

THE WORKER



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PLESSEY WORKERS SEIZE FACTORIES

Making Management Redundant

SOME 400 Plessey workers at the Kirkby Factory on Merseyside ejected their management and embarked on a "work-in" on March 3rd. The Kirkby stewards broke away from a meeting at the Edge Lane site, which had begun to talk about getting better terms for the mass sackings proposed by Plessey management. In order to put their own plan for occupying their factory to fellow workers. They decided that there was everything to be gained by fighting to save their jobs and skills and absolutely nothing to be won by accepting the sack, whatever the terms.

Their action was followed on the next day, March 4th, by a lock-out of management at the Liverpool Edge Lane site, the headquarters of Plessey Telecommunications where 1030 workers out of 5750 are under threat of redundancy. And workers at the Speke Factory also joined the work-in.

The "work-in" at the Kirkby Factory has the full support of staff and hourly-paid workers and strict discipline is being kept. Staff foremen and chargehands have undertaken to manage the factory in conjunction with the Kirkby joint stewards committee.

At the Edge Lane site, too, the hourly-paid shop stewards committee instructed their members to work normally, under strict discipline, despite management's attempt to split the work force by blaming the organisers of the "work-in" for the non-payment of wages.

The situation arose when Plessey's management reacted to Government cuts in telecommunications with a scheme for closing Sunderland, Kirkby and Fleming



John Sturrock (Report)

Having locked out management at the Plessey factory, Kirkby, workers continue their work-in.

Road plants, plus the thousand workers to be sacked at Edge Lane. So much for an invitation from management to employees to "fight the Post Office together!"

Last year staff workers accepted voluntary redundancy to the tune of some three or four hundred jobs. Now the decision has been taken to oppose all redundancy, voluntary or otherwise. The lock-out is intended to continue until the company withdraw their redundancy proposals.

Such a defiant stance is an example to workers throughout the country. As one of the Plessey stewards said of the "work-in/lock-out": "It seems such a big step to take, but once done you wonder at just how easy it was. There is nothing more healthy than the realisation of what can

be done without subservency. All you need is the confidence to carry out the first step."

This action by Plessey workers is not just a way to protect jobs; it is the only way to save their skills and their industry. As a senior steward pointed out: "There are people here with 30 years worth of experience which the company is going to throw away."

On March 11th the workers allowed management to enter Plesseys for discussions on the situation. On March 14th a meeting of staff at the Edge Lane factory voted to end the lock-outs of management while insisting that redundancies - either voluntary or compulsory - will not occur. The work-in at the Kirkby factory continues.

Leylands - Away with the Contract

LEYLAND's management, union leaders and the Government itself have joined forces to end the tool room strike at Longbridge and get the tool room workers back to work. The latest move by the Company, with the connivance of some of the union leaders involved, is to re-open all the factories affected and consider toolmakers who "do not report for work as having terminated their employment with Leyland Cars."

The toolmen are right when they say that skill is no longer respected, as is shown by the elimination of differentials; but they are wrong not to see that the social contract, which they say they are not attacking, is one of the main ways this erosion of skills has been brought about. By basing their demand on the right for their own separate bargaining in order to safeguard themselves from the effects of the social contract, they missed the opportunity of gaining the support of the whole Leyland workforce in a demand for a return to collective bargaining and the end of the social contract.

Since they had the moral courage to defy their own leadership, why, instead of disowning their own machinery, would they not have concentrated their efforts on strengthening the democratic running of their union which could have been used to achieve their aims. If they had sought to put their ad hoc struggle back into the union and had insisted that their union fight it out, they would also have had to take a stand against the social contract. The social contract makes trade unions redundant.

Meals on wheels

A Plessey wagon, loaded with canteen supplies was allowed to enter the Kirkby site on Friday March 4th. The workers received the supplies with thanks and politely paid for the driver's return bus fare.

In this issue

Against the the cuts P2

Spanish independence P2

Who will defend Britain? P3

Students fight fee increases P4



"Plump and healthy, this child in Tirana, Albania, is strong enough to withstand mild illnesses. But his health is doubly protected by the measles vaccine being given by a health worker. Such immunization ought to be available for all children the world over." (Photo WHO/D. Henrioud).

Taken from 'World Health', the magazine of the World Health Organisation, this picture and caption show the recognition given to the advanced practices of the people of socialist Albania in preventive medical care... Theirs is not a health service which deals only with crises, but which seeks to prevent them.

