

THE WORKER



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FIGHT THE CUTS SMASH THE LABOUR GOVT!

Social democracy which has its raison d'être in the welfare state now turns to destroy the welfare state. It is in disarray: aggressive yet in disarray. Wilson its chief spokesman and executor announces his intention to resign. Like a rat leaving a sinking ship, Wilson's resignation is the final stroke to social democracy and its pretensions of advance and working class orientation. A new phase of open oppression is to commence. The Labour Party, the acme of social democracy in Britain is through its government planning the wholesale destruction of Britain. Will the working class be a spectator?

The TUC General Council in what must be regarded as the greatest betrayal ever has accepted this strategy. Only

one vote was cast against it. Jones, Scanlon and Bassnett, described by the press as the "three most senior trade union leaders" called upon workers to support the Labour Government in its attack upon them. Will the working class remain a spectator?

Those Labour MPs who from among that bankrupt institution, the Parliamentary Labour Party, had the courage to stand against the Government White Paper must be admired. They were immediately crucified by the Government and so-called trade union leaders as well as by the mass media. The action of the Tribune Group shows more than anything else the dishonesty and corruption of those "leaders" who with disgraceful

servility supported the Government. Healey's outbursts and abuse gives a rare insight into what those who oppose future corporate measures will have to expect. Will the working class stand on the sidelines, a spectator?

Capitalism first born in Britain has today reached its extremity first here in Britain. A force for advance three centuries ago is today a force for reaction and destruction. It closes factories, destroys industries, slashes education and health, strangles research and technological advance, abandons Britain. Far from being mere spectators, we are the cast in an unwritten play of a life and death struggle in which we have to work out the right line or perish.

Revolution Sweeps S. Africa

A great storm is sweeping Africa. The people of southern Africa are today engaged in a great movement for independence and national liberation. South Africa and Rhodesia together with the imperialist powers tremble as this movement gathers strength. Britain, the oldest imperialist power entangled within deep contradictions, hopelessly attempts to resurrect part of its imperial past. The cry of the royal colony of Rhodesia is now coming from various quarters of the British ruling class.

The US continues to pronounce upon the situation in southern Africa as if it was the 32nd state of America. The Soviet Union, the new star of international imperialists, attempts to occupy the seat left by the former colonial powers, now under the slogan of international solidarity.

The present revolutionary tide was precipitated by the departure of the last major colonial power in Africa, itself the outcome of a long and arduous struggle.

Those who see every event as a product of big power manoeuvres fail to see the tide flowing underneath. The imperialist powers no longer determine events in the

world. Vietnam has decidedly put paid to imperialist hopes to shape events to their liking. Today revolution is the main trend in the world and imperialism, whether of the American or Soviet variety, is on the decline.

It is not the danger of Soviet domination that is throwing the western imperialist powers into their present panic. It is that a sleeping giant is beginning to flex its muscles and feel its strength. The Soviet Union is given a free hand in Angola by the US to quell this uprising of the people in southern Africa. Contrary to what is claimed, this is precisely what detente means. It is an alliance between the major imperialist powers against revolution anywhere in the world. It has yet to be used against the working class in Britain and the rest of Europe. The fact that these imperialist powers fight among themselves to retain and expand their influence does not distract them from their major task of counter-revolution.

History marches forward. And with it marches the people of southern Africa, sweeping aside the imperialists and their stooges.

EDITORIAL Destroyed by the Lesser of Two Evils

Only if you vote Labour, we were told in 1974, can massive unemployment be avoided. Only if you vote for Britain's entry into the EEC, we were told by Labour in 1975, can massive unemployment be avoided. Today on the second anniversary of Labour's return to power unemployment stands at one million and a half and is still rising!

Under a Labour Government collective bargaining has been stopped wages drastically cut, health, education and housing all slashed. Even the postal and rail services and heating and lighting have become luxuries beyond the reach of many workers. In fact, the whole oppressive weight of capitalism's counter-attack against the working class is being imposed by a Labour Government.

