



DEFEND JOBS, SKILLS, PAY DEFEND BRITAIN!

Engineering workers fight For new minimum wage Against destruction of jobs

AFTER three Mondays of strikes, the confidence of the Engineering Employers Federation (EEF) representing over 6,000 engineering firms, has been badly shaken.

Before the strikes, the industrial columns of the press were full of headlines like "Engineers split over one-day strike call" and "Limited support forecast for engineers strike today." The EEF was quite convinced that only a few would come out and even after the first day's strike it made the comment that the strike was "widely but reluctantly" supported.

Union discipline

Maybe the reluctance of 2 million engineering workers to accept £10 instead of £20 forced the industrial news columnists to change their headlines to "Backing for engineering strike above expectation."

The effectiveness of the one day strikes and the overtime ban is not disputed now. Indeed it has made its way into company annual reports. The chairman of ERF, one of Britain's heavy lorry producers, told the annual meeting that the strike was costing the company 20 per cent of production, and was endangering its share of the market.

So far over 160 employers in the EEF have agreed to pay the claim in full to keep their factories open. Indeed the EEF has had to threaten expulsion of the members.

The discipline and determination of engineers in pressing their claim, first made policy in May 1978, is an example of the strength of trade unions in Britain and makes a mockery of those who insist that trade unions do not represent the members and are run by a corrupt

"aristocracy".

The negotiations on this claim began in the now far-off days of the 5 per cent rule and continued into the present climate of government destruction.

The engineers will now increase the pressure on the employers by striking for 2 days a week. How much longer will the EEF be able to say it "will not be intimidated by action."?

At the beginning of the year the EEF considered the claim for £80 minimum as "outrageous" and offered £5. Now they say they have offered £10 and are not to be intimidated to pay the full £20. The outrage of skilled workers, whose skill is under attack with the destruction of industry, is something the EEF cannot make disappear with bluff.

Britain's future

The demand for payment for skill is as much a part of preserving skill and saving industry from destruction as the fight for the right to work.

Skilled workers rightly consider themselves to be the backbone of Britain and the capitalists headlong rush to destroy the British working class is aimed particularly at them. The Capitalists know something about the strength of organised workers and are out to destroy the places where they work.

The task of the labour movement in Britain is to preserve all that has been won in 200 years of class struggle. That means facing up not only to demanding due payment from capitalism but making capitalism redundant and running our own country ourselves. Certainly no-one who balks from a wages fight is going to fight for anything better.



Shotton steelworkers have been fighting attempts to close their steelworks since 1975.
Photo: Andrew Wlard(Report)

British Steel Corporation plan attacked 10,000 workers fight Shotton steel closure

SHOTTON, like Corby is built around steel. Again like Corby, it shares the common threat of the British Steel Corporation's axe. The workers' action committee at Shotton reckons 8000 jobs are at stake if the finishing end is included. This figure does not take into account any effect on service workers, suppliers and on the retail trade that would spring from the impoverished town Shotton would become without steel. In all, a further 4000 jobs are estimated to be indirectly affected.

In an interview with the AUEW convenor at the works, contradictions of BSC's re-organisation plans were revealed. For instance, BSC say that there is an over-capacity of steel in the world as well as in the U. K. The

total capacity of our steel industry is some 32 - 36 million tons per year. BSC wants this reduced to 15 million tons, in line with the dictate of the EEC quota system. However, last year, output was 19m tons and BSC equate this to a £305m loss. So rather than increase output towards the capacity figure they plan to reduce it -- no doubt a further loss, and a further reduction will follow on their logic. Such logic is sense if the aim is to destroy an industry, which is precisely what they want. From the point of view of our class interests it is, of course, absurdly illogical.

To achieve their plan, BSC propose to close Corby and Shotton and to "rationalise" Llanwern and Port Talbot. Redcar and Ravenscraig are to expand production while a smaller operation in Motherwell is written off, with some 390 jobs at stake.

Against such wanton destruction workers have other ideas, but the fight to save Shotton and defeat the BSC's

anti-national plan will only succeed if the gilded lily is seen for what it is -- an employer's destruction tool. The attractive flower soon withers. Talk of 2 years pay as a buy off for closure shows how scared BSC is of the workers' strength.

Plans to fight the Shotton closure are being laid locally, and an estimated 10,000 workers converged on London on Thursday August 9th seeking support via the T. U. C. Steel Industry Consultative Committee for a national fight. All unions in the industry are represented on this committee.