Peanut Messiah

PRESIDENT Carter's hot line to God, on which the American people can now listen in as party-line subscribers, has not helped him come up with an acceptable peace plan for that cockpit of religious recidivism in the Middle East.

His assurance to Israel after talks with the Israeli Prime Minister show that there is to be no change in US support for its imperialist bastion in the area.

The official spokesman of the Palestine Liberation Organisation said in Cairo that there was also no question of a change in the line of the Palestine National Council (the Palestinian Parliament-in-exile) over the status of Israel. The PNC's charter calls for a secular democratic state in all of Palestine including Israel. There is no other basis for peace in this part of the world.

Of course Israel is not the US's only means of interfering in Middle Eastern affairs. Carter recently tried to hush up information about the enormous CIA funds for Jordan's King Hussein which are still being paid. He need not have bothered; there can hardly be anyone who did not already know.

Workers fight the cuts - Edinburgh

In Leeds

IN RESPONSE to a NUPE-organised strike and demonstration against the cuts in public expenditure, backed by NALGO, NUS and other public service unions, over 8000 trade unionists and members of the public marched through the streets of the City of Leeds on the 9th March.

Many schools were closed in the city, several colleges and students from Leeds University - who had held a lightning occupation of their administration block in protest at the rise in fees of foreign students and post-graduates - also joined the demonstration. Teachers, school clerks, dustmen, doctors, librarians, social workers, students and other council

Concorde or discord

American airlines using British airports should be blocked until US authorities allow Concorde to use all suitable airports in the States, the Bristol district of the Confederation of Shipbuilding and Engineering Unions has declared. The national executive will be asked to introduce the boycott.

The threat to Concorde is not based on environmental considerations in New York which is one of the dirtiest, noisier cities in the world. Concorde is not being excluded because it is a bad aircraft but because it is such a good one - and happens not to be American.

This is not the first time US capitalism has sabotaged Britain's aerospace industry. The Comet, the world's first jet airliner, would have put Britain ten years ahead of its nearest rival in supplying civil aircraft all over the world if ways had not been found to prevent such a breakthrough.



March 9th anti-cuts demo in Glasgow John Sturrock (Report)

East Anglia

PUBLIC sector workers from the whole of East Anglia took part in massive demonstrations on March 1st against council spending cuts. Thousands of angry members of NUPE, NALGO, NATFHE, the Fire Brigade Union, NAS and NUS converged on the County Halls of Essex, Suffolk, Norfolk, Hertfordshire and Cambridgeshire. In several areas workers backed their protest by a one-day strike including NALGO members in Norfolk and nearly 3000 NUPE members in Cambridgeshire.

Spanish fight for national independence

(From Vanguardia Obrera, organ of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Spain (Marxist-Leninist).

IN THE HIERARCHY of the repressive forces, things are not as they were. From "total control of the situation" they are now tense and insecure.

The times of "Franco's peace" (the peace of the cemeteries) are gone. Those were the times in which they could curb the revolutionary movement, the movement that was slowly building up but which was still not generalised and which was weak politically.

Things started to change before Franco's death - Burgos 1970, the May demonstrations of '73, the revolutionary general strike in the autumn of '74, the armed actions in '75. The old terrorist apparatus of the dictatorship was widely used; "anti-terrorist" legislation was introduced and still remains, leading to a permanent state of emergency. But in spite of all these measures the apparatus started to crack.

The first conclusion of Franco's successors was that the political police, the Civil Guard, were not able to cope with the situation by themselves. The mass movement was taking on such proportions that the old terror was insufficient to stifle it.

More than 150 million hours have not been worked during 1976 because of strikes involving over 5 million workers. The masses have taken to the streets by the hundreds of thousands. In March, Victoria's workers went from a general strike to pre-insurrection in response to the massacre carried out by the "anti-riot brigades". The organisation of the masses in pickets

(for extension of strikes, solidarity and self-defence) has increased enormously. These pickets are opposing systematically and with increasing strength the repressive forces and the fascist gangs.

The tensions and changes at the top of the repressive forces do not represent a struggle between the "ultras" and the "reformists". That is a fairy-tale, the fairy-tale of social democrats and revisionists who

It is false that repression has diminished, quite the opposite! What is different is that it does not paralyse the masses any more. What is happening is that the people are being tempered in struggle, and the struggles are aiming at higher levels of combat.