To be opposed to the attacks on the working class by the present Government is a good thing and this opposition must not be inhibited by the fact that it is a Labour and not a Tory Government.

As long as workers are willing to limit their political action to a choice between Labour and Tory, which is no choice at all since both parties are equally committed to the defence of capitalism, as long as the working class languishes in this ideological self-emasculation of merely opting for what appears to be the lesser of two evils, there will be no limit to the miseries imposed on the working class in the interests of profit.

That is because the "lesser of two evils" argument has no limits. Is unemployment already a million and a half? Under the Tories, it can be argued, it would be two million. And when it reaches two million under Labour, it can be said that under the Tories it would have been three. It is just as if workers were asked whether they would rather vote for a government that would execute one worker in every ten or a government that would only execute one worker in every twenty. If workers are foolish enough to allow themselves to be trapped in a choice like that there would eventually be no workers left to choose anything.

The working class has to go over to the kind of revolutionary struggle that challenges the very parliamentary basis on which it is fobbed off with empty promises, phoney choices and false alternatives. The only real choice for the working class is socialism.

CONTENTS

- P. 2 ... CHINA
- P. 3 ... NO TO THE CUTS!
- p. 4 ... TEACHERS



500 men and women Concorde workers demonstrated in London on March 1st before handing letters to the Prime Minister and the United States Ambassador. Their cause, to save Concorde and resist the 2400 redundancies announced by BAC in November.

China-The People Decide



One aspect of the dictatorship of the proletariat in practice is that the people have the responsibility of deciding their own affairs at every level of society. In socialist China, students, like other workers in education, participate fully in the running of education.

One of the basic principles of socialist democracy is put into practice - that political decisions cannot be left to a few, but must emanate from the workers at their place of work - in education, through lecturing and studying, production and scientific research,

discussion and criticism.

These democratic rights of the people have been ensured in the new constitution of People's China. One specific right included is that of writing wall posters to promote widespread critical discussion.

PUBLIC HEALTH ACT

At a time when the Labour Government has cut finance available for housing repairs and improvement work, the High Court has decided to reinterpret the phrase 'statutory nuisance' in the 1936 Public Health Act.

Under Section 92 of this Act, a local authority had the power to take action against any landlord whose property was in such a state as to be prejudicial to health or a nuisance. Public Health Inspectors and the Courts had assumed that any condition interfering with the personal comforts of the occupiers would be regarded as a nuisance, and thousands of property repairs have been ordered on this basis.

On 24th February, the Lord Chief Justice and two of his col-

leagues, decided that no nuisance can arise if only the occupants of the house are affected or that health is at risk (the Courts have yet to interpret the meaning of 'health'). Since this precedent was set, magistrates in London have already thrown out cases brought by local authorities. This, in practice, means that many tenants who would have had their living conditions improved by successful action taken under public health legislation are now forced to continue living in conditions previously considered a 'statutory nuisance'. Public Health Inspectors are now forced to consider using provisions under the Housing Act 1957 (much more complex and unwieldy legislation) and unsuitable to many cases that

would have been brought previously under the Public Health Act. One important Section, however, that existed within the 1936 Act and is nowhere to be found in the Housing Acts is Section 99. This provides that any person, eg. a tenant, aggrieved by a 'statutory nuisance' can take action through the Courts and if the Court is satisfied that a nuisance exists, it can order the local authority to abate that nuisance, eg. carry out repairs if it actually is the landlord, or order the landlord to carry out the repairs.

At a time when local authorities are cutting back drastically on their repair programmes, their tenants have no remedy at law.

Press-Reform-Corporate Style

In 'The People and the Media', a discussion paper, the Labour Party says: "The Labour Party believes that the mass media ... are not serving the British people adequately and that they are dominated by a few privileged groups." It wants to remedy this by making the press come under the domination of just one privileged group - the bourgeois state.

