



THE ECONOMICS OF DESTRUCTION

Tory economics - price rises a cure for inflation.

This is the most blatant con-trick on the people of this country since the South Sea Bubble

"ECONOMICS", declared a science by those who make a living expounding it is, in every sense of the word, an illegitimate offspring of wizards who by hocus-pocus could convince anyone of anything. Barnum expressed it more succinctly when he said, "there is one (a fool) born every minute."

The present government is playing the most blatant "con trick" on the people of this country since the South Sea Bubble. As a firm believer in the American guru Friedman, Thatcher is going ever further than that character, in destroying Britain.

There must be less money, that is in the spending capacity of the working population. Wages must stay still but prices must rise; industry after industry must die or be sold off; unemployment must rise; the health, education and transport systems must be destroyed, but greater sums must be spent on war and the police, the latter at a time when burglaries are more frequent than the common cold. Where are policemen on the streets?

Economics is supposed to be too difficult for ordinary people and it is wrapped up in initials and words to confuse

On November 10th the Daily Telegraph had a headline "Political storm ahead if MLR goes over 15 per cent". What will be the headline now when the minimum Lending Rate is declared by the government to be 17 per cent, the highest rate since the Bank of England was founded in 1694? What does it mean to us, besides increasing the inflationary profits of banks?

First we are told that inflation (which has gone up steadily since the Tories took over) must come down; but now prices of everything must rise even faster than after the VAT rate was raised to 15 per cent by Thatcher. This was supposed to claw back the losses in revenue caused by the pica-yune income tax reduction promise that won the election for the Tories. To the surprise of the unlettered Cabinet this did not happen because the naughty working class reduced spending on everything including essentials.

Mortgage interest will rise even faster. As most workers' mortgages are paid by both a husband and wife working, how will the Building Societies fare? As Council house building has practically ceased where will people live

and who will buy foreclosed premises? They are hardly smart enough for property tycoons like the old Slater-Walker Empire. The sickest joke is what will happen to all the small backyard firms that the Tories were declaring would bring back prosperity to British industry. Everyone was supposed to take his redundancy pay and set up on his own. That would indeed be playing ducks and drakes.

But it is not only workers who distrust the capacity of this Government to think at all. The Government's own securities have fallen substantially in price in the last couple of weeks. So those city gents, not manufacturers but money men, who applauded Thatcher, so warmly at the Lord Mayor's banquet do not trust her either. That is unkind as she is doing her bit for the common good. Has she not bought herself two limousines like the Queen? It is to the Parliamentary Labour Party however that the rosette for stupidity must go. On the day of the declaration of the MLR shock they have raised as a serious issue the corny old melodrama of the "Fourth man," so letting Thatcher off the hook once again.

USA missiles will turn Britain from nuclear launching pad to graveyard

THE TALKS at the Hague this week, coming in the wake of Hua's visit to Western Europe, have turned the fictional nuclear hobocaust into a reality. We can no longer watch the celluloid heroes battling for survival in the face of nuclear war with suspended disbelief; the reality is in our living room too.

This present British government not only invites the US to use our soil as an aircraft carrier for the next world war, but positively invites them to do so. This is called "modernisation" and makes the "cold war" seem like a trip to Southend.

Experts have reported that 572 more American Cruise missiles must be deployed by

NATO in Western Europe, at a cost of £15 billion. Britain is to find space for 160 of them and is putting pressure on other NATO countries to take their share. The Dutch government is under pressure in its turn to resist this, from the Dutch people. The prospect of becoming a graveyard doesn't appeal to them.

It is even possible that the British Government will agree to take even more of the missiles, for this strengthening of NATO is very important to them. No doubt conversations with Hua have made them even more determined to send us to war against the Soviet Union. We must be just as determined on our part not

to go to war at all and to get rid of these and all the rest of the American armory that is here.

We are told that we must have these missiles so that firstly we can talk to the Soviet Union about arms limitation and secondly that we will have a suitable deterrent against attack. The first suggestion is ludicrous and the second suicidal. We would be a prime target if we didn't use it and completely destroyed if we did. The British deterrent is sometimes called the "blow from the grave". Our government would have us the Judas goat of Europe. We can prevent them if we want.



Farm workers lobbying the Agricultural Wages Board on 7th November over their £100 claim for a 35 hour week. Their fight also opposes the destructive policies of the Government and the EEC. Photo: The Worker.