Those who are taking the key posts in the repressive forces, are not "liberals" but specialists in repression and counter-revolutionary war, as well as secure servants of the Pentagon.

Facts are proving the correctness of this analysis: the scrapping of the Tribunal for Public Order (TOP) because it is useless, the increased budget of the repressive forces, the training of the Army in street fighting, the transference of responsibility for the Civil Guard from the Ministry of the Interior to the Army...

Thus the changes that are taking place are only preparations for military repression on a big scale. What is clear and important is that the ruling class and its US masters are not preparing for "democracy" but for crushing the popular movement.

All these changes are aimed directly against revolution and the people. They are being carried out behind the smoke-screen of the "road to democracy" put forward by the fascist monarchy in order to expand its otherwise limited social base; and the oligarchy is being helped by the loyalty of the so-called "democratic opposition" made up of social democrats, revisionists and opportunists - all of them anti-popular forces.

The task for the people, struggling for their rights, is to arm themselves to protect their interests and overthrow the monarcho-fascist dictatorship, and to obtain national independence by establishing a Peoples' Federated Republic.

VANGUARDIA OBRERA SEMANAL



try to present the generals of Franco and Juan Carlos' Army as "responsible for democratic freedoms". They only show that the official language has changed. They do not talk any more of "spiritual and permanent values" but of "democracy", when in fact it is all a cover for the feverish arrangements that are being made to prepare the Army and other repressive forces in techniques of counter-insurrection, i.e. civil war.

WALES - struggle continues

THE LEAD given by NALGO and school caretakers in resisting cuts and attempts to undermine trade unionism in the West Glamorgan area, has been taken up by two other sections of local authority workers.

In Swansea, 400 TGWU dustmen have introduced an overtime ban, after the council introduced new work loads and the Lliw Valley branch of NALGO is to begin strict 9 a.m. - 5 p.m. working in line with NALGO's national overtime ban as from April 1st, thus hindering all council business which usually occurs after 5 p.m.

Journalists in the Aberystwyth area have begun a 72-hour ban on all news items supplied to BBC radio and television after the appointment of a non-union contributor to the Welsh language news magazine 'Helo Bobol' on Radio Cymru.

Universities in Wales were hit by a 24-hour strike of ASTMS technicians in support of Birmingham University colleagues over the interpretation of a national holiday agreement. All services and goods were refused entry at Swansea, where the 150 technicians were joined by 40 AUEW members at the University. In Cardiff, students at the university ended their 4 day sit-in over the increase of tuition fees after a writ was served, only to move into occupation of their

university buildings.

Finally, the 200 UCATT workers in occupation at Pontin's Prestatyn holiday camp likewise ended their occupation after a writ was served only to set up a 24-hour picket of the site to prevent lump labour finishing the work. The dispute continues.

THE SUCCESSFUL conclusion of a 48-hour strike by shunters and cleaners at South Wales Transport's Ravenhill and Brunswick depots, over the effects of the company's cutbacks on manning levels, must serve as a pointer for bus crews in Swansea to utilise the national day of action on April 21st as a rallying point for the disjointed protests, which are at present being made by passengers against cuts in services.

Although workers' protests over cuts in services have had some limited success, the use of a day of action to draw such protest together, as happened in Port Talbot in January, is essential if the momentum of the shunters' and cleaners' success is to be maintained. They forced the company to take on extra staff in the depots - the first setback South Wales Transport received since their reduction of services by 1 million passenger miles in January which resulted in the loss of 130 jobs, and has jeopardised the other depots' future.

Who will defend Britain?

THE Labour Government is not cutting all public expenditure - only public expenditure for the benefit of the working class on health, education and housing. Public expenditure on defence, apart from some cheese-paring to appease the Labour 'left', is sacrosanct.

In defending this expenditure the Government has stressed its obligations to NATO and its part in the US-backed strategy of western defence. NATO came into being as an anti-communist bloc poised not only against the socialist Soviet Union and the Peoples Democracies but also, quite explicitly, against communist movements inside the treaty countries. NATO forces were used to preserve the status quo in western Europe while imperialist countries like Britain and France were busy trying to put down the liberation struggles in Malaya and Algeria.

NATO has not changed. It is still the enemy of socialist and liberation movements. But the Soviet Union has changed. It has, since the betrayal of the revolution, become a major imperialist power like the US. The Warsaw Pact is an anti-communist and anti-liberation as NATO, poised against socialist China and Albania and suppressing independence in Czechoslovakia.

