

THE WORKER



Published by the Communist Party of Britain (Marxist - Leninist) No. 16 May 4th 1978 5p

MAY DAY IN BRITAIN — 1978



THE WORKING CLASS ALONE IS THE REVOLUTIONARY FORCE

The task of our party is to accelerate that movement

ON this May Day we send our best wishes and feelings of class solidarity to workers all over the world. To fraternal working class parties we send our revolutionary greetings.

Last year on May Day, speaking of the international situation, Reg Birch, Chairman of the Communist Party of Britain (Marxist-Leninist), said:

"Just now there is great clamour about the threat of World War III. In history's time it is overdue: it has been longer than a quarter of a century since the last. That does not make it inevitable and, unlike some, our Party does not subscribe to the view that world war necessarily brings revolution. I would prefer to put it the other way: revolution prevents world war. If you get revolution out of war, that is a bonus; but you have to be alive to conduct it."

Reg Birch went on to say: "It was true that in the First World War by 1917 the great Bolshevik Party had triumphed and the Russian workers had seized power having turned an imperialist war into the capture of power for the working class and having contributed to the establishment throughout the world of communist parties. In the Second World War, a world saved by the Red Army's

blood and the loss of so many young, the fat old men seized power in the Soviet Union and the revisionists came into their own. Soviet imperialism was born. And many of those communist parties founded after the Bolshevik revolution fell by the wayside.

"We do not need any warnings about that. Nor do we share the view that, in some automatic way, out of chaos comes progress. We say instead: progress will create chaos, for the capitalists. That is our business. We must put them in disarray

"If we listen to much that is said about the 1st, 2nd and 3rd worlds, we are liable to believe that the 3rd world, some homogeneous unit of progressive, liberation-seeking peoples, will join the 2nd world, capitalists and imperialists but not so much so, and co-operating together face the 1st world of super powers. Soviet imperialism and US imperialism. Is that likely? Can we

believe that capitalism will ever join anybody on the path of progress!

"When we consider the question of world war we have to remember those wars made by the so-called 1st and 2nd worlds on the so-called 3rd world. We can only say we have not had war since the Second World War if we conveniently forget Malaya, if we conveniently forget Korea and Vietnam, all ingredients of potential world war. Especially if we forget the war waged by British imperialism in Ireland."

And on the question of how we meet the threat of war: "We do not need anyone telling us that the Common Market is good for us. You try telling that to people in the streets around here. Or that NATO with its neo-Nazis and Yankee generals is an effective barrier against the imperialist powers. We do not need people telling us beware of the enemy at the gate, arm and be ready, stand shoulder to shoulder with the bourgeoisie against the Soviet. Of course we have to defend. But remembering Franco and Spain we cannot forget the Fifth Column inside our coun-

try either. We do not require war mongers to frighten us. We have a war to fight here and that is what we must do.

Then Reg Birch turned to the question of the situation in Britain. "And what about here? We communists have no need to be the Theoreticians, great clever people. We are not required to be the mentors of the working class - only of it. They alone will resolve the question of their own freedom. They alone are the revolutionary force. The task of our Party, which is of the working class and in it, is to accelerate that movement. We are proud as a Party of what has been achieved already. We are sad only about our inadequacies, our lack of impact that is so necessary today.

"We have yet to smash social democracy. And soon they will seek to put us in a great quandary. Mr Callaghan says there will be an election in '78. Shall we have Callaghan? Shall we have Thatcher? What kind of a choice is that? The very idea of putting crosses on bits of paper is an insult to our literacy.

"There is no substitute in

this land for the trade union machinery that exists, so laboriously constructed with such great sacrifice within the trade union movement. In that area of struggle where such primitive weapons are required there is not a better one. We do not want parallelism. We want our membership to seize that which has been made by them and run it, instead of being told what to do. Run it for ourselves.

"In this land our function, our job is to remember the heritage which out of class relationships and struggle is ours as Marxists. All Marx ever wrote was learned from class conflict. It was we the working class in this world, and first in Britain, who were the inspirers of all that theory and all that reason. We have the job to say: there is no easy road, there is not a gradual road, there is not a civilised road - not when you are dealing with barbarians. Capitalism is barbaric. It has outlasted its time. It must go. That is the task of our Party. It is your job too, all of you, wherever you are, to struggle for the emancipation of the working class in this land."