Bold line of London NUT

INNER London teachers are opposing any reduction in the total number of teaching posts, in a bold reply to the Inner London Education Authority's proposed cuts in education spending.

The Council of the 15,000 strong ILTA, an important division of the National Union of Teachers, representing all inner London teachers, called a strike and demonstration to County Hall and Parliament on December 4th.

The ILEA has drawn up plans to cut expenditure by as much as 5 per cent.

This demand for the total number of jobs to remain intact should be echoed by the National Union of Teachers as a whole and the whole labour movement.

As rolls fall, to call simply for "no redundancies", important as this is, is to tolerate posts remaining unfilled as teachers retire - and hence a gradual whittling down of teacher numbers as the numbers of pupils in the schools fall. The demand to retain the total number of teaching posts should be taken up at the forthcoming NUT Special Conference.

To achieve this would be a massive and long overdue rise in the standards and quality of education. Yet all the government can do is order the immediate loss of tens of thousands of teaching jobs nationally, and then remedy

"falling standards" with a state imposed "core curriculum" cutting completely the teaching profession's right to decide what to teach.

Such is the struggle against it, that the government will be hard put to succeed. Action over 400 proposed redundancies in Avon has cut the number to under 10 - and struggle continues.

The Executive of the NUT in the December 8th Special Conference mirrors the increasing anger of teachers.

They call for co-ordinated action on a national scale, "with a levy of members where appropriate, for industrial action." "The education service is essential to ensure national recovery and a prosperous future."

The following excerpts from a County divisional newsletter of the NUT shows how the tide is running. Their answer to the Tories' claim of no public money is that too much is spent on weapons of aggression. "Unobtrusively when in opposition the Tories agreed with the Labour Party to increase armaments." Guns, not education, is Thatcher's policy - which now faces "rapidly developing opposition which, with continued pressure, would reach mass proportions."

The stand of the Inner London Teachers is a stand for the future of the Union and the nation as a whole.

The Week

FURTHER tax cuts are out, and even the government quacks have to admit that the economy is dying rather than reviving under their treatment. Barely can a government have been forced so quickly into rejection of a major (although never sincerely put forward) plank of its policy, or have lost so many friends so quickly. It was not just Labour, but the Liberal leader and even a Tory, who attacked the ridiculous rise in the lending rate in the Commons on the day it was announced. Which industrialist, not to mention worker, can have any regard for the government after this latest piece of folly?

WE WERE told a few weeks ago that the neutron bomb was essential to protect Europe from Soviet tank attack, although the bomb was lethal only to unprotected civilians, not the machines. Now a new, so-called anti-tank role has been devised for the parachute regiment, who would become a highly mobile force equipped with helicopters and Landrovers, deployable at any point of trouble. What would they be used for?

WITH ALL the talk just now of spies and spying there is one thing that must not be forgotten. The development of nuclear weapons by the Soviet Union was largely carried out by Soviet scientists when that country was still socialist. In so far as "spies" like Klaus Fuchs felt they owed an allegiance to the first workers' state and assisted it in breaking the US's extremely dangerous monopoly of such weapons, the world owes them a debt of gratitude.

DATA BANKS held by the police and internal security forces will be fed even more information as the police switch to a computer linked 999 service, a computer to assist the public. The system allows the virtually immediate identification of the location of the phone call, and its relation to records stored in its memory. At the same time, the police have revealed the existence of a new detention centre close to the major demonstration routes in central London. It is purpose built for the ferrying in by vehicle of demonstrators, pending their transfer to courts for sentencing. It is said to accommodate 250.

THE GOVERNMENT'S proposed closure of Corby steelworks - made more likely by the present inability of the Iron and Steel Trade Confederation to agree on united action - must have convinced all of the dead-end that nationalisation and capitalist state control of the industry is. But the answer is not to find a buyer in the private sector, whose interest in asset stripping and profitable run-down is at least as great.

THE LORD mayor's banquet in the last century was an occasion for the then Prime Minister, Lord John Russell, to launch a campaign for people to eat less bread. Queen Victoria ordered her household to eat no more than a pound a day each, and a string of dukes pledged to "reduce consumption as far as practicable(!)". At this week's banquet, over laden tables, the message to all was that bread was not the only thing we would have to do without.