Newspaper workers are already fighting the profiteers of the Press. Why should we change direction, vote for state intervention, only to face a future of struggle against state control?

The working class must demand control of the Press and of

the state. But we cannot have the first until we have the second.

At its last conference, the Labour Party unveiled its plans for dealing with the 'Press problem'. It wants to set up a National Print Corporation with powers to take printing plant into so-called public ownership.

It wants to set up an advertising revenue board to subsidise lower circulation newspapers artificially, and to launch new non-profit making papers.

Furthermore, it would like to put a tax on advertising; to control newspaper promotions, and to reconstitute the Press Council. Never has the illusion of reform

been so well illustrated as in these shameful, half-baked designs.

Needless to say, the editors and proprietors oppose state intervention in their industry. Not, of course, to protect workers from the corporate state, but to maintain their power and manufacture their profits.

Just as long ago the bourgeoisie discovered that war was too important to be left to the generals, they now realise that the media machine is too important to be left to individual press capitalists. For our part, we must declare that the running of the country is too important to be left to the capitalists; then we can set about the reform of the press.

More importantly, workers have no interest in this nationalisation of the Press. The scheme has been criticised by some printing unions in part. But the sham has yet to be exposed for what it is - one step in a growing corporate fascism.

The Dragon Stirs

The cuts in social services have hit South Wales, just as every other region in Britain has been affected. However, it is within this very attack of capitalism that the seeds of its destruction lie. In the fight to defend what our class has built up over the years, there will come the realisation that in order to save we must destroy - destroy that aggressor capitalism which attacks our gains.

In the fight against the cuts all sections of the class are united, all regions are equally affected, giving the lie to the talk of separatism and devolution. There follows below an outline of the growing resistance in South Wales.

HIGHER EDUCATION

Here action against cuts has involved unions which are not directly hit. Both the NUM and NUPE have organised joint marches and rallies with the NUS and NUT. This support has been reciprocated in the Health Service. February 27th was a day of action, which resulted in strikes, pickets and sit-ins in most colleges throughout Wales.

HEALTH SERVICE

The idea for joint union action against cuts in the NHS sprang up in September. Apart from health service unions, the NUM and the NUT have been active. In October a battle to get extra beds installed in a new hospital in Haverfordwest was won largely through support from construction workers. The Hospital Action Committee thrown up at the time is now embarked on a campaign to prevent the closure of the County Hospital in Haverfordwest. In West Glamorgan, NUPE has come out against proposals for the future of the health service contained in a report by the Area Health Authority. The plan contains proposals for the closure of three annexes, and a hospital by 1985. The total number of beds is to be cut by at least 195.

NUPE itself organised a joint march with the NUS in Cardiff on February 28th, against redundancies in Gwynedd, and understaffing in South Glamorgan.

RAILWAYS

In light of the directive that Government departments should draw up schedules for staff re-

Unemployment in the USSR

In the Soviet Union, widely hailed as a "Superpower", there is now a large army of unemployed workers. Soviet newspapers and journals disclose that 20 per cent of the workers in Soviet industrial establishments are unemployed.

In the building industry, 30 per cent are without jobs. There have been over six million industrial workers without jobs every year since 1970. Every unemployed worker has to search at least one or two weeks, some take months or even years to find a job.

At the same time workers are "imported" from East European countries for the more menial jobs and for hazardous and unpleasant jobs in Siberia.

reductions, the civil service unions are preparing to fight redundancies.

In Swansea at the Drivers and Vehicle Licensing Centre, the Society of Civil Servants is ready to resist all redundancies, by strike action if necessary.

CIVIL SERVICE

The fight against cuts in services in Wales, particularly in West and Mid-Wales has so far been mainly contained within the rail unions. The 'No Rail Cuts Campaign' was begun on December 11th 1975 but since the announcement of increased rail fares a series of public meetings against the cuts has begun in Dyfed. 500 South Wales railmen attended a national demonstration in London against the cuts.