By declaring war on steel, the bosses are attacking us all. Their designs for our future are nakedly exposed by each closure, whatever the industry. As we have said many times in THE WORKER never before has the unity of our class been so imperative -- our task is to co-ordinate individual holding operations such as this into the ultimate battle to destroy our bosses, and their destructive system.

Next Issue

Trades Union Congress
1979
Historic Notes-The TUC

Workers fight capitalism,

East and West

IN MRS THATCHER'S favourite "communist" country, Yugoslavia, an increasing number of workers are striking against the oppressive system of capitalist self-administration.

In Croatia, one of the republics of Yugoslavia, over a seven month period to May 1979 7880 workers took part in 22 strikes. Yugoslavia openly admits to its problem of too many millionaires. One thing that Tito and Thatcher have in common is the struggle of the working class to overthrow capitalism, and them as its representatives.

In the USSR, which has a slightly different capitalist face, workers are showing their opposition to their new capitalist rulers and relations of production; the industrial growth rate has risen by only 3.5 per cent, the target was 5.7 per cent; in agriculture the grain harvest is forecast to be down to 185 million tonnes from the target of 226.8 million tonnes.

The Soviet economy failed also to meet its targets in oil, steel, coal, electricity, piping, ready-rolled metal and fertilisers. The increasing amount of foreign capital investment in the USSR and COMECON has a still greater exploitative effect upon the working class and peasants.

It is a far cry from the Soviet Russia under Lenin and Stalin, when through the proletarian dictatorship Socialist industry and agriculture was built, from a backward peasant economy to socialist industry.

In COMECON price rises and falling production have meant greater exploitation of the workers and peasants. Hungary has just announced a twenty per cent rise in food prices, fifty per cent on bread, thirty per cent on meat, and twenty per cent on dairy produce.

Chile plan of destruction and depression

WHICH COUNTRY is this?

- where the number of teachers and pupils have declined?
- where the education budget has been so severely cut that schools are running short of basic materials?
- where the Government couldn't care less about reduced educational opportunities, and welcomes the creation of a highly educated elite, 'choosing to spend their money on schooling'?
- where education is seen as narrowly serving the needs of a declining capitalism and cheap labour market?

Full marks if you've said 'Britain', though in fact this description is by a community worker in Chile. In the six years of the Pinochet regime, the percentage of Chilean children at school has dropped from a record 92 per cent in 1973 (the last year of Allende's Government) to below 70 per cent. This is because with a sharp drop in real wages and soaring inflation many parents can't afford to send their children even to primary school any more. In practice, free education in Chile is dead - in a country that was the pride of Latin America in educational provision.

State school children are no longer provided with books or paper. Schools run out of chalk and other basic materials, and parents have to pay. It costs about £12 a

Historic Notes

PEASANTS of the South West, with other workmen and sympathetic gentlemen, had formed an army in defence of their lands and lives. They laid siege to Exeter, a crucial supply and political centre for the area, controlling most of the surrounding villages. The government's troops were sent to destroy them.

Their first major battle took place at Fenny Bridges where the longbows and bravery of the Cornishmen proved useful allies against the fancy mercenaries from abroad. Their siege caused the people of Exeter to question the political structure of their city, where all wealth and political power was in the hands of a few, selfish, rich merchants and the like.

The relief of Exeter was essential unless some of the monarch's and businessmen's richest supporters were to be destroyed. A fierce battle took place in the now sleepy village of Clyst St. Mary. The rebels dug in and the strength of their conviction made them repulse the government troops several times and capture many of their weapons. However, they were eventually overcome;

Part 3 - Class Wars 1549

though they never surrendered, a thousand were killed in hand to hand fighting over two days. Others managed to retrieve artillery, morale and energy and they escaped with them to other parts of the South West ready for the next confrontation.

On August 6 1549 Exeter was relieved and the government forces occupied it as a base from which to begin their political reconstruction of the area. Their first priority was to get rid of the last outposts of militant resistance. This was urgent, for peasants all over the South, in Hampshire, in Sussex, were joining to consider the possibility of a new rising. Ironically, some met in 'The Crown' inn in Winchester, and they plotted to rob the cathedral clergy to get funds.