Historic Notes

IN CELEBRATING the 35th Anniversary of the victorious conclusion of Albania's great contribution to the world proletarian cause, what the Albanian people have heroically demonstrated is that no country is too small nor too hemmed in by hostile neighbours to achieve genuine national independence and to build socialism self-reliantly.

The passionate desire for an independent Albania appeared on the stage of history as early as 1443 when the great national leader, Scanderberg, raised over the fortress of Kruja the double-headed eagle standard of resistance to the Turkish invasion of Europe. For 25 years the Albanian people, united by the national consciousness forged in the course of fighting, kept the Turkish hordes at bay; and when the Albanians were eventually overwhelmed by sheer weight of numbers, that same national spirit kept alive, during 500 years of occupation, the sense of being Albanian, speaking the Albanian tongue and never losing

the Albanian will to be free.

In 1912, independence was won from Turkish domination, but after the First World War the allied countries tried to carve up Albania to pay off their obligations to Italy, Greece and Yugoslavia. The Albanian people fought back and, among other actions, threw the Italians out of Vlora.

Then in 1939, ironically on Good Friday, the Italian fascists invaded Albania and turned it into a colony of Il Duce. As the Italian grip weakened with the strength of Albanian resistance, the German Nazis poured in thousands of brutal well-armed troops to try to crush the spirit of Albanian revolt.

In 1941 Enver Hoxha summoned a founding conference, and the Communist Party of Albania, the Party of Labour, was born. This was added to the Albanian passion for independence the Marxist principles of scientific socialism. Not only was the war one of liberation of the country from fascist invaders: it was also a revolutionary war to prevent the return to power

of businessmen, priests and feudal Zogists (supporters of the deposed King Zog) who had exploited the people and betrayed them to external enemies. The Albanians, waging a people's war under the leadership of the Communist Party, absolutely unaided, defeated an Italian army of 100,000 and a German army of 70,000, thus making a very considerable contribution to victory in the war.

Even before the war was over, Yugoslavia, in whose own liberation war Albanian partisans had participated, plotted against Albania's independence. The argument was that Albania was too small to stand on its own and was bound to be gobbled up by some imperialist power; therefore it would be better if Albania were incorporated in Yugoslavia as a seventh province.

Under Enver Hoxha's firm leadership, the Albanian people asserted their right to exist on their own, and refuted the charge of falling prey to imperialism by standing up to both Britain and the US who combined together to con-

tinue, long after the war was over, trying to destroy Albania by sabotage and bribed subversion.

The Albanians have received assistance from fellow socialist countries in building their socialist society; but they have never depended on such aid to the extent that they would sacrifice for it their freedom or their right to go on developing in a Marxist-Leninist way. First the Soviet Union and then China, having given Albania useful help, abandoned socialism and began to expect Albania to accept colonial status in exchange for further assistance - just like the western imperialist powers. In both cases, and with considerable hardship, the Albanian people rejected such help with strings and made up for the loss by redoubling their own efforts.

On this occasion of their 35th Liberation Anniversary, we salute the historic struggle of the Albanian people for national independence and for socialism, because the two things are ultimately inseparable.

British imperialism out of Zimbabwe

THE BRITISH Government seems about to get its way at the Lancaster House Conference on Zimbabwe after agreeing to a verbal formula which recognises the existence of the guerrilla liberation force.

It is ironic, to say the least, that the sentence which solved one of the most intractable problems of the negotiations, the question of the status of the two opposed forces which have been locked in combat, should state that the "Patriotic Front forces will also be required to comply with the directions of the governor." How could being under the explicit orders of the representative of British imperialism constitute an acceptable status for a liberation army? It is like a man saying as he is marched away to prison, "Well, at least the judge had to sentence me by name."

The recognition of the armed liberation movement of the Zimbabwe people is not a matter of words at a London conference. The very holding of the Lancaster House Conference at all is recognition of the existence of a determined and resolute liberation

army. If it did not exist, UDI in "Rhodesia" would have been allowed to go on indefinitely - just as the situation in "Ulster" will go on indefinitely till an effective liberation movement expels British troops.

It is the continued existence of the Liberation Army of the Zimbabwean people that is the only guarantee of eventual independence. If, through the machinations of the British imperialist government, the blood-stained Smith-Muzorewa clique can claim another "electoral victory", it will no more represent a regime the people of Zimbabwe are obliged to obey, than the same British government can claim a mandate for the destruction of everything the workers of Britain have created over the last 200 years.