LONDON MAY DAY CELEBRATION

MONDAY 1st MAY 7.30pm

CONWAY HALL, RED LION SQUARE, HOLBORN

'ONE WORLD - TWO CLASSES'



Fraternal telegram

"TO THE WORKER:
Greetings for the First of May."

ZERI I POPULLIT
(People's Voice)
The newspaper of the
Albanian Party and
People

HISTORIC NOTES

A day for the working class

THE WEEK

MAY DAY is a day of celebration. From time immemorial the British people have celebrated their deliverance from the harsh struggles of winter to the new life of Spring by a day of rest, dancing and joy.

In the nineteenth century this rite was transformed into something quite new. On May 1st, 1886, strikers from the McCormack Reaper Works in Chicago were brutally attacked by the police. In the ensuing struggle, 10 workers and seven police were killed. Four of the workers' leaders were later arrested and hanged.

July 4th, 1889, is an important date in the history of May Day. It was on this day that the International Association of Working Men met in Paris and adopted the following resolution:

"Congress decides to organise a great international demonstration so that in all countries and all cities on one appointed day, the tolling masses shall demand of the State Authorities the legal reduction of the working day to eight hours." May 1st was the day chosen in honour of the American workers' struggle.

In 1890, the first organised May Day marches took place in Paris, Berlin and Chicago, as well as in other cities. The demonstration in London was held on May 4th in Hyde Park. A massive turnout was recorded with all sections of the working class represented.

Three years later, the International, in keeping with the rising tide of revolutionary feeling, passed a resolution calling on all workers to celebrate May 1st not only in connection with the eight hour day campaign but also as an expression of determination to change the old order of things.

The 1890's saw the Russian workers rising and beginning to assert themselves. All forms of working class activity and organi-

sation were illegal; but in spite of killings, tortures and deportations by the Tsarist police, workers were becoming organised, and often expressed their solidarity in massive May Day marches in the principal cities.

London's May Day celebration in 1900 took place at the Crystal Palace, and speeches denouncing the imperialist aims of the British Government in South Africa were in stark contrast to the Boer War jingoism of the time.

The twentieth century came in on 'the tide of working class activity throughout the world. In 1905 the Russian workers, with the aid of sections of the Tsarist navy, who mutinied, attempted to overthrow the reactionary regime and transfer power into their own hands. The attempt failed but the lessons paved the way for future success.

With the First World War of the imperialist powers came the world-shattering breakthrough of the great October Russian Revolution of 1917. Throughout the period of the war the Clyde-side workers had struggled against the imperialist war and the attack on their living standards. The first Sunday in May,

1917, was a big demonstration in Glasgow. Between 70,000 and 80,000 people marched to Glasgow Green where they passed resolutions expressing solidarity with the Soviets, the organisations which were to lead the people of the Soviet Union to power later that same year.

By 1920, the rallying call was "Hands Off Russia". The May Day demonstrations in London not only included a thousand strong contingent of ex-servicemen but also sacked members of the Metropolitan Police who had been on strike for better wages and conditions!

On the first Sunday in May, 1926, at the very time the demonstrations were being held, the TUC Executive was meeting in Kingsway Hall to discuss the General Strike which began at midnight.

The first great hunger march was in 1930. On May 1st, a thousand marchers representing the unemployed in various parts of the country arrived in London. They marched to Fulham Work House where they were refused entry by a large force of police. The whole of the London May Day gathering of workers then

marched to the Work House in support. In the face of this show of strength, the hunger marchers were allowed in, and promptly hoisted the red flag over the building.

The 1930's witnessed the rise of fascism and the struggle against Franco in Spain. The main theme of the 1937 May Day march in London was support for the Spanish Republicans and the International Brigade.

In 1945, the fascist axis powers were defeated. The Labour Party refused to participate in the traditional May Day celebration because Julie Jacobs, Secretary of the London Trades Council and a member of the 'CPGB, was to be one of the speakers. This was the beginning of separate May Day marches by 'Labour' and 'Communist' parties, which was to become traditional.