INDIAN REVOLUTIONARIES MURDERED

The fascist dictatorship of India under Mrs Gandhi has declared a state of emergency and arrested nearly two hundred thousand people, particularly worker and peasant leaders. Under this state of emergency the bourgeoisie has suspended its own capitalist constitution, which was made inoperable by the immense majority of the Indian working class. Today we see that no detainees can question their detention, that bail is forbidden, and the courts cannot interfere.

In fact, the state of emergency is not a new thing. Since the Indian bourgeoisie-comprador in nature, grabbed power through compromise and surrender, the Detention Act has been continuously used to suppress the revolutionary movements of the working class.

The record shows that the killings and brutal murders of landless proletarians has surpassed that of the British Raj. Hundreds of women and children of landless workers were burnt to death by the Indian Police and the landlords. As the depression created revolt the so-called untouchables organised themselves under the leadership of the Marxist-Leninists Kishor Gaud and Bhoomia. The Indian ruling class was forced to change the old methods and started to receive the mass movement with open arms, with the argument that strong government can discipline Indian society and make capitalism work better. Now India has been hit by recession - 102 of the 135 mini-steel plants have closed and over 40 per cent of the population remain below the official poverty level.

The Indian bourgeois government has hanged two revolutionary leaders - peasants from Andhra - with the idle hope of smashing the revolutionary tide, but when the revolutionary spark is ignited the struggle will never stop until complete proletarian revolution.

On the one side the Indian ruling class is trying hard to crush the Indian revolution. On the other hand, with sham independence, the big comprador bureaucrat bourgeoisie has been serving its imperialist masters quite faithfully. These puppets of imperialism, while preserving the old British exploitation, have also brought US and Soviet imperialist exploiters to fleece India.

PUBLIC MEETINGS

BRISTOL - Matntrend Books
April 3rd, 3pm - Fight The Destruction of Aero-Space
- Save Britain from Capitalism.

BRIGHTON - Brighton Workers Bookshop, 37 Gloucester Road
telephone 684404

March 24th, 5pm - Fight For the Right To Work,
Fight For the Right To Rule.

NO TO THE CUTS!



With the rallying call of 'Save our health service' workers in Exeter demonstrated their opposition to the massive health cuts being proposed in the region. Over 200 members of NUPE, COHSE, ASTMS and the Exeter University Guild of Students marched to the city centre. It was emphasised by union speakers at the rally at the end of the march that the demonstration was just the start of a campaign which it is essential for all workers in Devon to join to defend their health services.

Exeter Nurseries

The Exeter Guild of Students' day nursery campaign has for four months pressed for the University to institute the first free college day nursery in the country. In the face of procrastination by the University aimed at delaying any action by the Guild until the third (exam) term, a decision was taken to occupy the administration building immediately.

A high level of discipline and organisation; and students withdrew at a pre-arranged time. The union was left confident, united and prepared to take more action if necessary, the administration helpless and embarrassed. The fight will continue until the University agrees to finance the nursery.

Overseas Students

Over three thousand students took part in a demonstration organised by the National Union of Students on Friday March 12th in protest against the attacks on overseas students.

The government is seeking to halve the number of overseas students. This is an attack on all students. It is part of the attack on education as a large number of courses will be closed down and educational standards fall.

Overses students are singled out because the government considers them as a weak section of that part of the working class. Their aim is to divide the NUS and thus weaken its resolve to fight.

Sandwell Action

Sandwell, in the West Midlands, has been the second division of the NUT to apply the sanction of 'no cover' by teachers for staffing inadequacy. Twenty schools will be in action following proposals by the local authority to reduce the already dismal staffing standards. Proposed cuts will also threaten the provision of books and equipment.