The way for this breakthrough was paved by Kaunda's visit. Kaunda could hardly have refused to allow liberation fighters bases in Zambia, but he has never put up any resistance to the vicious invasions of his country by the Smith-Muzorewa security forces and he was worried by the cutting

off of supplies like wheat. The sanctions imposed by Britain on Rhodesia have never been effective; those imposed by Smith-Muzorewa on Zambia have worked admirably!

The only way Kaunda could get out of his dilemma without appearing too obviously to have sold Zimbabwe liberation short was by a Lancaster House settlement which included the Patriotic Front. So the verbal formula has got him temporarily off the hook. Hence his hysterical gratitude to Margaret Thatcher who "had succeeded where all the male PMs before had failed". It is a disguise much too thick for the workers of Britain ever to discern behind the malicious destructiveness the slightest glimmer of blessedness. It will prove just as thick and impenetrable for the people of Zimbabwe. She has never ceased to refer to the country as "Rhodesia" and only the fighting force of the people of the country can wipe that word off the lips of imperialists and freely raise over their own land the flag of an independent Zimbabwe.

Bookshops Book Review

AMONG the many excellent books for children to be found on the shelves of the Beilman Bookshop, worthy of particular notice is *PLAYING WITH PLAYS*, written by Nicholas Barter and published by Macdonald Educational.

Starting off with the games children play as the original stuff out of which drama is made, the book goes through the various forms of play, like dressing up, changing one's facial appearance, staging fights, and shows how these forms of activity can be developed into thinking up and acting out real plays. Making masks, using props, handling scenery and lighting, rehearsing and learning how to work as a team are all described as kinds of playing which, once they are organised and given some shaping direction, turn into proper stage plays which children can present to an audience.

And of course in such "playing with plays" children are learning about drama in the most practical way and will be appreciative of the great works of dramatic art to which they will be introduced in the course of their schooling.

Richard Blythe must be congratulated on the playlets he has devised for performance and emulation and the dynamic photography of Nick Birch brings the whole book marvelously alive. The editor of this particular volume has done a splendid job of bringing such talents together for the edification and delight of children. It is grimly ironic that, at the very same time when such excellent work is being made available, the Government is determined to cut back the opportunities working class children have for getting to know, enjoy and profit from it.

contrasted with the appearance of Labour MP's at the rally who tried to identify themselves with the fight against the cuts in order to secure a return of their government. Those MP's who so actively once supported cuts, who now crawl out of the woodwork with expressions of shock and horror have nothing to offer the working class except treachery.

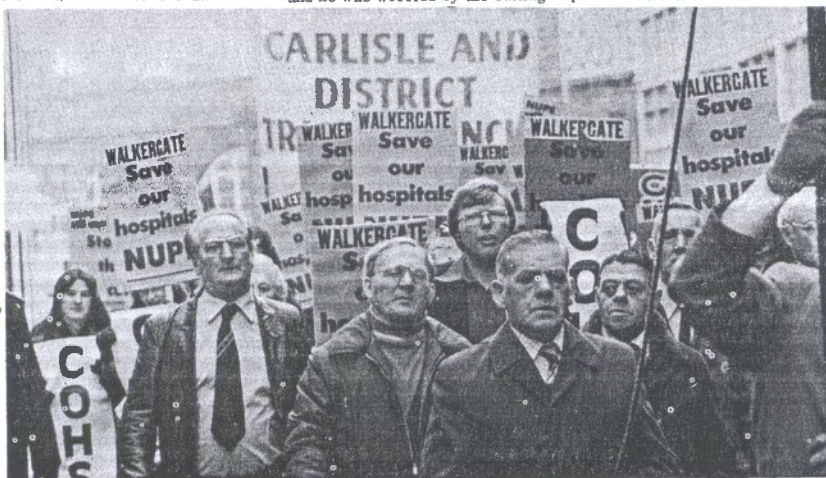


PHOTO NEPCO

SATURDAY November 10th saw Newcastle's biggest ever demonstration, as thousands of trade unionists from the north of England marched in unity against the government's policy of cuts in public expenditure. Significantly, unions representing industrial workers were strongly represented with large delegations from the National Union of Mineworkers,

TGWU, Sheet Metal Workers, AUEW, GMWU, and UCATT, as well as public sector unions like NUPE and NALGO.