It is unlikely that the US and the USSR will launch war against each other. It is far more likely that they will continue to foment war among the states they can influence and make huge profits selling arms to them as in the Middle East, while continuing to use their enormous military power to frighten smaller countries into each other's arms, the better to exploit them economically.

Indeed, after the crushing defeat of US arms in Vietnam and the vindication of people's war as the only real defence against imperialist aggression, it is somewhat less likely that the major imperialist powers will embark on direct military interventions in other countries. It is not on blocs or treaty organisations that Albania is relying for its defence against Russian aggression. Enver Hoxha dismisses the idea that a small country like Albania is just "one mouthful" to be gobbled up. "Watch out, gentlemen, for socialist Albania is a hard bone that will stick in your throat and choke you. Should the Soviet social-imperialists undertake such a venture against our country, they will suffer an irreparable defeat."

To submit to one major imperialist power is no defence against the other. That is the surest way of becoming involved in a war which suits them both. That is why the Marxist-Leninists of Spain and Portugal demand the removal of US bases from their countries. And are there not US bases in Britain that are a threat to our peace? As far as the US is concerned - and our own bourgeoisie concurs - Britain is just an aircraft carrier.

It is no defence to suspend class war in Britain and ally ourselves with our own bourgeoisie against some external imperialist aggressor. The willingness of the bourgeoisie of France and Britain to collaborate with Hitler's Germany was a main cause of World War II and it was the people who had to turn what began as an anti-communist war into an anti-fascist war. Can we really expect our country to be defended by the bourgeoisie who have turned their backs on Britain as an investment possibility, who have turned Britain from the world's workshop into an industrial graveyard in their attempt to destroy the organised working class, who are trying even now to destroy Britain's national sovereignty both by merging Britain in Europe and by tearing Britain into devolved pieces?

Only we, the working class who made Britain, can defend it from imperialism; and we shall have to destroy the fifth column here, our own bourgeois imperialist ruling class, to do so. Our class struggle is also the struggle against war. The struggle for socialism is the struggle for peace.

Devon students fight

OVER 6,000 students, members of the Devon Area Students Association (NUS), went on strike on March 9th to register their opposition to education cuts. Students in Devon have good reason to know the meaning of cuts, since not only are there cuts in each college, but also one local college is being cut by half, and another one closed down altogether.

The strike represents a new determination amongst students in Devon not to allow any more cuts. It involved every type of student, art students, degree students, A-level students, and for many was the first occasion on which their own college union had been involved in battle.

The strike was also noteworthy for the fact that students, in striking, made it clear that their concern was not for a special case, but for education as a whole. In several colleges, proposals to limit the demands to protest over the closures of

local colleges only were defeated.

One of the colleges involved, Exeter University, had also been in occupation of their administrative block for the previous eight days demanding that the University freeze tuition fees instead of raising them in line with the Government's directive. This struggle, too, was characterised by a new involvement and resolution amongst the mass of students in the college. General meetings, usually attended by 200 or 300, were attended on one occasion by 1600 and on another by 2500. The occupation was called off after ten days, having achieved some minor concessions from the administration and a great deal of unity between students never before united.

There could be no better proof that students are part of a class than the timing of this change in attitude. Devon students have accepted decline with the rest of their class, and are now rejecting it with our class.

A single spark can start a prairie fire

THE ACTION taken by Plessey workers to save their jobs by ejecting their management and working-in could be a spark falling into a highly inflammable situation.

Plessey has had to fall in with the overall strategy of the capitalist class which is bent on destroying our industrial base and cutting our basic services, while encouraging the growth of candy-floss assembly-type industries like motor cars. Hence the enormous amounts of our money pumped into Chrysler or Leyland while the telecommunications industry and electronics generally are forced into contraction. Capitalism is cutting its own throat but it expects us to bleed to death first.

The Plessey workers are determined not to. They say we are here; we are skilled and we are willing to work. If the Government has cut its orders, you will have to make them change their minds or else provide alternative work. They

know that Plessey do not want to sack them all yet - only enough to increase profitability. The workers say it won't be like that. You won't sack where and when it suits your profits. We will stop production in all areas, whether they are profitable or not.

With the skills of the workers at Plessey it is perfectly possible to provide everyone in the country with a telephone, to bring about a great expansion of the telecomms industry for the general benefit. If the capitalists cannot afford to let this happen, we have to get rid of

them to save and expand our industries.