The government's hungry army took to indiscriminate plundering of villages and town houses. The horrendous 'pacification' procedures began. Gallows were set up on every street corner and village green, and anyone remotely suspected of supporting the revolutionaries was severely dealt with. A Protestant priest was commissioned to pass many sen-

ences. He hanged Catholic priests who had helped the peasants in chains from church steeples, garbed in all their religious finery. Many who had sympathised had their lands confiscated and loyal personages benefited from this plunder.

The rebel troops at this time were amassing and preparing for battle again. Battle, unrelenting and bloody, broke out at Sampford Courtenay later in August. And this time the back of the rebel army was really broken. The government appointed a fierce man, Sir Anthony Kingston, to destroy once and for all every scrap of resistance. This he did with grim efficiency and relish. Practically everyone put into positions of responsibility by the people was dealt with. The new owners of the land were executors of feudal owners and peasant sharers. Changes of ownership and control came about through revolutionary violence, though at this time it was violence against the fragmented world of peasant producers.

The concluding part of this series follows in Issue 35.

Israel still expanding

THE TREATY with Egypt has not stopped Israel from continuing its expropriation of Arab land. The Israeli Government passed a bill permitting 37,500 acres to be taken over in order to build a military air base in the Negev Desert. The 8000 Bedouins who have been driven off their land have called the bill and the 'compensation' offered by the Israeli government 'highway robbery'.

Meanwhile, the Government has agreed to the creation of new and enlarged settlements on the west bank of the Jordan river, designed to surround whole towns and villages. The purpose of these settlements, as the minister responsible put it, is to prevent any future Palestinian autonomy or independence. Only an arch racist would think that the existence of Jews on the West Bank is incompatible with a Palestinian state. But the state the Palestinians wish to establish is precisely one where Arab and Jew can live in harmony.

Neither did Israel talk of peace stop it from attacking neighbouring Lebanon. These frequent incursions into a sovereign state have gone so far that even the US asked Israel to halt the most outrageous attacks. This came after Israel planes swooped over Lebanese roads early one Sunday morning, killing scores of people who were on their way to the seaside. The US, however, was not objecting to the murder of civilians and the destruction of homes so much as to the use of US supplied jets which were intended for the 'defence of Israel'.

In the period before the forthcoming UN debates, on the question of whether the Palestinians' right to their own homeland is to be recognised, Israel, abetted by the strong organisation of Zionists in the US, has forced the sacking of the US ambassador to the UN, Andrew Young, for simply talking to a representative of the Palestinian Liberation Organisation.

The Week

HAVING proved THE WORKER'S case on who causes inflation by raising the inflation figure to over 16 per cent the Government has now produced, out of a hat, the figure for the reduction in the cost of living resulting from cuts in taxation which - surprise! surprise! - exactly balances the inflation increase, so that workers need not ask for any more money. Which shows that you can do anything with figures except, when you can't afford the food in the shops, eat them.

THE TRIAL has begun in the US of Bob Arakian and other American Marxist-Leninists for their part in demonstrating against Teng Hsiao-ping's war-mongering visit to Washington. It is a measure of the change brought about in China since Mao Tsetung's death that the police and courts of an imperialist country should be punishing American progressives for attacking current Chinese policy.

BECAUSE of the reputation of British union organisation, the Yugoslav crew of a German-owned ship, "Marabu Parr", chose the port of Hull to fight for better pay and conditions. The ship was blockaded in Hull for over two weeks by the International Transport Workers Federation and the crew's action was fully supported by the dock lockmen, tugboatmen and dockers of Hull.

IN THE first half of 1979, Shell made £1328 million profit. It expects to make £2500 for the whole year. So much for the oil crisis - to Shell the only crisis is one of accountancy and the problem is how to devise a statistical way of hiding the loot. Already Shell insists that the 300 per cent increase in profits is only 23 per cent.

BY THE middle of the year, massive unemployment was a feature of working class life everywhere in the capitalist world. Japan, in spite of its much-vaunted 'economic miracle' had 1,240,000 out of work and that paragon of capitalist 'development', West Germany, boasted 775,100 or 3.4 per cent unemployed.

In the US almost 6 million workers are jobless, Britain and France have over 1½ million unemployed each, Belgium a rate of 7.2 per cent and Holland 5.2 per cent.

All those skills wasted, those lives blighted.