Oswald Mosley, the British fascist who had been in prison during the war, announced his intention of marching on May Day, 1949. The Labour Government was forced by public protest to ban the march. They then banned the May Day march of the labour movement as well! Just as today when the present Labour Government bans workers' demonstrations along with National Front marches. Workers needed no urging to march to Trafalgar Square for the usual rally. Thousands of demonstrators converged on the Square, in spite of mounted police charges and dozens of arrests. The following year, when the Government again banned the march, workers demonstrated with the same militancy.

May Day, the traditional celebration of new life, has now become the main ceremonial expression of the working class's international solidarity and aspirations for a new world from which exploitation has been eliminated.



May strike of McCormick Reaper Works, Chicago, 1886, which the International Working Men's Association later made the date for the annual occasion where workers celebrate solidarity against capitalism.

Mock freedom in Namibia

NO WONDER the British Foreign Office are crowing over the new "peace" plan in Namibia. The nub of the proposal is to maintain, under U.N. supervision, 20,000 South African troops in foreign territories so as to safeguard "democratic" elections. Their respect for "democracy" is such that they are refusing to move out - unless requested to do so by the fraudulent "Constituent Assembly" they hope to set up. The recent arrest of SWAPO opposition leaders shows how they intend to do this. With the detention of the secretaries for foreign affairs, labour and transport, they have virtually eliminated the possibility of "legal" opposition to their rule. The "illegal" they are bent on stamping out by force of arms. "There must be a complete cessation of hostilities before any reduction in the South African forces takes place. Also that primary responsibility for maintaining law and order during the transitional period shall rest with the existing police forces."

So crude a parody of democratic elections is worthy of the white masters who deny nine-tenths of their subjects any say in their own affairs. The plan commands the respect of no-one. What, then, do the imperialist powers who support it hope to gain, apart from the unreasonable expectation that the people

will abandon armed struggle against the South African occupiers?

The keystone of the plan is the banding together of Britain, France, West Germany, Canada, and the US to constitute the United Nations so-called independent presence. The support given by French and other imperialist troops under the UN flag to Zionist aggression in Lebanon is now to be given to apartheid and its troops by the UN acting as agents of imperialism.

Worse still, in their arrogance, it appears that they hope to generalise UN intervention throughout Africa. According to a Foreign Office spokesman reported in the Times, Owen "thinks that this decision, with its recognition of the role of the United Nations and of the value of international acceptability should pave the way for a similar agreement in Rhodesia for a United Nations supervised cease fire for fair and free elections and for an independent Zimbabwe."

Let the people themselves decide on their own destiny. No interference from any imperialism, still less in its UN form of special protection for the most reactionary and aggressive regimes in Africa - those of Smith and Vorster.

From social contribution - Albanian women's liberation

THE PROBLEMS of relatively oppressed sections of society must be solved if we are to succeed in creating a socialist society. In Albania, the Women's Union, which is preparing for its 8th Congress in June, has rejected that defensive approach which encourages disadvantaged groups to go off in separate organisations and directions to concentrate on their 'own' problems in isolation. They see the road to liberation as positively asserting the contribution they have to make to society.

A recent article by Vito Kapo, President of the Women's Union, points out that great strides have been made by women through increasing participation in production; training and being trained,

in the armed defence of the country, and in the Party of Labour. All such activities, she stresses, "serve as important factors for complete emancipation of women." This does not mean that the problems of women have been submerged or forgotten. On the contrary, the job of socialism is "the complete emancipation of the whole society, women included; the problem of women, as a great problem of the Party, is becoming a problem of all society."

The Albanian example illustrates one of the great strengths of Marxism. It has the ability to help put problems in their context, and in perspective. This way they can be solved, even if the solution may be long and hard.



Bookshops



Bellman Bookshop, 155 Fortess Road, London NW 5
Basildon bookstall Tues Fri Sat Marketplace
Northern Star Bookshop, 18A Leighton Street, Leeds
Main Trend Books, 17 Midland Road, St. Philips, Bristol
Brighton Workers Bookshop, 37 Gloucester Road, Brighton
Liverpool bookstall
Every Saturday at Paddies Market
Great Homer Street, Liverpool

THERE were nearly 600 people killed and 326300 injured in accidents at work in 1976, according to Mr William Stimpson, Chairman of the Health and Safety Commission. These appalling figures do not give the full story because "many accidents are not reportable and there is known to be under-reporting". The law shows an equal lack of concern. The maximum fine imposed by magistrates is £400.

