs as "economic lunacy" and "national asset stripping by the National Enterprise Board." British Leyland, whose subsidiary it is, are refusing to consider any plan to continue production, while Joseph, the Industry minister, is refusing to meet Union officials. BL Bus and Trucks division alone made £2.6 million profit last year - £100 a man. Yet they cannot afford Prestcold!

THE WIDE-SCALE unemployment created in China by the return of capitalism will be administered by "managers" whose training is a priority according to the Chinese press. Meanwhile China furthers the cause of war internationally by supplying Egypt with 60 fighter planes which, ironically, are developments of the Soviet MG-19. And the Chinese government has the nerve to brand the Soviet Union as the only threat to world peace and the world's people!

HAMPSHIRE County Council's plans to cut 1000 jobs out of a total of 40,000 jobs in the next 10 months are representative of councils all over the country. The public service unions are united in their opposition. With their wage claims settled, the defence of jobs and services is the next and most urgent fight.

DESPITE vicious repression (Somoza has once again decreed martial law) the guerrilla movement against the Nicaraguan regime is having renewed success. It has repulsed attacks on several towns which, at the time of writing, it held so securely that the rebels were able to turn to administration and the distribution of food. This in spite of threats from Guatemala and El Salvador to send in troops for Somoza, as well as US air force supplies from the supposedly anti-Somoza Carter.

BASILDON Council's attempts to prevent the dumping of poisonous waste on its residents' doorstep by closing an access road have been thwarted by Heseltine, the Environment Secretary, who has allowed the dumping company to construct its own access road. Private enterprise!?

Editorial

TRADE UNIONS were invented by the British working class in the first capitalist country. They are more than just defensive organisations to protect workers from the excesses of the profit grubbers -- they are an expression in organisational form of working class ideology.

It was on the basis of trade union organisation that Lenin formulated the principle of democratic centralism. "Is it really so difficult to understand," he asked, "that, before a decision has been taken by the centre on a strike, it is permissible to agitate for it and against it, but after that decision in favour of a strike has been taken, to carry on agitation against the strike is strike-breaking?" He also said: "The strength of the working class lies in organisation. Unless organised, the proletariat is nothing. Organised--it is everything. Organisation means unity of action, unity in practical operations. . . The proletariat does not recognise unity of action without freedom to discuss and criticise."

Trade union organisation, by which every member is involved in unity of action and freedom of discussion is direct proletarian democracy. It is the reverse of bourgeois representational democracy in which those represented are excluded from action and discussion. Where there is direct democracy workers have only themselves to blame if they are "deceived" or "misled".

Trade unions reflect the collective morality of the working class in which the interest of the individual is always seen in the social context of the interests of the group or community. It is based on the understanding that in union there is strength; that an injury to one must be regarded as an injury to all; and that as victims of an exploitative system workers share a common liberative struggle with all those who are exploited anywhere. This can be contrasted with the competitive morality of the bourgeoisie, based on the unfettered expression of each individual's naked self-interest which the market place is supposed to reconcile automatically for the general good.

The organised British labour movement created its own political wing, the Labour Party, which was a translation of working class organisation into a bourgeois form to represent working class interests in Parliament. This apparent hiving off of the political aspect of working class activity, which produced on the one hand a social democratic party, was the basis on the other of what is known as syndicalism. Of course, it is not really possible to separate politics and economics that way and the working class has been recovering its understanding that the direct democracy of trade union action and discussion is always political as well as economic.

It was British working class organisational development which was the basis of the Communist Manifesto which Marx and Engels wrote in 1848. In it they first drew out the full implications of working class organisation. They showed how capitalism brings about the polarisation of a country into two classes only, and demonstrated that defensive class struggle had to become the revolutionary struggle by which workers emancipate themselves from class exploitation.

In other countries like Russia and China the experience of an organised working class over many decades, as encapsulated in the Communist Manifesto, did not yet exist when the workers and peasants of these countries armed with Marxism were nonetheless able to overthrow capitalism at its weakest points and demonstrate the superiority of the socialist system.

It is right to make revolution wherever it can be made, even though the working class may lack the organisational experience to safeguard the revolution once made. As a remedy for that, Mao Tse Tung sought to back up the revolution which had overthrown the capitalists and landlords with the proletarian cultural revolution which would establish the working class's ideological ascendancy in every field. He himself said that no cultural revolution would probably not be enough. In spite of set-backs and failures in Russia and China, the October Revolution and the Proletarian Cultural Revolution are great landmarks on the working class's triumphant march to a world free of exploitation and war.

Ironically, some calling themselves Marxists and Leninists have wanted to import, even for Britain, the very features of the revolutionary movement in other countries which reflect the lack of a long continuous development of an organised working class: our own. Not until eleven years ago was there established for the first time in Britain a revolutionary party growing directly out of the organised working class here, having no other interests but those of that working class, fully aware that the only revolutionary force is that same working class and that the revolutionary party serves the class and does not try to command or rule in its name. A revolution is the ultimate in the assertion of direct democracy.