The workers at Plessey have shown their willingness to work so it is only reasonable for them to demand that no one be without a job. Yet we have to understand that when the employers can only survive by sacking us in our thousands, our insistence on the right to work, however reasonable, is also revolutionary. The fight to save jobs is the fight to save our industry is the fight to save Britain itself, to save it from capitalism, to save it for socialism.

Dockers and redundancy

A REVIEW of the history of London dockworkers when they were casual workers suffering terrible exploitation and fighting bitter and heroic battles for union recognition leaves one aghast at their recent acceptance of the destruction of their jobs and industry.

Decasualisation was a great victory that has now become a two-edged sword.

Dockers have accepted severance pay and sold jobs and believed that a Labour Government would solve their problems by making all container work within five miles each side of the river their work. This did not come to pass and dockers have been left high and dry without a policy to save their industry.

They have now meekly accepted new increased payments on severance pay, in one of the most depressed areas in the country, the boroughs of Tower Hamlets and Newham.

Dr. Owen, the new Foreign Secretary, who lives in this area, in his first important speech supported Carter on the declaration of human rights, in the defence of dissidents in other countries.

He wants to come a bit nearer home to his own area and talk about the need for human rights there - the right to work, to lead a satisfying life in a thriving community, in the knowledge that their children are going to leave school and have jobs to go to within the community. It is an obscene effrontery to talk about human rights somewhere else.

Above all, dockers must gain back their pride and fight to save their jobs and industry.

Ford medics hit contract

THE MEDICAL staff in the foundry section of Fords, Dagenham, have declared from March 12th a ban on overtime in response to management's use of the social contract to upgrade them while refusing to give them any additional pay.

Even though the medical staff is skilled, they are very badly paid, getting less not only than agency nurses, but less even than janitors.

While the ban is on, casualties in the foundry section will be transferred to the engine section or some other section. But from March 19th the overtime ban is to be extended.

This action will be supported by other workers refusing to do their shifts when medical arrangements are inadequate. Shop stewards are determined that this supporting action will be effective and are thus supporting an attack on the social contract.

Disconnecting telecomms

WORKERS from telecomms factories all over the country demonstrated on February 14th against cutbacks in their industry. The industry relies heavily on one supplier, the Post Office, who have announced a cutback in orders of £220m, no different in essence from cutbacks in the social services.

The size of this attack on our telecomms industry in terms of jobs lost is 20,000 out of 88,000. Workers have to fight to save

the industry for it is clear that its destruction is on the cards. Only 18 months ago cutbacks of 37 per cent followed on top of an earlier round of "Barber cuts" during the Heath administration. And the latest estimates of jobs lost through cutbacks are only part of an on-going process.

The sooner we fight, the less we lose. The more we delay, the harder it is to fight another day. No more sackings!

Doctors' dilemma

THE RECENT BMA Conference about evidence to the Royal Commission on the NHS showed that doctors are fully aware both of the falling standard of health care and the threat to their future posed by medical unemployment.

However the remedies that were proposed will not help either the NHS or the medical profession. On the question of falling standards of care, the Conference held that the answer was to charge patients for consultation and treatment, and thereby raise more money for

the NHS. This conflicts with their reaffirmation of support for the basic principles of the NHS.

On the question of medical unemployment, rather than demanding an increase in the number of jobs available, the BMA demanded a reduction in the number of medical graduates produced. This is in conflict with their demands for reduction in GPs list size, better career prospects in hospitals (i.e. more consultants) and shorter working hours for junior hospital doctors.

Let us hope that objectivity will triumph over awe, before the declamation of the medical profession and the NHS has gone much further.

Fleet St. plan hit

DESPITE a huge propaganda campaign, Fleet Street workers are rejecting the vaunted plan for the introduction of new technology and the declamation of the workforce which the national newspaper owners thought they had sewn up. The plan outlined 'generous' redundancy terms for the thousands whose fate was to be turned out into the streets.

Already the plan has been rejected by NATSOPA, the National Graphical Association and the Fleet Street electricians. Fleet Street workers are not such fools as to think that their skills could find another home once the new technology had been introduced. Nor will they be so foolish as to think that rejection by ballot will be enough. The sharks have been beaten off, but will return.

Boys in blue alter colour

SOME of the leaders in the agitation by the police for better pay, the social contract notwithstanding, have approached the trade unions to see if they can persuade the Government to allow the Police Federation to affiliate to the TUC.