THE RICH are getting richer, and one per cent own twenty-five per cent of the wealth, according to the Diamond Report. At the other end of the scale, about half the population account for a mere six per cent of wealth. Income tax is no longer a burden on the rich (if it ever was), but on us. 20 years ago the richest ten per cent paid 65 per cent of income tax - two years ago this was down to 40 per cent. After the Budget, almost all income tax in this country will come from workers, so that the public services are at least 90 per cent financed out of our tax and national insurance.



The 10,000 strong demonstration in London, on 12th August, is part of the rising swell in Britain to get the British troops out of Ireland.

month to send a child to a 'free state' school. Experienced primary school teachers earn about £100 a month after tax, while the minimum necessary for a basic standard of living is £136. There are many countries that could be quoted as worse in this respect. The point is that Chile did have a relatively advanced welfare state. (Northamptonshire County Council is already suggesting teachers' and parents' fund raising as the solution to the problem of buying books and stationery.)

The Junta is not at all worried at the reduction in educational opportunities. Pinochet has said it is government policy to cut opportunities and standards for the majority so that only a few children whose parents can afford it, will go to secondary schools. The aim is to create a small highly qualified elite, while most children's aspirations are deliberately reduced to fit them for cheap labour and unemployment.

State education is being handed over to the private sector. Corporations and companies take over responsibility for administration of a school in return for financial support.

Since last August, the Junta has been experimenting with a system that they might have borrowed from our own Manpower Services Commission. Firms can now employ, as apprentices,

young people under 18 at 40 per cent less than the minimum wage paid to adults, by providing the apprentices with some training. Apprentices' cheap labour replaces that of workers who, a few years ago, had the best trade unions in Latin America. Schools in the border areas all have compulsory 'labour training programmes'. And if that conjures up images of Hitler's 'strength through Joy' movement, think of the Engineering Employers' proposals for training within our secondary schools, or 'Industrial experience' courses for teachers. Because the Chilean teachers' union has been banned, opposition is difficult to organise. The parents' committees that still exist are carefully supervised. Minutes of their meetings go direct to the Military Command.

A bit tougher than Britain, 1979, true. But anyone want to lay any bets for 1984? It's clear that the basic principles of educational policy, as built up by Callaghan and Thatcher, are the same as Pinochet's. And perhaps we ought not to be too smug that we don't have as harsh repression as in Chile to enforce it. Is this because we don't care enough and haven't fought them hard enough, so they feel they can rub our noses in the dirt and get away with it? After all, the Chilean bourgeoisie had to perform a bloody coup to save their skins.

Editorial

IF ONE waits long enough the charges Marxists make against the imperialists will be conceded, revealed or even boasted about by those imperialists themselves.

We have often spoken about the undeclared and totally unjustifiable war the British and U.S. governments waged against Albania for over five years after the end of World War II.

Now secret documents in the American National Archives in Washington D.C. have been made public which show in considerable detail the collaboration of the CIA and the British Secret Service in carrying out these absolutely unprovoked acts of aggression against Albania. These papers also prove the British involvement in the CIA-engineered coup by which the Iranian government was overthrown and the Shah in 1953. It is further revealed that the American U-2 spy plane which was shot down over the Soviet Union was stationed at Lakenheath in Suffolk and was often flown by RAF pilots.

Many years after the so-called "emergency" in Kenya when the British Army was engaged in a ten-year war of suppression against jungle liberation forces, a book was published boasting about the success of the lying propaganda about the Mau Mau. The British government was worried about possible US reaction to the brutal attacks on the Kenyan people and by portraying the Mau Mau as degenerate savages practising the most obscene rites it was hoped to disarm American criticism. The real savages were the imperialist forces.

A number of articles in THE WORKER have pointed out that the problem of world malnutrition and starvation was not simply one of raising agricultural output by some kind of "green revolution". It was not so much a problem of forces of production but of relations of production which was keeping millions upon millions of people in such dire straits; and this problem could only be met by a revolution to change the relations of production and liberate the creative energies of poor peasants.

Now UN agencies and spokesmen for "aid" schemes have had to accept the paradox of "rising malnutrition amid rising agricultural output". It is having to be recognised that the main cause of some 750 million people living on the verge of starvation is that so many governments in the countries where such poverty exists represent a landowning minority who are getting rich out of the misery of their fellow countrymen.

We Marxists know these things about imperialism not because we run some super spy service manned by Red James Bonds but because we have analysed what kind of beast imperialism is and how it tried viciously to maintain itself against the opposition of the people. It is this same kind of analysis which enables us to tell our readers not just about this secret imperialist crime or that, but about the absolute decline of the capitalist system of which imperialism is the final phase. It is what enables us to predict not just the evil things imperialism will go on doing to save itself but the good things the workers of the world will do in overthrowing this brutal, savage, obscene, unjust system.