"The survival of socialism and the future of communism depend on the proletariat of the advanced industrial countries moving to revolution. The British working class and our Marxist-Leninist Party must accept the responsibility which falls upon it, arising from its own particular historical development."

IN BRIEF

THE PRICE of milk is determined by the government which also sets the rate of profit for the distribution companies. The recent price increase of 1½p per pint is being blamed on the wage increase of up to 18 per cent gained by workers in the industry.

To show their concern for the

preservation of the distribution system, which otherwise might have been seriously damaged, the unions had agreed not to strike during the negotiations. But this large increase in the price of milk will lead to a further decrease in the consumption of milk and, at this rate, this country (which consumes by far the most milk in the EEC, may soon end up adding to the EEC dairy mountain.

Docks threat to London

EXACTLY a year ago the Port of London Authority (PLA) announced that it was in financial difficulties and suggested that the closure of its upriver docks was an essential step in returning to "commercial viability".

The trade unions directly involved and the South East Region TUC opposed this. They argued that the upriver docks could make a significant contribution to the rebuilding of the industry of East London. The financial problems of the PLA should be met head on and not by disposing of irreplaceable and still useful physical assets.

Although the Labour Government agreed to give a grant of £35 million to the PLA, this was dependent on significant reductions in man-power (between 1965-1978 the labour force fell from 24,000 to 8000). All that this grant has done is to stave off the wolf from the door for just a little longer, while at the same time insidiously destroying the skills of our class through redundancy.

The problem of the upriver docks has a significance far beyond the Port Industry, which must be the concern of all of us. There has been a highly fragmented and largely unplanned expansion of port capacity in the South East as a whole.

The rundown (and consequent financial losses) of the upper docks are the result of investment starvation (not enough profit to be made) an unfair allocation of the Ports' operational costs (notably

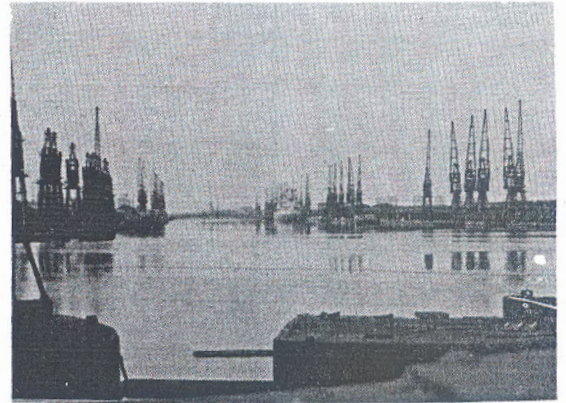
for surplus and restricted labour) and an excess of conventional berth capacity in the country which allows ship owners to minimise their runs (and hence costs).

So what advantages could there be in retaining these docks? First, it would strengthen the economic base of the South East, both by providing an important service for its industry and by maintaining the role of its transport interchange points. Secondly, the employment spin-off from port-associated activities would be an invaluable benefit.

It is clear that a major initiative now needs to be taken in East London. The development of new industrial activities on surplus

dockland needs to be co-ordinated. At the moment this is fragmented between the Dockland Joint Committee, the GLC, the 5 dockland boroughs, the Port of London Authority and, of course, private developers. As usual under capitalism, the rational and sensible solutions to problems are ignored in the rush for short-term profit.

The trade unions and their regional organisation have begun the slow fight to save our docks but they are only as strong as we make them. Their weaknesses are ours. The struggle to keep our skills, our jobs, our assets, is the struggle for the future of Britain. We have no choice but to win it.



"They make a desert and call it peace." Photo: The Worker.

The facts behind the oil crisis

IF ANY ONE industry can be said to lie close to the nerve centre of capitalism, the oil industry must qualify. In fact and fiction oil has been depicted at the centre of world power struggles and as the cause of either boom or doom in capitalist society.

Even five years after the first oil crisis (and there were warnings of impending oil shortages before that), despite attempts at conservation, despite lower consumption due to reduced economic growth, despite massive investment (on a scale unprecedented in any civilian industry) in nuclear power, the industrial capitalist countries are still dependent on five Middle Eastern countries - Kuwait, Saudi-Arabia, UAE, Iraq and Iran - for their daily consumption of 35 million barrels. These five nations supply three out of every five barrels imported by Western Europe, two out of four imported by the OECD countries, and one in every three of the barrels used by the OECD overall, including their own production.

This dependence developed when the main producer nations were either colonies or semi-colonies of the major imperialist states. When supplies were threatened by nationalist governments, the imperialist countries felt safe to intervene directly to restore regimes servile to their needs as when Mossadegh was deposed in Iran in the early fifties.