The non-striking Claridges workers "rewarded" with a week's extra holiday and cash or share bonuses would do well not to pin their hopes on their employer. The Government is already seeing if the payment contravenes the 'guidelines'. Claridges management will doubtless wish to comply. We applaud the trade union discipline and unity of the strikers who returned to work once it was clear that support was insufficient for a lengthy strike. Their efforts at organisation will be more effective within the hotel than in a long and potentially demoralising picket without.

DOCTORS inside the drug company manufacturing the most widely used hormone pregnancy test in Britain were so worried by evidence of its possible damage to unborn children that they wanted to withdraw the drug 10 years ago. But the parent company, Schering AG of Berlin, refused. Last week, the drug - Primodos - was still in chemists' shops in this country.

In the intervening decade, a million and a half women in Britain have taken hormone pregnancy tests. The number of deformed children born as a consequence is estimated to run into thousands.

World wide sales of the drug grossed £4 million last year.

MRS THATCHER'S efforts to set up the anti-communist European Democratic Union have not won widespread acclaim amongst reactionaries.

The Italian Christian Democrats rejected the EDU, arguing that some of the parties involved are too right-wing. The Dutch, Belgian and Luxembourg conservative parties were also absent from the inaugural meeting as they regard the EDU as unwanted opposition to the Common Markets European People's Party.

THE recent announcement by the Labour Government that it wishes to pay "the dole" fortnightly instead of weekly cynically reveals the limits of its confidence in reducing unemployment.

The move, which is being resisted by the Civil Service Unions and by claimants' organisations, represents a long-term acceptance of high unemployment.

THE WALES devolution Bill has been speedily rushed through Parliament like an unwanted baby. Like the Scottish Bill, the vast majority of the clauses of the Bill were not even discussed. In this case only one clause about finance was included. As one MP complained to the House during the debate, even proponents of devolution have not yet discovered precisely what the functions and roles of the assemblymen would be. Just like the Scottish Bill, the Wales Bill has been planned very carefully - to create maximum chaos and confusion for workers asserting rights.

EDITORIAL

THE WORLD keeps confirming our thesis on the absolute decline of capitalism, even though the apologists for the system keep on telling us about the light at the end of the tunnel of some particular crisis.

In Britain the industrial base of the country is continuously being eroded, more and more of the workers whose skill could be providing goods for us all are thrown on the scrap heap of unemployment. Capital leaves the country for more profitable climes like rats deserting a sinking ship. The two major political parties keep blaming each other for what's happening to the country, rather like ticks on a dying capitalist ox accusing each other of doing the beast in. Capitalists go on getting richer at the expense of workers, but the capitalist system is doomed.

Exactly the same is true of the capitalist world scene. The imperialist countries, with the help of local capitalist governments, continue to exploit the LDC's. (Less Developed Countries is one of the euphemisms for poverty-stricken colonial or semi-colonial countries.) Indeed the exploitation gets worse. The rich countries, not the working class of course, go on getting richer and the poor countries, not the ruling class of course, go on getting poorer; and this continues to be the case in spite of UNCTAD meetings, "North-South dialogues" and all the other euphemisms for the exploitative relationship between imperialist countries and the rest of the capitalist world.

The MDC's (More Developed Countries) keep exporting capital to the LDC's while discouraging their industrial development; the terms of trade, in spite of particular exceptions like oil, continue to run against the producers of primary commodities and the debts of the LDC's have reached such proportions that well over half of their export earnings go simply to pay debt charges without beginning to reduce overall indebtedness. It is estimated that over £200 bn is owed to commercial banks without taking into account loans from the IMF or the imperialist countries.

What we have here is not some cyclical phenomenon but what the Director General of GATT calls "a general crisis of confidence in the capacity of the world economy to recover and expand again."

The main apologists for the deteriorating world capitalist system are the "third-world theorists" who talk blithely about improvements in the standard of living of people in the LDC's and how second order imperialist countries can be persuaded to lend a helping hand to the poor people of the colonial and semi-colonial world. These "helpful" imperialists are in our case, the bourgeoisie, the class enemy of all workers wherever British imperialism operates. The "third worldists" by extolling such developments as the so-called "green revolution", would claim to have eliminated any necessity for a genuine red revolution, which is the only means whereby people anywhere can liberate themselves from exploitation. Very few of the most outspoken supporters of the capitalists system dare talk such rubbish any more.