The north at present faces hospital closures in Newcastle, steel closures in Middlesbrough and Consett, transport cuts in Durham, Northumberland and Cumbria, education cuts throughout the region, social service cuts in

areas of intense need, as well as massive job losses in both public sector (DHSS complexes, local government etc.) and private sector (steel, shipbuilding, textiles) industries dependent on government aid. In the face of these threats the wonderful solidarity expressed in the demonstration will be the backbone of the resistance to the cuts. How this

Editorial

RESISTANCE to the Government's destructive policies is gaining momentum all over the country, but our fight is still dogged by illusions and bad habits which are a legacy of social democracy.

No mandate for destruction

There is still the idea that this Government was elected in a proper parliamentary manner and must therefore be allowed to run its ruinous course right to the end. In fact, the whole business of parliamentary elections, with choice limited to capitalist parties, is not at all a means whereby a mandate is bestowed by the people on a government but simply the way in which the bourgeois dictatorship over the people is maintained and perpetuated. That is why we have always urged workers not to vote in such elections but to go on organising themselves to change the system into one in which their voice will be heard and their legitimate demands will be effective. By refusing to have anything to do with the parliamentary fraud the working class can eliminate the illusion that governments which preside over the exploitation of the people have a mandate from those very victims.

No use waiting for a General Election

Some people may still think that the best form of resistance is to let the Labour Party gather strength from this Government's crimes against the working class and then come back into power. But to do what? The Labour Government's policies were not essentially different from this Government's: they just didn't go so far and were better concealed. Besides, we cannot wait four or five years for some meagre change to be brought about by parliamentary means. Nor, for that matter, does Labour show the slightest wish to lead real opposition to Government action. They would rather throw dust in everybody's eyes with a meaningless internal row that involve themselves in the kind of action which would be as effective against a future Labour Government as a present Tory one.

We must all fight now.....

There are those, all too many of them, who think that in bowing to the attack, the Government may be merciful and not press too hard. Let them consider the example of the Leyland workers who thought that by giving way on letting 25,000 of their mates get the sack they might be spared. Already Leyland's boss, taking the sorry vote as a sign of complete capitulation, has presented the workforce with a whole book of new demands which would amount to the de-organisation of the motor car industry for further drastic destruction and the hiving off of the profitable bits for private exploitation.

.....to save the future

Some few may not want to fight because these battles to save education, health and industry itself do not seem revolutionary enough. The revolutionary struggle isn't somewhere else involving some other people than our own workmates. It is right here and now in the daily war we have to wage to prevent ourselves from being viciously exploited and our children from being shamefully victimised in the interest of a thoroughly corrupt and bankrupt system.

All these excuses for not fighting, whether they take on a leftish or a rightish tinge, are just cowardly defeatism. Fascism, to which all this Government's actions against our class point, won't come unless we let it.

NALGO faces challenge

AS NALGO'S local government branches up and down the country hold their Annual General Meetings over the next month, the twin issues of cuts and pay are going to dominate debates.

Approaching its 75th anniversary, Nalgo faces its sternest challenge yet - for too long we have been content to follow the lead of others. Now as we face huge cuts in the public services we must, alongside the teachers, civil servants and local authority manual workers, face squarely the challenge that confronts us.

Nalgo's support for the social contract and for government wage fixing left us disarmed when other workers rejected these corporatist measures - and it resulted in the paltry 9.4 per cent pay settlement last summer. We must not permit this to happen again - now is the time to assert our belief in collective bargaining. If we are to retain the skilled people necessary to run our services properly we must halt the decline in our wages that has occurred over the last few disastrous years.

Any idea that we should, or can, trade off wage increases in an attempt to lessen the cuts will surely fail. The employers and the government will gleefully accept the savings we offer them and be further encouraged in their belief that we cannot effectively resist their attack.

The fight against the cuts has already begun in many areas - recently 20,000 trade unionists left work to march in the pouring rain from Lambeth to Westminster to show their anger and contempt at this government's policy. How dare they even suggest that Britain can be revitalised by even longer housing waiting lists, by taking the dinners away from children, or by charging old people for home helps.