Birmingham Demo

A demonstration of 4000 workers marched through the streets of Birmingham on February 14th protesting against the growing rate of unemployment and the cuts in public spending. NUPE members and the nurses who would bear the initial brunt of the cuts had taken a day off work in order to be at the march. Members of this union had gathered from all over the West Midlands.

The numbers attending the march, in the light of the recent poorly attended marches in the West Midlands, was a great morale booster to everybody there.

North London Censure

The North London Teachers Association has condemned the general secretary of the NUT for his 'capitulation at the general council of the TUC to the cuts'. The Association, resolving to defend education by all means at its disposal, called on the general secretary to withdraw his consent.

Cambridge Against the Cuts

Both staff and students at Cambridge University have come out in opposition to the Government's cuts in staff and facilities, which were accepted and implemented by the Authorities. Last year 10 per cent of technical and assistant staff positions were chopped through 'natural wastage'; a further 280 jobs lost in a town with high unemployment already. Academic staff are equally under attack, numerous posts have been frozen; for example the English Faculty now has a staff to student ratio of 1 - 23, as against an average in the Arts Faculty of 1 - 14. An examination strike is planned by the staff in opposition to this deterioration in educational standards. The freezing of vacancies has also meant an increased workload on staff throughout the University and the closure of libraries in the evenings. In particular the (idiotic) closure of the University Library, one of the country's four copyright libraries, in the evening, angered students who were deprived of the right to study. A work-in at the Library was organised by the Cambridge Students Union Grants and Anti-Cuts Committee with 300 students participating in defiance of this cut. Students in Cambridge must now gain confidence to develop the fight and unite with the staff against these and other cuts. A first small step has been made in defence of the University.

Women: Part of the Class

Witnessing the meagre turn-out on March 6th in London to 'celebrate' International Women's Day one could be forgiven for wondering if one-half of the working class had perhaps found no cause for celebration this year. The sectarian, anti-male tone which was allowed to dominate that gathering gives rise to the obvious question - where were all the women who had struggled together and alongside men through a critical year? Why were we not out in force to celebrate another year of struggle, to look ahead and discuss the challenges of the coming year?

What took place instead was a parading of the vestigial remains of the sectarian women's movement, those who still cling to the idea that women's liberation is somehow a separate issue to that of the emancipation of our class, something to be achieved by women alone.

We as Marxist-Leninists say that "It is fundamental that all social life and all political problems are first and foremost rooted in classes and class conflict, not in age, sex, nationality religion or anything else." Yet this is not to gloss over the fact that women do have specific problems arising out of class conflict, problems which the ruling class ever seeks to exploit to divert the struggle away from class lines and into the murky back-waters of sectarian struggles.

The flourishing in the '60's of the Women's Movement was a response to those specific problems of women and it must be viewed in the light both of its achievements and its failures. For some it provided a spring-board into areas of class struggle both in the work place and the community. The growth of women's membership in Unions coupled with their increasing preparedness to participate and at times to lead in struggles can be seen as one of the major achievements of the women's movement.

But as a continuing separate entity the movement contained within it the seeds of its own destruction. Faced with the choice of becoming active in unions, and community groups or remaining active in women's groups, many chose to give their time and energies to the former. Those who

choose the latter must see that in effect they are turning their backs on class struggle and becoming submerged in diversionary conflicts.

Viewing some of the events of the past year, where there have been struggles, women have been involved in the thick of them. In the fight against the cuts and unemployment just as much as the fight against the reactionary abortion amendment bill, men and women have demonstrated together in their thousands.

Women's membership in the unions continues to rise. In NALGO for instance, it increased by 22 per cent in the last year. The sham of the Equal Pay and the Sex Discrimination Acts are all too obvious to most women. Although they were in response to women's demands, far from viewing them as the culmination of their struggles, as the ruling class would have them do, women view them for what they are worth - empty pieces of legislation. Struggle alone and not the statute book has only ever improved wages and conditions for men and women.