Bristol Trades Council to defend jobs Youth Health Elderly target for Tory axe

"IF MY dog needs meat but only has a bone, and people try to take it away, I shall fight them - not console myself with 'Too bad, it wasn't enough for him anyway'." Applauding this analogy, Bristol Trades Council pledged itself to fight all jobs lost and to resist the Tory attack on the Manpower Services Commission. But the MSC is no paradise lost. Started by the Labour Government, it was set up to manage a giant Euro-style swindle, with its pretensions to 'channel the right people into the right jobs, quickly', taking over valid jobs along with cosmetic schemes to dress up the dole queues.

The cuts are to be finalised in September when MP's are on holiday: they will entail a 20 per

cuts.

The undermining of apprenticeships by means of six-month 'White Wonder' courses will continue, and where these are reduced the skilled jobs will be lost entirely, to be replaced by people with not even that level of skill, or machinery. Such specious schemes as have had youngsters counting lamp-posts may be retained: their loss would be 'socially explosive'.

Valid jobs are most at risk. They are all on limited contracts with no security and little chance of unionisation. In Bristol the

Playbus, Day Care for Children, Women's Aid, Refuge for Battered Wives, Inflatable Play for the handicapped and others, will all get the chop. These have proved themselves a necessary part of civilised life.

The fight is to make the work permanent, funded by the Local Authority. For these, as for the Civil Service jobs affected, we must go forward - not backwards from the meagre bones chucked to us by Labour. Cuts on capitalism's terms will rob us of what little there was nourishing in them: even our dogs deserve better!

Tory vandals plan destruction Libraries face further attacks

THE SECRETARY of State for the Environment, Heseltine, together with the Association of County Councils, has launched a major new attack upon public libraries.

Heseltine promised the ACC on July 25 that he would give a 'sympathetic reception' to county plans to introduce charges to a number of hitherto free local government services, including libraries. The ACC, never to be outdone, is pressing to go still further and abolish the statutory requirement upon local authorities to provide a public library service at all!

Meanwhile the current round of cuts, following those made each year since 1974-5, is forcing public libraries to consider such measures as drastic reduction of opening hours, closure of many branches, or abolition of certain whole areas of service.

The 'nibbling operation', as one County Librarian put it, has

been done already. Book funds, cut this year by some tens of thousands of pounds in one typical county library system, will not stretch to buy the books (rising in price) needed to meet a higher and currently rising demand from the public.

The service to schools by the public libraries, which in many areas provides most, if not all, of the school library, is also under the axe. It is hardly surprising that public libraries, which were won by our class in the same battle as public education, are being threatened with extinction at the same time as many schools.

Are we going to witness the rise and fall of education and libraries for workers within just over 100 years? Are knowledge and culture again in future to be only for those who can pay to go private? NO! The working class will defeat these philistines and vandals.



cent staff cut (5,400 to go), an end to the STEP provision for adult unemployed, halving of TOPS skillcentre retraining, marginal cuts in YOP school-leavers' schemes, plus reduction in Health and Safety research, help for job-seekers and even sheltered employment schemes for the elderly and handicapped.

The bitter irony is that the MSC strategy of creating non-jobs and destroying skill, opposed by previous Trades Council policy, is in no way mitigated by these



Tory Philistines attack education

WANDSWORTH teachers have reacted angrily to the local Tory council's attempt to withdraw schools from the Inner London Education Authority (ILEA). The Wandsworth Tories want to bring local schools under borough control, claiming that this will make education less bureaucratic, that standards will improve and teachers will be more accountable.

In a press statement the Wandsworth Teachers' Association of the NUT has denounced the plan as a crude political move which totally ignores the educational welfare of the borough's children. The Tory plan is seen as a backward step that will actually damage education in Wandsworth.

Wandsworth teachers want their schools to remain within

the ILEA which is controlled by Labour. Their association is not uncritical of the authority. It considers that the ILEA policies on teacher transfer and school closure, in particular, to be damaging. However, it does believe that education is likely to remain in a far healthier state if schools remain in the ILEA rather than being withdrawn from it.