Under the Police Act 1964 affiliation and the right to strike are expressly barred to policemen. If the police decide to affiliate to the TUC there might well be a day when the police say they would remove their class brothers from the factory they are occupying - only they cannot cross the picket line.

Union sovereignty must be the cardinal principle for NUT conference delegates

DELEGATES to NUT Annual Conference at Eastbourne this Easter will be presented with three Executive memoranda. The Salaries memorandum is an abject surrender to the TUC of the Union's role as negotiators of its members' wages. Current policy is, on paper, 'to maintain and wherever possible to improve living standards', but for the second consecutive year the Executive, with the tacit approval of the members, has disregarded Union rule 34 (requiring a special conference be called to ratify departures from salary policy) and sought instead the £6 maximum under the social contract. This has meant a decline in living standards. It is now proposed that members agree to a contract that has not yet been made. Are teachers such gluttons for sacrifice that they are again prepared to accept cuts in real wages in return for education cuts and more teacher unemployment?

The Superannuation memorandum succumbs to the philosophy of 'total remuneration package' - that is if there are salary increases there will be no money for improvement of pensions. This would mean abandonment of the Union's major aims.

The third memorandum, Defence of Educational Standards, Class Size and Teacher Employment, is not radically different from that accepted at last conference. This is in itself a criticism since the situation has markedly deteriorated, and yet the response is muted. The criteria for action, if Conference accepts them, will be in the main the poorest staffing standards. Thus some areas are left to take on the campaigning while other areas such as inner London merely applaud from the sideline and the Government, instigator of the cuts, emerges relatively unscathed. Can there be anyone who still doubts that the very future of education is at stake? And are we still reserv-

ing our wrath for those authorities where Union organisation has had, to date, the least success? The response must be national and directed against every single cut, be it in staffing or education provision.

Mention has already been made of the erosion of democracy in the Union, in particular the surrender of wage negotiations to the TUC, which, constitutionally has no influence whatsoever over the NUT. There are other developments which equally strike at the very roots of the teachers' trade union. Under the smoke screen of a battle between those who pose as the guardians of union discipline and those who embark on ill-considered action, severe disciplinary procedures have been introduced which restrict genuine militancy. Teachers will have to reject every diversion and assert their freedom for if the action is principled and supported the way forward will be found. Of similar origin is a proposal before Conference to forbid local associations to elect their officers at association meetings. Some say that members who find more important things to do than to go to their union meetings are thereby disenfranchised, and so the postal ballot must be introduced. But is it not rather the case that such members disenfranchise themselves?

The situation facing Conference delegates is a challenging one, the opportunity will be there for delegates to debate all these issues and to shape their Union's policy. The message should be put at Conference and in the schools: there is nothing right about closing colleges of education, leaving schools inadequately staffed or destroying the schools meal service. We should nail the lie that education is being cut to save manufacturing industry. The Inner London Education Authority has recently announced plans to close Shoreditch College, which trains craft teachers, at a time when

there is a desperate shortage of such teachers, not to mention the shortage of craftsmen in industry (and this on top of Government demands to close other colleges of education). Ironically, under the slogan 'Cut public services - Save industry' the Government's 'industrial strategy' is achieving the destruction of both - if we permit it.

The education service, abandoned by successive Governments, is the proper concern and responsibility of those who work in it, and indeed the whole labour movement. The National Union of Teachers has not struggled for over 100 years just to see the fruits of its struggle decay. It is high time to throw off the misplaced allegiance to the Government which has stayed the labour movement's hand in defence of education.



Students demonstrate against fee increases (Andrew Ward - Report)

The direction for students

THE NUS Conference at Blackpool from March 28th to April 1st comes at a time when union membership is showing a magnificent response to the major issue confronting students. The task of Conference therefore will be to reaffirm the correctness of the contemporary struggles whilst pointing to the political necessity of extending and strengthening them. The sovereignty of Conference must be established in this, together with the recognition that the leadership of the union is students in struggle. Any attempt to foist an alternative leadership on students must be utterly rejected.

Save education - fight where you are

As in previous years, the Grants and Education Cuts debate is top priority. The difference now, however, is that by the very nature of the attack on students, the main emphasis of the campaign has changed from a fight over conditions within education to a fight for its very survival. And since education is such a necessary part of industry, so the fight to save education is part and parcel of the general class struggle to save British industry.