Looking to the year ahead our task is mapped out. The active defence of our country, our industry and public services requires the involvement of women everywhere - in the work place, in the community, in the home, our voice must be heard in the struggle for we know all too well what a heavy burden failure would bring.

Criminal Trespass Law

In June 1974 the Law Commission, the Government's advisors on changes in the law, published a working paper in which they recommended that trespass, in any form, be a criminal offence. They have produced their final report which almost certainly contains a draft bill to put before parliament.

If these proposals become law the effects on the Trade Union movement will be far reaching. It will create a new class of criminals: those who defend their jobs and living standards by occupations and picketing. We must oppose all attacks against our liberties.

ENGINEERING DISPUTE PROCEDURE

In an agreement signed by the Confederation of Shipbuilding and Engineering Unions and the Engineering Employers Federation on a new disputes procedure, workers have won an important gain in the maintenance of the status quo. This says that in the event of a disagreement which

cannot be dealt with immediately whatever practice or agreement existing prior to the difference shall continue to operate pending a settlement or until the agreed procedure has been exhausted.

The old 1922 agreement was something forced on the Trade Unions when they had their backs to the wall and the Unions finally terminated it in 1971.

It is due to come into operation on April 5th but already a dispute has broken out at Electric Construction, a member of the Hawk Siddle Group. Some 800 workers walked out when six fitters were suspended after refusing to accept a £2.15 piecework rate when they have asked for £2.45. Under the new agreement the job should have been held to be in dispute and negotiations would have taken place between local officials and the Company.

LETTER FROM A BUILDING WORKER

You will no doubt recall the now infamous Shrewsbury Trial where building workers who were merely defending their right to picket were charged with "conspiracy" and jailed. One man Des Warren is still inside, charged with being 'violent', under a law a hundred years old. As a direct result, his wife Else Warren who was left to fend on her own for their five children has now suffered

a nervous breakdown. The children will have to be put in care - as if the ruling class 'cared' for working class children!

The result of this case highlights the sham 'democracy' we are always hearing about. 'You have the right of free speech' they say - 'You may say what you like against us and that's democracy' - but if you dare act against us that is 'conspiracy'!

South Africa may take note, not only of Britain's century-old laws, but the new ones brought in under our noses, which attack human as well as Trade Union rights. The Special Powers Act's Detention without Trial means police may hold 'suspect' (read 'worker') for an almost indefinite period without access to legal guidance, or to family and friends. Sir Robert Mark now openly sugg-

ests that the army should be used to help police where they cannot cope. Northern Ireland provides an example of what could happen here any day. Where will the first detention centre for 'conspirators' be?

If a worker is a criminal for defending hard-won working class rights through our unions, then, sisters and brothers, we are all 'criminals', or if not we should be.

EROSION OF DEMOCRACY. THE ISSUE FOR TEACHERS

The major issue for the NUT's Annual Conference at Easter is the erosion of democracy, and the sovereignty of the Conference itself. This is the key to every question currently involving teachers.

The problem stems from political weakness of the Union on the question of the Labour Government. The Union's representatives, in flat defiance of Conference policy, have accepted Labour's £6 pay limit. Union Rule demands that such a departure from policy must be ratified by Special Conference. The NUT Executive has ignored the Rule.

The struggle of the Union against the education cuts is gradually being subordinated to the Labour Government's need to impose them. Action undertaken has generally been reserved for those local authorities that advance even beyond the government's directives. And the general secretary of the Union, technically little more

than an office boy, has taken it upon himself to throw the Union behind the Labour Government and cry 'wolf' about the Tories. This despite the Union's cherished independence from both.

The social democratic philosophy aims to stifle all struggle. The Conference will face proposals to introduce new disciplinary procedures. Members involved in 'Industrial Action' without the prior approval of the Executive, recently 'banned' by Rule, will face immediate suspension from membership. Moreover, the Executive intends to employ a device at the Conference which will curtail the opportunity to debate the measures.