There is no way that workers in a capitalist country or in a capitalist world can improve their conditions except by overthrowing the capitalist system which exploits them - and exploits them more grossly because it is in a state of decline. But workers can do this more easily precisely because it is a system in absolute decline.

WE WANT MORE BUSES

LONDON'S busmen, after a well-conducted campaign of lightning strikes, have succeeded in getting their employer to negotiate over the proposed new bus timetables.

A union spokesman said, "London Transport has agreed to talk and that is a big improvement. Before they were trying to present us with a fait accompli."

The LT plan involves scaling

down timetables to levels which it supposedly can provide, thus cutting back an already inadequate service.

London transport is recruiting 700 more staff to meet their new timetable, set to come into force in October but has admitted it will not reach the staff target until early next year.

The union, the TGWU, has said that 700 is not enough.

UNEMPLOYMENT AROUND BRITAIN

NO.1 - MERSEYSIDE

CURRENTLY doing the rounds of the workshops and factories of Liverpool is the following example of "Scouse" wit:

Q. Name five types of murder.
A. Homicide, infanticide, suicide, patricide and Merseyside.

The basis for such black humour is of course no laughing matter.

It has been announced that despite the existing unemployment rate of 12 per cent, another 8000 are to join the dole queue. Announcements of redundancies or inten-

ded redundancies since the beginning of the year include:

British Leyland	3000
Lucas	2000
Courtaulds	500
GEC	700
Tate & Lyle	400
Birds Eye	500
Spillers	500

These figures do not include companies which have sacked 300 or less.

The tactics of closure or threatened closure of factories

are not limited to Merseyside but the scale on which they are being used here suggests that the area is to be used as an example of 'where militancy gets you'. Ironically, all the firms mentioned have a relatively free strike record.

The Liverpool Trades Council has called for a one day stoppage on May 9th. A one day strike will not stop the rot but it is time for the workers on Merseyside, as elsewhere, to put their foot down. Let May 9th be a declaration that we need jobs but we do not need capitalism.

Government cosmetics cannot beautify the hideous face of unemployment

DESPITE the cuts in public spending implemented by the Labour Government which have had such destructive consequences for British workers, there are two areas of government spending which continue to soar inexorably: these are unemployment benefits and the money spent by the Government to reduce artificially the size of the army of the unemployed.

The number of workers kept off the dole queue by the Government's 'special programmes' has grown from 2200 in 1974 to 154000 in 1976 and will continue to grow to 400000 in 1979.

Under these programmes the Government provides employers

with temporary employment subsidies. This means that the working class pays capitalism to exploit as cheap labour those of its members who would otherwise have been unemployed.

30 000 people are currently involved in the work experience scheme, a scheme which epitomises the cynicism and stupidity of capitalism. Workers acquire skills at the point of production and are then pushed back onto the dole queue to wait for jobs which never materialise. The training itself is grossly inadequate. Those involved in this scheme are mostly young people. Nothing could serve to prove more forcefully that the young (like all mem-

bers of the working class) have no future under capitalism.

The original rationale for cuts in public spending put forward by the Labour Government was that a 'transfer of resources' would bring about a regeneration of manufacturing industry, which would create jobs and cure unemployment.

Since 1974 unemployment has doubled and now drifts around the two million mark, showing the nonsense of the Labour Government's logic. Under capitalism, unemployment will continue to grow and no amount of government applied cosmetic will hide, let alone cure, the hideous blemishes of a decrepit system.

Amalgamation in the engineering union in order to secure working class advance

AMALGAMATION is no new word for engineering workers in Britain. Ever since the ASE (Amalgamated Society of Engineers) was founded over 120 years ago amalgamation has been part of the name of the union itself. Many times in the history of what is now the AUEW was amalgamation been a key issue. As Tom Mann wrote in 1920 in the ASE Journal:

"The societies or unions which we bring into existence themselves require remodelling from time to time to admit of larger growth, and the present strong trend towards the AMALGAMATION OF UNIONS into larger bodies embracing many sections is evidence of healthy growth on an ascending

plane. The object of amalgamation is not to destroy initiative or diminish individuality, but to minimise the risk of group clashing with group with the inevitable friction such clashing engenders."