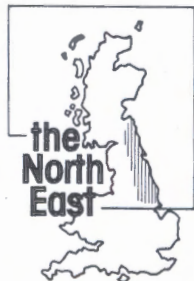
Over the years the ILEA has built up excellent human and material resources, making it, relatively speaking, one of the best education authorities in Britain.

Drastic cuts in the education budget have been announced and many local education authorities in Tory hands intend taking barbaric measures to satisfy their political masters at Westminster. School meals are likely to be abolished in some areas, nursery education (if it is available) to be charged for and many schools face closure. Inevitably many teachers will be threatened with redundancy.

The record of the Wandsworth Conservative Council since being put in office has been such that it can be considered a model 'Tory' council. It has drastically cut down on the services that should be provided for the people. It has antagonised local trade unionists by its reckless attitude towards the social services. Should the council get its hands on the schools the prospects for

the children of Wandsworth are bleak. These Tories will dutifully carry out the cuts initiated by the government.

The position of Wandsworth Teachers Association is clear. It wants the schools to remain within the ILEA and its secondary schools to remain comprehensive. It will fight to defend education by demanding that class size continues to fall, that staffing ratios continue to improve and that the provision of material resources continues to increase.



Humberside cuts nurture revolt

DECLINE in educational provision continues. In Humberside all adult education has been cancelled until next March when it may be 'revised' as a two-thirds service. This means no evening classes, no adult literacy, no craft classes.

Redundancy notices have already been served on teachers. Heads are being told to plan for a 'basic curriculum', eliminating all non-essentials (music, history, geography??). Swimming goes (in a county with three major ports!)

Every parent in Humberside will be sent a letter asking them to keep their children home at lunchtime, to 'save' on school meals. Teachers fear they'll stay at home all day, in that case. The youth service, like adult education, is to be 'suspended' until March (where do all the kids go until then?) and cut by 50 per cent thereafter. The Careers service, too, is to be axed (so much for all the hogwash about 'preparing for the world of work').

All these measures are part of £2½ million cuts in Humberside education in the current financial year. £1½ million more at least (to pay for oil and wage rises) are promised for September. Next April, £5 to £6 million cuts are expected. A civil service report has told the Government that cuts on this scale will put 100,000 people out of work nationally (including 70,000 teachers) and represent an effective dismantling of the state education system. Our masters are not misguided zealots. They are knowing destroyers. The truth is that in Thatcher's eyes, a kid destined for the dole and then the mud and blood of World War III doesn't need an education: the less the better, the less to ques-

tion why.

Humberside Tory Councillors are the storm troopers of the new Britain. Like Heseltine, their hero, they find the cuts 'immensely exciting', and are determined to give other, more squeamish Tories, something to live up to. The leader of the Council says the people of Humberside no longer want to be 'mollycoddled' by the welfare state. This is the language of the workhouse beadle: not back to the '30s, when measures for social improvement were well afoot, but to pre-1900, before even the most elementary reforms won by the working class.

Humberside NUT at an emergency meeting during the holiday decided to mount a campaign to intensify and widen no-cover and class size sanctions (already in operation for 18 months). In addition thought will need to be given to new and tougher tactics to fight redundancies.

Hull and District Trades Council has formed an action committee to coordinate the fight against the cuts. The Trades Council President said "The cuts are not necessary, they are a matter of political choice. The increases paid the Peter Pans who want to play out their fantasies of being toy soldiers are equivalent to the cost of all adult education in Humberside. We've had the boot put in by the previous government and now by the present one. It's time we started to put the boot in".

NHS staff fight cuts in services

A MASS meeting for all staff was held at St. Mary's Hospital, Harrow Road, in West London on 30th July to discuss the pending cut in services.

Among the proposed cuts are reductions in acute services including closure of the Casualty Department and the Rehabilitation and Rheumatology Wards. The latter will occur by September and there was overwhelming support for a resolution to keep these two wards open by all staff working on and refusing to transfer patients out.

The importance of the unity of all staff was stressed from GP's continuing to refer patients, to Consultants admitting them and other staff working in and servicing the wards.

A steward from the local ambulance service pledged support for the action. His ambulance crews will continue to bring patients to the casualty department and refuse to transfer patients to other hospitals.

Within the North West District of Kensington, Chelsea and Westminster Area Health Authority other cuts are imminent, such as the closure of St. Coloma's and Paddington Green Children's Hospital.

The campaign at St. Mary's will give encouragement to the workers in these smaller hospitals to fight the closures.