The rebuilding of Britain will not be done by this or any other capitalist government - it will only be done by the ordinary working people of the country. That rebuilding begins now - by saving, and improving, the services that we have won in the past - and Nalgo must accept its duty to play an active part in this.



Gas craftsmen lobby the executive of the Confederation of Engineering and Shipbuilding Unions in London as part of their struggle for a skilled basic rate. This year the craftsmen, members of CSEU, have organised a national shop stewards committee to co-ordinate their struggle in the 12 regions of the gas industry. The gas industry now makes £1000m profit, yells for higher prices, reduces services and farms work out to cowboys and lump workers and has the face to pay a basic rate of £48 to craftsmen. This is not only an insult to skill but the greatest deterrent to recruitment of craftsmen into the industry. PHOTO: THE WORKER.

THE STATE OF BRITAIN/Health

THE EXTENT to which some managements are willing and ready to tread the road of destruction which the Government has mapped out for them is nowhere more clearly shown than at Charing Cross Hospital in Hammersmith.

The cuts in the hospital service have meant that for 18 months vacancies for mates and labourers in the engineering department have been left unfilled, with the result that skilled workers have had to spend more of their time doing work normally carried out by non-craft workers.

The engineers have for the last 6 months made it their policy to fight these cuts by not doing such work as changing the air filters, so that pressure on management would force a review of the work in the engineering department.

On October 23rd, the management sacked 2 engineers for refusing to change such an air filter and since then the 55 members of the department have organised a picket on the back gate of the hospital as a protest against victimisation.

It is this picket that the management, press and Government have sought to crucify. Although the policy of the picket was to allow and encourage entry to the hospital of all essential supplies, including oil, the management has closed down as much of the hospital as they could, claiming shortage of oil, drugs or whatever. First they turned off the heating to the nurses' home in an attempt to get the nurses to fight the picket. This has backfired to such an extent that the nurses have now offered to organise a demonstration to force the management to meet trade union officials and settle the dispute.

The local MP organised a public demonstration of "leaving the union in disgust" which entailed standing beside a man tearing up cards for any interested press reporter. A total of 50 cards were torn up before anyone noticed that these were not the real thing.

The TV have organised a patient waving a petition at the picket, although a closer examination showed that there were no signatures on the sheet.

Reporters from Fleet Street are digging up the past history of sacked men to the extent of going to previous employers and searching the personal files.

A "Nationwide" camera crew were allowed to film wards closed down and emptied for repainting as examples of the effect on the hospital of this notorious picket.

In the face of this news-making, muckraking and general intimidation the picket has stood firm, gaining the respect and support from the unions in the hospital, from the area health shop stewards and from the members' own branches and districts. This week the management have agreed to meet national officials who are by now aware of what is actually going on.

Workers at Charing Cross Hospital will certainly have more battles with the present management, who really should be sacked in the interest of the patients whose well-being is of less concern to them than cheap publicity stunts.

St Benedict's

In South London a geriatric hospital is threatened with closure in 1980. A "Workers Council", comprising of COHSE, NUPE and RCN members has taken over the hospital, and aims to prevent the transfer of any patients to other hospitals. The AHA has responded by saying it will stop sending new patients or transferring patients to St. Benedict's: the workers will need all their unity and courage to succeed in opposing this cut. See page 4

Cuts = ill-health

The Government's Commissioners running the Lambeth, Southwark and Lewisham AHA have now announced another hospital closure, that of St. Olave's, with the transfer of its 200 patients to Guys or New Cross. Meanwhile, latest figures show hospital waiting lists in England are up 100,000 on last year to 700,000, an all time record, of which 47,000 are urgent cases. Pickets at St. Olave's have responded by preventing transfers, having won the co-operation of ambulancemen.

Cuts that are not cuts

The Government has announced that it intends to increase spending on the NHS by 3% next year - what a pleasant surprise, if only it were true. In fact Government figures underestimate likely inflation by several percent, and 2.5 has already been effectively replaced this year, so it will hardly replace that. Furthermore, of the 'increase' is supposed to come from increased prescription charges.

The deception does not end there; the Government has promised to honour the recommendations of the Clegg Commission on nurses' pay increases due in January - yet these will probably more than wipe out the 3% - as Jenkin himself said in the House, cash limits will have to be adhered to, so if too much is paid out in wages, it must lead to a cut in services...