1978 is an important year for amalgamation in the AUEW in two ways. First there is the outstanding question of consolidation of what we already have - the four sections of the AUEW - and the need to complete that amalgamation. In the end it will not be a question of the rules for election of officers but the fundamental question of the strength of the AUEW as a union. Secondly there are the approaches to other unions in the engineering industry

- in line with the aim of one union for engineering. Naturally these two aspects of amalgamation are not independent. Indeed, the sooner that the consolidation of the AUEW's four sections is completed the more certain it will be that any further amalgamation will be from a position of strength. Only the completion of the present amalgamation can give us the unity to ensure that amalgamation in our union always means advance for the working class. Last year's National Committee was very clear on the wages issue. This year's National Conference in May must be equally clear on the question of amalgamation.

KPDML, Central Committee, Dortmund, 20th April, 1978.

To CC, CPB(ML)

Dear Comrades,

We send you our heartfelt fraternal greetings on the occasion of the 10th anniversary of the foundation of the CPB(ML).

With the foundation of the CPB(ML) you raised anew the banner of Marxism-Leninism in Britain, which the modern revisionists and opportunists had dropped and trampled in the dust. Since then the British working class has a Marxist-Leninist party again, which leads the struggle for the proletarian revolution and the erection of a socialist Britain, for the overthrow of the capitalist system of exploitation and oppression and will lead the way to victory.

We German Marxist-Leninists have a sense of brotherly solidarity with you, through our common principles, the teachings of Marx, Engels, Lenin and Stalin, through proletarian internationalism. Our common struggle against the imperialist camp led by the USA, and the Soviet Union, against reaction and all shades of revisionism will gain new victories in the future, too.

We wish you, dear comrades, new victories in the struggle for a socialist Britain.

Long live the Communist Party of Britain (Marxist-Leninist)!
Long live Marxism-Leninism!

Central Committee of the KPD/ML
Ernst Aust
Chairman



Capitalism can't be trusted with Windscale development or with anything else!

NUCLEAR weapons are rightly condemned as an abomination. We demand their complete elimination. But this condemnation cannot be extended to nuclear power and all research into its future development. From its beginnings nuclear power was not seen by capitalists as the step forward for humanity which it is, but simply as the possibility of increased profits. The promise of cheap power has, of course, fallen by the wayside, and the opportunity for throwing troublesome miners on the scrap heap by closing pits was not missed.

In its mad rush for profit and destruction capitalism disregarded the treatment of dangerous by-products and plunged ahead into its production. Hence their dilemma as workers protest at plans to make Britain an international dumping ground for radioactive waste.

It would be wrong to condemn nuclear power because of the approach so far, as some would have us do. Mankind will find the answer given time - it is capitalism that denies us the time. A socialist Britain - with an expanding industry - will have need of

efficient energy sources. Research must and will be made into all available methods. Nuclear power is one of these, and of such importance that we cannot discard it. All ways of obtaining energy are potentially dangerous, but if we approach them correctly we shall learn and understand the dangers. We do not condemn hydro-electric power yet a huge dam has immense potential for destruction.

Of course, under capitalism protection of people and the environment is the last consideration, in spite of the efforts of workers in the industry. Nor is there adequate research into more advanced techniques.

No benefit accrues to the working class through the capitalist development of nuclear power. Indeed jobs have been lost as pits closed, not to mention unemployment in the industries displaced by nuclear technology. We shall not benefit until the working class controls the future and our resources are used wisely. Such control demands a socialist Britain - capitalism's approach to a nuclear power makes our need all the more urgent.

Government collaboration with U.S. in destruction of aerospace industry

THE CONFEDERATION of Shipbuilding and Engineering Union's recent call for British Airways to buy the BAC111 comes as a direct challenge to the destruction of the British aerospace industry, and marks a blow for the future of British industry.

This attempt to stem the flood of British aerospace work going abroad must be taken up by workers in the industry through proper use of their unions. Nationalisation of the industry has proved to be nothing more than a plan for its destruction. The various plans and proposals for the future of the industry made up by joint shop stewards committees and combine committees have rarely seen the light of day and have frequently succeeded only in turning members away from their unions. And the acceptance of measured day work throughout the industry has brought only division and recrimination in its wake. What is needed now is unity to fight for an independent British aerospace industry. This call for British Airways to buy British aircraft provides the initial focus.