At a time when the Government is doing everything within its power to divide students off from society, we must accept that the future of all education in this country is the responsibility of every student and non-student alike, and our duty is to allow neither students nor the general public to shirk that responsibility. Superficial approaches to 'linking

up with other trades unions' must be thrown out. Instead we must devote our main effort to fighting where we are for our own sector and win support that way.

It should be clear by now that there is no possibility of any future benefit coming from acceptance of the cuts, for all these things are the very foundation upon which future prosperity is based. The Government's IMF loan goes hand in hand with these cuts in public expenditure, causing social distress and deprivation, not as some unfortunate by-product, but as an integral part of the economic system we live in. The cuts will continue to the extent that we fail to fight and to recognise that that fight is against the system itself. There can be absolutely no acceptance of priorities within our opposition to these cuts. Equal priority for all our demands, including those of the Grants Campaign, will unite the widest possible numbers. Attempts to wreck this unity by prioritising certain demands, for whatever reasons, must be defeated.

The way we fight is by taking direct action to defeat each cut when and where it occurs, so that by perseverance and determination the cuts as a whole will become impossible to implement. As our activities are spread across sectoral and local boundaries, united national action can develop on the basis of local initiatives, so that the entire membership is mobilised to fight and fight hard for education.

No fee increases

No closures

The present inspiring actions to stop the Government's proposed fee increases are proof of the correctness of the union's general cuts policy. Students are aware that they must not fall for the Government's divide and rule tactic, by making sure that the racist aspect of the proposals does not cloud the fundamental reasoning behind them - an attack on education, and thus on all students and all college workers. They have shown the correct response to such attacks is

to use direct action and not plead that this person or that college is a 'special case', because more has been gained in two weeks of action over fees than in six months of polite protest. Our minimum demands must be "No fee rises", "No discriminatory fees for overseas students", "No quota on overseas students' numbers".

The other major aspect of the cuts in higher education at present is the projected closure of 30 colleges of education. This is a most ruthless pruning exercise, with many colleges taking in students with no certainty that they will not close before those students even begin their courses. If the colleges are allowed to close, the damage will have been done, class sizes in schools will continue to multiply, and the possibility of restoring those colleges as need demands will not exist. They should be retained and used for their original purpose - colleges of education - and any attempt to adapt them to other uses must be condemned from the outset as outright collaboration with the State's policy of destruction.

United we fight

It is essential that in all our campaigns we see the 'Great Debate' in education for what it is - a smokescreen for the cuts and an insult to teachers. We should treat it with the contempt it deserves and not allow ourselves to be trapped into dividing students into 'useful' and 'useless', or turning 'industry' against 'education'. Such reasoning only serves the Government in its attempts to put education in the straightjacket of producing the greatest returns in the short run, and ceasing to exist in the long run.

Our commitment to education and to students as an essential part of industrial society will ensure the development of the union, encourage more colleges to join the National Union (as many Colleges of Further Education are doing or wish to do), and enable us to reject the proposals for devolution of the union - proposals which encourage students studying in Scotland or Wales to think of their problems as peculiarly Scottish or Welsh, when in fact the attack is an overall one and the enemy is the same. United we fight for education and the future.

Public Meetings

7.30 p.m. Bellman Bookshop, 155 Fortess Road, London, NW5.

March 25th Health
April 1st Technological and Cultural Achievements in Albania. Organised by the New Albania Society. No meeting planned.
April 8th Science, Research and Technology in Jeopardy
April 15th Revolution - Britain's Duty
April 22nd

CROYDON
April 14th Away with the Social Contract
Federation House, Elmwood Rd., Croydon 7.30 p.m.

CRAWLEY
April 28th Only Revolution can save Britain.
AEU Hall, Robinson Rd., Crawley. 8 p.m.

Bookshops

Marxist-Leninist literature and CPB(M-L) publications available.

Bellman Bookshop, 155 Fortess 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

'THE WORKER' 155 FORTRESS ROAD, LONDON NW5
£2.50 per year (including postage)
NAME.....
ADDRESS.....

No contract call

Shop stewards of London North District of the AUEW unanimously passed the following resolution at their quarterly meeting on March 10th: "This Shop Stewards Quarterly demands an immediate end to the social contract and a return to free collective bargaining forthwith." Further the stewards called on the District Committee to pledge full support to all members engaged in struggle against the contract.