Waltham Forest NUT acts to keep education

IN WALTHAM FOREST, London it was proposed that 10 per cent should be cut from capitation allowances to schools. This is the money which goes to buy books and equipment.

When this is compared with areas such as Avon, where it was proposed that 400 teachers would be "naturally wasted", or made redundant, it would have been easy for Waltham Forest teachers to become complacent.

However, this has not happened. In September a meeting was held to condemn the Tory cuts in education.

Action was demanded at local and national levels, following guidelines in the NUT pamphlet "Local Action", and including "one-day-no-cover", where appropriate.

Following this a lobby of the council meeting, called to discuss the cuts, secured a reduction in the cut in capitation from 10 per cent to 5 per cent.

Superb rally for education

BETWEEN 700 and 800 people crowded into the Town Hall, Wandsworth on November 14th. It was part of the campaign to keep the borough's schools in the ILEA. The Tory Council seeks to set up its own education authority in that area of South London.

The meeting was transformed from being concerned with a purely local issue into a rally for education which stretched far beyond the bounds of Wandsworth and of education.

The spokesman for teachers on the platform emphasised how statistics on education standards are abused and used as a springboard for attacking education. Denigrate a vital part of our heritage and it will be easier to destroy. So they think!

A speaker from the adult education service stated that education is a right and not a privilege. The adult education

service attempts to make this right available to all. He pointed out that the ILEA devotes 3 per cent of its budget to adult education while the 1944 Education Act calls for 1 per cent to be spent on this area. He feared that a Tory council would demolish the service and cited the closure of the adult education service in "Tory" Humberside to emphasise his point.

A parent drew the attention of the meeting to Tory attacks on the young, the old and the sick. The council has decided to close down a children's library, an adventure playground and a swimming pool. "Meals on Wheels" charges have been raised and old folks' luncheon clubs shut. Hospitals are to be closed to NHS patients but will remain open to those rich enough to pay for "private" health care.

At the meeting there was a tremendous feeling of unanimity between parents, teachers and ratepayers. This is reflected in the voting figures on the resolution of opposition to the council's attack on education. Only 9 hands were raised against the resolution. Over seven hundred hands were raised in support of the motion which was both impressive and heartening.

People left the meeting under no illusions. Faced with overwhelming opposition the Council is on the run (the leader had accepted an invitation to speak at the meeting but hadn't the courage or dignity to turn up) but a long and difficult battle lies ahead. At the same time it was made clear that while on the one hand the ILEA will be defended from the Tory attack, the Authority will be fought tooth and nail should it try to impose the cuts that the Government wants made in the education service.

The visible signs of occupation are a strong picket on the gates guarding against removal of patients and equipment, and inside the signs are unity and confidence amongst the 300 strong staff.

130 electricians have been on strike at the Nat West Bank site in Old Bond Street, London since 19th October.

Crown House Engineering refused to manage the site from 25th September and disregarded an instruction from the Joint Industrial Board and stepped up their attack on the

electricians by announcing 52 'redundancies' and declaring their intention to continue employing sub-contract labour.

The electricians are campaigning through their branches for support from all members to force the Executive Council of their union to support this struggle.

St Benedict's is occupied

"WE ARE ON A WINNER" - that is how a spokesman for the Occupation Committee of St Benedict's Hospital in Tooting, South London, summed up their situation. "The cuts announced by the Sutton, Merton and Wandsworth Area Health Authority threaten 7 hospitals - among them the 225 bed long-stay geriatric hospital, and while closure date is 7 months away, a mass meeting of workers called by the full time officials of 5 unions covering ancillary, nursing and medical staffs launched the occupation".

The visible signs of occupation are a strong picket on the gates guarding against removal of patients and equipment, and inside the signs are unity and confidence amongst the 300 strong staff.

"Out of a nursing staff of 160 for example, only 4 agreed to be interviewed for jobs elsewhere - the rest said "we stay at St Benedict's. We will not go."

The Occupation Committee is backed by NUPE, COHSE, RCN, AUEW and EEPTU and has organised a wide variety of activities to enforce their demand for the preservation of their service. From outside,

help has been coming in from local trades councils and workers such as the council's ambulance drivers.

Local GPs have pledged support as have some councillors. Even the local MP asked a question in the House!