In the present state of the industry Concorde has ended, the HS146 (which is now Britain's largest single civilian air project under construction) is in grave doubt, and there is talk of dismantling production to share work with French manufacturers, or even of handing work over entirely to the Dutch to build a military version. The BAC111, a well-established passenger plane, is now threatened with extinction by British Airways' proposal to buy American Boeings; and the Trident has become

dependent entirely upon the Chinese order as British Airways consider re-equipping their whole fleet.

The overwhelming majority of new development work is restricted to military projects, but even these are increasingly being shared out as bits and pieces among NATO nations. Meanwhile, collaboration in civilian aircraft production has reached an advanced stage; for example, work on the A300b European "Airbus" is shared among six nations, with the British contribution restricted to a mere 17 per cent of the airframe. Yet in terms of technological knowledge and skills, British aerospace leads the world, and it is for this reason that foreign firms are so keen to establish collaborative projects, steal our expertise and leave the British industry in ruins.

The planned destruction of British aerospace is well illustrated by two recent contracts. The first is the £250 million order from Lockheed for the RB211 engine to power Tristar 1011's. This deal was heralded as a great competitive achievement over General Electric and Pratt & Whitney (which it was) but also as a "vital job saver" for the Rolls Royce workers at Filton and Derby. It is in fact nothing of the sort, because the RB211 is a production line engine and a large part of the order is already in stock. Less publicised was the fact that as part of this deal the British worker is paying for the destruction of the British industry in other areas. Through the agency of the Export Credits Guarantee Department our taxes are being



The mass meeting of Leyland workers of the no 2 Speke factory, Liverpool, which, on April 15th, took the correct decision to resist closure and fight redundancies. Already attempts are being made to change this from a fight for the right to work into a hassle about the price at which the jobs will be sold. This must be resisted.

Erratum

The photograph on the first page of the last issue (No. 15) should have been credited to John Sturrock, REPORT.

Alternative to educational decline at Sladebrook

Last year, Sladebrook High School made national headlines as the centre of a controversy concerning educational standards and behaviour. In the middle of the furore teachers heard that the Brent Education Committee had decided to cut staff from the school. Teachers, parents, unions, school governors and the Brent Trades Council alike called for the school to maintain its staff in full and take advantage of the falling roll (reduced pupil intake) to improve class size. The Education Committee reversed its decision and the teachers achieved an important victory, keeping all their staff.

This year they are faced with the same threat. The Education Committee is intending to reduce the establishment by 10 teachers. Teachers at

the school have again produced a document outlining their case. This calls for: the maintenance of all school establishments; the balanced reduction of pupil intakes; the use of falling school rolls to improve class size; a maximum class size of 25 in primary schools in Brent by 1982/3; a maximum class size of 25 in Brent secondary schools by 1984/5; the rapid reduction to a maximum of 20 thereafter.

Teachers have started a vigorous campaign. NUT members have passed a motion supporting the policy of maintaining their establishment and demanding the balanced reduction of rolls, and intend to fight. A motion is being put to the next meeting of the Brent Teachers Association, and support from other unions is already beginning to flow in.

Lies about standards

THE government's carefully staged panic about educational standards (in parallel with its programme of education cuts, school closure and teacher unemployment) might well lead to the assumption that every year more children pour out of the schools illiterate and unemployed (if there were jobs for them). Examination statistics released this month by the Department of Education and Science show otherwise.

Exam results have dramatically improved over the last ten years. 50 per cent of all school leavers in 1975/76 had at least one "higher" grade in English, Maths, Science or a modern language, compared with 38 per cent ten years earlier (in English, 36

per cent compared with 27 per cent in Maths 24 per cent compared with 20 per cent; in Science 27 per cent compared with 22 per cent).

More children are getting 'A' level passes, and more of those are getting two or more passes. About 30 per cent of those with two 'A' levels had Mathematics, and more children are mixing arts and science subjects.

Examinations indicate a very small part of what is learnt in schools. But they are just the sort of mechanical gauge the government loves. If they cannot even prove by their own statistics the disarray of education, let them stop slandering the schools, the children and the teachers, who have managed to improve despite the cuts.

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