University votes to take action

AT A MASS MEETING of clerical and related staff at Leeds University on 9th August a motion calling for industrial action in support of the present wage claim was successfully carried by 5 to 1 of the members present. The call will now go to NALGO's National University Committee to call a one day stoppage on the first day of the Autumn term. This will be the opening shot in the University Staff's fight for a substantial wage increase, reduction of the working week and improved working conditions.

At other universities in the Yorkshire and Humberside District of NALGO, York, Sheffield and Hull have all called for industrial action. Bradford University which is not in the National Consortium, and not affected by the present wage claim, has nevertheless pledged support for any action taken by other university staff in the District.

SAVE SHIPBUILDING

GOVAN Shipbuilders shop stewards called a half day strike and a complete ban on overtime in opposition to the Government's announcement of cuts in shipbuilding amounting to 6,000 jobs and the closure of ship-yards on the Clyde, at Dundee and Sunderland. This is a much more savage axing than had been anticipated and is part of a plan for running down the shipbuilding industry over the next 18 months by cutting the number of workers from 28,000 to 18,000.

The General Secretary of the Amalgamated Society of Boilermakers said that the unions would not accept the proposals to close the yards and that representatives of the Confederation of Shipbuilding and Engineering Unions would be meeting at Newcastle on August 23rd to resist the proposed redundancies.

The Government slashing of annual shipbuilding capacity by over 500,000 tonnes is their answer to what is described as a loss of some £150m since the creation two years ago of the nationalised British Shipbuilders.

The crisis in British Shipbuilding is part of the world capitalist crisis which has already led to such proposals as the "scrap and build" programme of the EEC Shipbuilding Commission

which is designed to scrap 2m tonnes of shipping a year and replace it with 1m tonnes of new shipping built with a 7% subsidy. Naturally, this two fold for one new scheme ran into trouble from those individual EEC countries whose younger or smaller fleets would suffer at the expense of those with old fleets.

Tonnage cuts

Such contradictions within the capitalist camp over shipbuilding were also expressed at the April meeting of the International Chamber of Shipping, representing 29 nations, where a cut in shipbuilding subsidies was called for. It was pointed out at the conference that 1978 was the first year since World War II in which there was a net fall in world tanker tonnage. The more recently industrialised countries at the UNCTAD conference on shipping called for a larger and more balanced share of the shipping trade, arguing that while they export 61% of world sea-borne cargo they own less than 8% of the world cargo fleet.

The Comecon countries have also been building up their shipping fleet and this is seen as a threat to all the other capitalist shipbuilders.

In Britain the shipbuilding, marine engineering and ship-

repair workforce fell from 96,000 in 1977 to 86,000 in 1978 and now stands at 80,000. The Confederation of Shipbuilding and Engineering Unions has backed the "scrap and build" programme as a tactic for at least slowing down closures and saving some skills, and it is obvious that old dangerous ships should be scrapped in the interests of those who build ships and those who refit them. But the adoption of this tactic in place of the demand for full ship-building capacity and no loss of jobs is to accept the madness of the capitalist system as the terms on which we have to fight. In any case, what has become obvious to all workers in the ship-building and ship-repair industry with the latest Government cuts is that what is at stake is the destruction of the whole industry as incapable of putting enough profits in the right pockets.

IN BRIEF/International

MUZOREWA has announced the intention of accepting into Zimbabwe 1,000 of the Vietnamese boat people who are running away from socialism. No doubt he hopes in this way to make up for the quarter of a million Zimbabwe people who have been driven out of Zimbabwe by the vicious operations of the Smith-Muzorewa security forces.

IT HAS long been a common assumption that the emergency facilities at our hospitals are sufficient to cope with any eventuality. Yet if the cuts proposed by the Enfield and Haringey Area Health Authority had been allowed to go through it would have led to road-accident victims and those suffering injury at work being left unattended.

The intention was to close the accident and emergency department of the Prince of Wales Hospital after 6pm, effectively stopping admissions at 3pm, when factories were still working and roads at their busiest. Clearly the alternative facilities at the North Middlesex Hospital in Edmonton, unable to cope sufficiently with the cases on hand, could not hope to provide adequate coverage. Ambulances would be totally unable to come through the busy rush hour traffic in time to prevent many deaths.

Coupled with the decision to close completely the Wood Green and Southgate Hospital and to restrict ward space at the other hospitals in the area, this decision would have had very serious consequences for those people foolish enough to have an accident in Haringey.