The whole membership will have to rise to this challenge. Their delegates to the Conference will have to be well briefed. So will the Executive and all know their address. There can be no timidity on this question.

UNEMPLOYMENT : NO RETURN TO STATUS QUO

The annual Economic Review of the TUC published at the beginning of March, asked the Government to set a target of reducing unemployment to 600,000 by 1975. Such are the reforms offered to us by the social democrats. We remember when unemployment reached 600,000 in August 1970. Then, we said in THE WORKER "The demand for full employment cannot be met by the capitalist system. Promises of full employment by successive Labour and Tory Governments aren't worth the paper they are written on." Now we are nearly six years and two governments on, and unemployment has risen by nearly a million. There can be no return to August 1970; not for the ruling class, nor for us, the workers.

Large-scale unemployment is inherent in the capitalist system. In the USA, the rate of unemployment in 1975 was 8.5 per cent, in Germany this January it had reached 5.9 per cent, almost as high as in Britain. These of course are official figures only. The answer of the capitalists is that we must suffer wage cuts if unemployment is to be combated. Yet long ago Karl Marx pointed out that "the ultimate reason for all crises always remains the poverty and restricted consumption of the masses." The employers give us the alternative between wage cuts and unemployment while all their policies are designed to bring us both.

Yet in Britain the cancer of unemployment, the enforced idleness of millions of men and machines, has revealed itself as part of a conscious strategy to destroy the working class and its fighting traditions and organisations. This takes the form of the destruction of whole industries - the motorcycle and machine tool industries to name but two - and outbreak throughout manufacturing industry. Between 1964 and 1974 the manufacturing labour force actually fell 7 per cent. In coal, electricity, gas and rail employment declined over the same period by 38 per cent. In Britain there is "all growth".

And still the attack continues, as with the British Steel, which wants to sack another 23,300.

But still the employers are not sated. The attack now has spread to white collar and public employment. Thousands are to go, civil servants, teachers, etc with the hypocritical pretence that these "non-productive" people can be made available for manufacturing industry which is busy sacking workers itself! Like the "shinke-out" of the 60's, thousands will be shaken out of one job, not into another but onto the streets.

In the face of this attack, this counter-revolution, what are we, the workers of Britain, to do? Sit back and watch the TUC call for only 600,000 of us to be on the dole, a return to the status quo? To do so would be to abandon all dignity and all sense. There can be no going back to the status quo. At work, in branch, at any reconvened TUC, we either go forward, take up the fight for the right to work, against the cuts, against wage control, against the destruction of Britain and for revolution or fascism will engulf us.



CPBML Bookshops

FROM CHINA

Cards, Papercuts, Posters, Scrolls. Obtainable from:
BELLMAN BOOKSHOP, 155 FORTRESS ROAD, LONDON, N.W.5.
 Brighton Workers Bookshop, 37 Gloucester Road, Brighton.
 Main Trend Books, 17 Midland Road, St. Philips, Bristol 2.
 October Books, 4B Temple Court, Liverpool.
 The Northern Star Bookshop, 18A Leighton Street, off Great George Street, Leeds.

Public Meetings -London

The series of public meetings being held in London deals with the theme: WE MADE BRITAIN: WE MUST SAVE IT. The meetings are held on consecutive Fridays at 7.30pm at the Bellman Bookshop, 155 Fortress Road, Tufnell Park, N.W.5 (Tufnell Park tube). You are warmly invited to attend.

Titles of the meetings are as follows:

March 26th - THE WAY FORWARD TO WIN.

April 2nd - 60 YEARS AFTER THE EASTER RISING.

(Other meetings see page 2)

Save Aerospace

Aircraft manufacture probably demands the most highly skilled engineering and engineering design knowledge of any industry. But the aircraft industry is being run down, just like all other industry in this country.