When the tide of nationalism in the Middle East grew too strong for direct intervention of this sort, imperialism was still able to control oilfields, because the oil companies, some of the most powerful capitalist institutions in the world, monopolised the technology, distribution and mar-

keting without which nationalisation was meaningless.

After acting together in OPEC to secure control of prices, the producer nations embarked on investment programmes to secure control of the technology of oil production and refining. For a period of 30 years the industrial capitalist countries had almost unhindered access to Middle Eastern oilfields and developed a preference for petroleum and its by-products over their own home-produced coal (with its greater technical difficulties of extraction and troublesome workforces.) When OPEC exercised control over its own resources, the vulnerability of the industrial capitalist countries as a result of their own actions was fully exposed.

No immediate end to this dependence is foreseen. In November last year, Schlesinger, the US energy secretary, told a meeting in London: "Even if the growth rate (of oil demand) were to be reduced to 2 per cent a year - a considerable achievement (it is presently rising at 4 per cent) - we would still reach that crunch point by the early 1990's, a period when we expect oil production to peak."

These remarks were made before the upheavals in Iran, at a time when there was still a market surplus such that only months previously, "experts" could claim that the "free market" would hold back, if not break up the power of OPEC to determine price levels. Estimates indicate that at the present level of demand there are sufficient oil reserves to last the world another 30 years or so. What the events in Iran have shown is that supply can be disrupted or completely cut by political events beyond the control.

of consumer countries, making nonsense of any long-term planning. Almost overnight a world market surplus was converted into a shortage, caused by a shortfall of 1.5 - 2 million barrels per day from Iran. Also the trend for producer nations to use their production for their own industrial purpose is continuing.

Neither can there be any reliance on new oil finds. The 1970's have seen the rate of increase of demand exceed the rate of discovery of new reserves, while Mexico, which has recently discovered huge reserves, has already stated its intention to exploit those reserves gradually in line with its own needs for development. China, too, may have large potential reserves, possibly of the magnitude of Saudi Arabia, but here again most is likely to be destined for its own use, with small amounts being bartered for pieces of foreign technology. In their greed to get the oil out of the ground (known as "realising the return on their investment") the oil companies are aggravating the eventual shortage. With the North Sea the British Department of Energy is having to force the oil companies to reduce gas flaring - which they are reluctant to do because it would slow down extraction of the oil.

We should be alert to the special situation created by capitalism's dependence on oil. With the threat of it being deprived of its lifeblood, comes the threat of war.

Not for nothing did Schlesinger say, "The United States must move in such a way that it protects those (oil) interests, even if that involves the use of military strength or of military presence."

Oxfordshire County Council plan school closures instead of providing smaller classes.

OXFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL has made public its plans to close three schools: Kidlington County Infants School, Gartford and Prilford Primary School, and Henley Infants School.

Kidlington Infants School has 105 pupils and the reason given for closing it is that it could hold 'twice the number'. It is not as if Oxfordshire children enjoy luxuriously small class sizes: the county has the worst

overall teacher-pupil ratio in the country. To implement the most modest improvement in provision, such as allowing all children to enter school in the year in which they are five would on the Council's own admission, require another 75 to 100 teachers. Instead, they are cutting the staffing establishment and filling vacancies by redeployment rather than employing new teachers.

It is a terrible thing that

in an advanced industrial country, educational provision should be getting not better, but worse. If, as the Council proposes, the Kidlington School children are moved into the Edward Field Junior School, all the pupils will be in larger classes.

Our nursery education has suffered more and more over the years; in 1900 a child stood more chance of a nursery place than he does today.

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our education system from destruction.

That these plans are merely an excuse for cuts is clear when we look at the unreliability of the statistics on school rolls. Already, in the course of the last year the ILEA has revised its figures. In 1978 it was predicted that 950 pupils would be transferring to Islington secondary schools in 1986. That figure has now been revised upwards to 1095, an increase of

throats to oppose their plans. We must resist their gutter tactics and fight to save every job -- no-one has the right to sell jobs for motives of self interest. Although the ILEA claims they will safeguard salaries (but not status), even this cannot be maintained if they are allowed to close schools in every area. We owe it to the 42,000 teachers already unemployed and the future generations to fight the ILEA's machievellian plans and protect

145, representing the equivalent entry to a medium-sized school.

The ILEA has also chosen to ignore the fact that people often base their choice of a place to live on the schools and facilities in the area. Current national policy is the rejuvenation of inner-city areas, and as Hackney and Islington become more attractive places to live and work more educational provision will be needed.

The ILEA document makes no mention of the likely school population beyond the 1980s. Nationally, school population statistics follow a "wave pattern". The next "trough" will be reached in 1985/6 but national and regional forecasts indicate that there will then be an upswing to a new peak in the 1990s.