However, such was the furore that greeted this decision, such was the united strength and determination of the doctors, nurses and ancillary staff working in the area, and the 20,000 people who signed the petitions and organised demonstrations to resist the cuts, that the plans have now been completely abandoned. New ways of saving money are being considered, but no one is under any illusions. As one shop steward said, "The staff are delighted but I strongly believe they will be coming back for more. This is only the beginning of the fight."



Part of the recent march in Haringey against the cuts. Photo: THE WORKER

Post Office refuses to pay wages bill

THE POST OFFICE is under immediate threat, from a management who are content to allow the rapid decline of all but the high profit services, and a government who seeks only to speed the process up. It is against this background that the SCPS and CPSA have been fighting for wages since April. The loss of telephone billing revenue has cost the PO £90 million in profit so far. Obviously money could have been saved by reaching a compromise settlement in March, but management see the battle as a political one rather than in terms of this year's profits. The new vigour of the civil service unions threatens them

and they have sought to stifle it. The rise offered over the pay period April to April amounts to an average of 14 per cent, although all the elements together will eventually total 18 to 20 per cent. SCPS members have already voted to reject this offer, feeling that a billing deficit soon to top £1000 million will persuade management to do better. To settle on management's terms would invite a counter-attack against the two unions, which, judging by tactics employed so far, would bring a need for more, but entirely defensive, industrial action.

A member of the UPW executive has alleged that by

fighting on, SCPS members risk spoiling the Post Office's 'corporate image'. The idea is that if everyone keeps quiet, the government might go away. As if running away is a sensible way to persuade the enemy of your strength in battle. Post Office unions can only rely on their own strength to preserve standards, jobs and wages.

Among SCPS members, rejection of the settlement was most emphatic in the computing section which has borne the brunt of strike action. The determination, the organisation and the funds exist to continue the pay fight to a satisfactory conclusion. Meanwhile, phone now... pay later.

Plessey pay fight continues

THE PAY DISPUTE at Plessey, Liverpool, continues. On 9th August, the company made a derisory offer: on 13th August the workers at a mass meeting strengthened their resolve to improve on the current 10 per cent offer as from April 1979. In their fifth week of suspension they are in no mood to return to work without a significant increase. Indeed, their claim - 20 per cent - seems too low with recent VAT and price increases.

They are quite clear that management warnings of redundancy because of their strike are declarations of intent regardless of pay, and recognise that more than pay is at stake; the issue is one of credibility. Workers having asserted their claims, do not follow where the employer would lead them. Spirits are high, as is determination that they will not be dictated to.

Morale high in GEC pay strike

THIRTEEN hundred workers are entering their sixth week of strike at GEC, Liverpool.

The company has offered a meagre 8.3 per cent wage increase for 1979. Workers at GEC have rejected this ludicrous offer. GEC's profits this year amounted to more than £370 million. They have a cash balance of £700 million, earning them £1½ million in interest alone each week. Even the Tory press has remarked that Weinstock's companies have so much money that they don't know what to do with it.

The workers on the picket line believe that GEC is deliberately digging in in a bid to intimidate them. Half of the Liverpool site is up for lease and, in the context of Merseyside factory closures, GEC appear to be pinning their hopes on workers' fears of further job losses if they stay out. The inevitable threat of 'possible' site closures is now a factor in pay negotiations on Merseyside.

However, as one striker put it: "No-one is going to intimidate me. I'm fighting for a fair wage. An all-out strike is the only way to move them."

He was summing up the feeling of all those workers outside the gate, who voted almost unanimously to come out at the end of the afternoon shift on July 4. Their morale is high and they are determined to stay out until they get a wage offer which adequately covers rising inflation.

Bookshops

Bellman Bookshop 155 Fortress Road, London NW5
Brighton Workers Bookshop 37 Gloucester Road, Brighton
Main Trend Books 17 Midland Road, St. Philips, Bristol
Northern Star Bookshop 18A Leighton Street, Leeds
Basildon Bookstall Tues, Fri, Sat Marketplace
Hull Bookstall Old Town Market, Saturdays
Liverpool Bookstall every Thursday Liverpool University

The Worker

155, FORTRESS ROAD, LONDON, NW5
6 months £2.50 (inc. postage)
1 year £5.00 (inc. postage)

NAME
ADDRESS