The Occupation Committee has won recognition from the District Management Team (after initial refusal to talk) by the strength of their pickets and is now full of confidence for the future. "The only way they will close us is by getting the patients out," said the spokesman, "and this is not on. If they try another raid like at Hounslow (where patients were dragged out in the middle of the night) we have the ability to stop them. Local trades councils have offered additional pickets as and when necessary, and the staff here are united. We are carrying out our normal duties and will continue to do so. We are not going to close."

St Benedict's offers a real lesson in how to fight. No romantic pie-in-the-sky illusions just a determined set of workers using the strength of their unions to fight one part of this government's strategy



Nearly 1000 parents, teachers and other trade unionists crowded into Wandsworth Town Hall to demonstrate unanimously their rejection of local Tory plans to cut education. Photo: Worker Reader.

British students fight

STUDENTS reacted quickly and massively to the Government's attack on higher education; but they are in danger of fighting on a diversionary issue of the Government's choosing, instead of on the correct issue of retaining full educational provisions for the students of this country.

The Government must not be allowed to get away with hiding its attack on higher education behind the dust raised by the question of prohibitory fees for foreign students; students from overseas have no inherent right to be educated in Britain. Talk of historic responsibility or "helping the underdeveloped countries" is nothing but imperialistic paternalism.

The provision of education is paid for by British workers for the benefit of British workers for their sons and daughters, and thus for the benefit of the country. The Government fosters the illusion that there are courses, indeed whole colleges and universities, which are only viable because of the enrolment of students from overseas.

This we reject entirely. The viability of courses has nothing to do with the number of home or overseas students enrolled. If there is a demand for it, if it plays an essential part in development and research, if it is necessary to maintain skills or it is necessary for understanding and appreciation, then the course has to be kept open.

We must demand that it be kept open - even if only one student might want it this year. It is a question of safeguarding skills and passing them on to the next generation.

The Government wants us to accept their premise that a course must close if the number enrolled falls below a certain level. In the same way they close schools because of falling rolls. We reject this premise.

The Government plans to close courses. Students refused entry must join with those within to keep these courses open.

The fight to maintain all existing educational provision to the full must determine the tactics employed.

Sutton teachers condemn attacks on education

LOCAL and National representatives of the NUT and a representative of the Campaign for the Advancement of State Education held a joint meeting in South London last week.

The meeting was organised by the Sutton Association of the NUT in their campaign to oppose this year's education cut of £340,000 and next year's of £1 million.

The councillors who attended the meeting were left in no doubt as to the feeling of the public on the matter: teachers, parents, school ancillary workers spoke from the floor reinforcing the opposition to all cuts.

The meeting took place against the backdrop of the industrial action being taken by teachers in Sutton.

They are refusing to cover for colleagues who are absent from school for more than one day, and are refusing to teach classes of over 30 in secondary schools and 32 in primary schools.

Bookshops

- Bellman Bookshop** 155 Fortress Road, London NW5
- Brighton Workers Bookshop** 37 Gloucester Road, Brighton
- Clarion Books** 5 The Precinct, Stanford-le-Hope, Essex
- Main Trend Books** 17 Midland Road, St. Philips, Bristol
- Northern Star Bookshop** 18A Leighton Street, Leeds
- Basildon Bookstall** Tues, Fri, Sat Market Place
- Hull Bookstall** Old Town Market, Saturdays
- Liverpool Bookstall** every Thursday Liverpool University

Public Meetings

All meetings start at 7:30 pm unless otherwise stated

LONDON

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| Fri Nov 23 | Britain's future solely in the Working Class | Bellman Bookshop NW5 |
| Fri Nov 30 | *Britain in the '80s, an Industrial Wasteland | Conway Hall Red Lion Sq, WC1 |
| Fri Dec 7 | Fight cuts now, Fight for a Socialist Britain | Lower Hall Lambeth Town Hall |
| Thurs Nov 29 8 pm | Fighting The Cuts | Sutton Adult School Benhill Ave, Sutton |

OXFORD

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| Mon Nov 26 8pm | *For an Industrial Revolution | Cowley Community Centre |
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*These meetings will be addressed by REG BIRCH Chairman of Communist Party of Britain (M-L)

The Worker

Subscriptions: 155 Fortress Road, London NW5

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| NAME | 6 months £2.50 (inc. postage) |
| ADDRESS | 1 year £5.00 (inc. postage) |
| | (as from Jan 1980, £3.75 |
| | and £7.50 respectively). |