No cuts!

If we allow amalgamations and closure now we will be faced with overcrowded schools and inadequate resources in the 1990s. Amalgamations take six to eight years to complete, by which time the school population will be beginning to rise again, requiring a similar long period of disruption. That is if it is ever intended to re-expand the schools to cope with the expanding numbers! It has been calculated that it would be less expensive to maintain all resources over the period than to cut resources now and expand later. Most probably the authorities are very well aware that falling rolls are a transient phenomenon, but intend to use them fully to slash back educational provision.



More teachers, smaller classes and no closures. Photo: The Worker

Stop EEC spy-in-the-cab plans

AFTER the decisive victory in which the British lorry driver improved his earnings the main question for long distance drivers is whether or not to accept the installation of tachographs, something which the EEC is insisting upon.

These instruments register the vehicles' speeds and the length of time for which the engine runs onto daily card discs, eliminating the present log book system. The tachograph is supposed to be foolproof against being tampered with by the driver or employer and thus, at a cost of £200 plus maintenance, would stop the illegal running of lorries.

Opposition to the install-

ation of tachographs is not based on any wish by the drivers to be free to pile up illegal overtime. The present log book system, which the drivers operate themselves under threat of fines for misuse or carelessness, and union pressure against the illegal running by the cowboys of the industry, already provide, the drivers argue, stricter regulations than those on the continent. There is the same kind of resentment of the tachograph as there would be to automatic searches in and out of all factory gates to prevent pilfering.

But the main objection to the tachograph is that the drivers know perfectly well that it is being insisted on by the EEC

not out of regard for the people of Britain but to bring the conditions and pay of lorry drivers throughout the EEC under the same over-all monopoly-capitalist control. The installation of tachographs is not going to stop or even slow down the proliferation of the highly profitable but socially costly transport of freight by continental juggernauts.

Resistance to the installation of tachographs is part of the fight against the EEC. In a system in which profits take precedence over people and transport serves not the people but the profiteers, we have to look very closely at anything the ruling class claims is for our own good.

Gas Board settlement held as profits go up

This week sees the sixth month in the delay on a wage settlement for craftsmen in the gas industry. The craftsmen, members of Confederation of Shipbuilding and Engineering Unions, put in a claim for £80 basic and 35 hour week in line with the policy of the unions in the CSEU.

The Gas Board has so far offered to increase the national basic from £44.32 (plus £6 supplement) to £54.51, an increase of 8.4%. This is the deal accepted by the General and Municipal workers in the industry. The CSEU negotiators have turned down this offer with the remark that it falls far short of the craftsmen's claim.

The gas industry at the same time as paying the lowest rates for skill is making

more money than it knows what to do with. Having used a new accounting system to decimate the profits of the past two years, this is no longer enough and the Gas Board has delayed publishing its accounts for this year since March. Its profits are in the region of £700 m, or £350 m using the new accounting. This is enough to double wages and still show a profit.

The craftsmen in the gas industry are determined to achieve a decent basic rate this year and are no longer willing to allow the GMWU or anyone else to negotiate their wages for the CSEU to rubber stamp. The only thing holding back the struggle is the lack of confidence in their own power to make this industry pay up.

Shaky prospects in oil rig construction

500 of the 2000 Ardersier oil platform yard workers, near Inverness are being made redundant. 500 workers at William Press on the Tyne are being made redundant. Laing Offshore's oil rig yard at Graythorp in the Tees closed a year ago after waiting two years for work.

Those workers who had previously been thrown on the labour market, with the run down and closure of shipbuilding and heavy engineering in the North East and Scotland, once more face the dole.

One factor in oil rig production is the use of contract labour, as large areas of the production are contracted to various firms. This has led to difficulties where differences in conditions, wages and turnover in labour have resulted

in divisions in the workforce and problems for the unions.

At the Burntisland yard in Fife, 800 workers on strike over a completion bonus have been threatened with the sack by Texaco, and also with the closure of the yard, while contract labour will be brought in to complete the work.

The Burntisland yard is 75% owned by British Shipbuilders, who have and still use contract labour.

On the Tyne, electricians forced British Shipbuilding to recruit electricians off the dole, as opposed to the continuing use of contractors. This was done not to spite the contractors but to strengthen and develop the resources of the yards as well as to promote greater stability which comes from a united workforce.

Musicians bring struggle right up to the discotheque door

THE MUSICIANS UNION in Newcastle called off their picket at a night club, but threatened to close it within 24 hours unless its members were employed. With more and more disco-type night clubs opening, the skills and employment of the musicians are under attack.

In negotiations with the owners the musicians union have so far

been offered live music on three nights a week and the immediate employment of a group on the night of the picket.

The musicians union have shown that even under conditions of change from traditional entertainment, they still have the power of organised workers to fight for the safeguarding of their skills and their jobs.

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