The British aerospace industry is special in being the only integrated one outside of the USA and Russia - making airframes, aero-engines and the complete range of components, as well as designing the complete aircraft. But since the Second World War this self-sufficiency has been steadily whittled away until we now reach the stage where an integrated European aerospace industry is the prospect, with only certain parts of the British industry having a role. Britain for example, might first make the engines, instead of designing and manufacturing the whole aircraft (see THE WORKER no. 2, 1976).

In 1945 the techniques and skills in the British industry were second to none, and the industry was second only to the USA in output. However since then there has been a dismantling of the industry in the name of rationalisation. In 1946 there were no fewer than 55 different British aircraft, 22 of them aimed at the civil market. Companies making airframes included Airspeed, Handley Page, Hawker, Heaton, Percival, Miles, A.V. Roe and Vickers, while there were seven firms making aero-engines - Alvis, Armstrong-Siddeley, de Havilland, Bristol, Metro-Vickers, Napier and Rolls-Royce. All these firms had design teams, but the amalgamation of the separate firms in Britain only meant stripping the entire industry of many of its skills and destroying much collective knowledge by dismantling these teams.

Today we only have two large airframe companies, BAC and Hawker-Siddeley and one aero-engine firm, Rolls-Royce. Plans are afoot to amalgamate the two airframe companies into one in line with the policy for a single European industry.

This policy has been in evidence for several years with the increasing dependence on joint research and manufacture with other European countries - Concorde, Jaguar, the MRCA and helicopters.

The industry's history since the war has been littered with cancelled projects, some of which were world-beaters. All were strangled by capitalism and its government through lack of investment or government indecision which was in line with their long-term strategy to dismantle the industry. Such projects were the Brabazon and Comet; the VC10 was made impotent in terms of sales (it was a clear leader in terms of design and passenger preference). The Americans were given a free hand to study our research on three-engined jets which led to several years lead of the Boeing 727 over the British Trident, hovercrafts, variable wing geometry - the list is endless.

One project conspicuous for its omission in the above list is the TSR2. The cancellation of this military aircraft project (by a Labour Government) eventually cost Britain £1000 million abroad due to the government buying similar aircraft from the US. This cancellation put 20,000 highly trained scientists and engineers out of work, never to work on aircraft again.

Concorde is now the end of the line as far as progress in the British industry goes. There are no plans to build anything remotely as sophisticated. When Concorde finishes, so will the British aerospace industry as we know it. One thousand two hundred workers employed by BAC are to be served with formal notices of redundancy - (not including those who will have to retire early or are being 'redeployed' on more mundane projects, which doubles the figure). Even should other airlines decide to order Concorde it is feared in the industry it will be too late to stop the skilled teams from being broken up.

Worker Interview

The Worker interviewed a supervisor at the Ford (Dagenham) plant where foremen have conducted an overtime ban. As reported in the Worker last month, Ford have conned some shop floor workers to take on the responsibility of the supervisors, thus threatening the jobs of the supervision staff. Cost to the employer is low, only 10p an hour more than they pay a shop floor worker.

These new 'foremen' are called Mini men by the workforce.

WORKER: How acute is the shortage of foremen?
 FORDS SUPERVISOR: There should be one foreman for every thirty workers. In some places one foreman has to supervise seventy!

WORKER: Why did you decide on an overtime ban rather than a total strike or striking for one day a week?

FORDS SUPERVISOR: That may have lost support for our struggle - and it might have caused wide spread lay offs.

WORKER: What do you say to the idea that your supervisors are 'Company men'?
 FORDS SUPERVISOR: That idea must be very rare now! And it's become clearer - if we are Company men, why this struggle against the Company?

The job of a Ford Supervisor has always been a thankless one, so much so that shop floor workers have preferred the line rather than accept 'promotion' to supervisor. These are now realising the value of their union strength in this their first struggle. And they are confirming the truth that in Britain today there are no classes in between worker and employer.

After four days of overtime ban, the Supervisors won all their demands.