

THE WORKER



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BRITISH IMPERIALISM: HANDS OFF AFRICA!

BRITAIN'S role in the imperialist military intervention in Zaire must be condemned by the British labour movement. Though played down by the Foreign Office, Britain's contribution was singled out by the French President speaking on French television. This old British Imperialist wizard is the behind-the-scene architect of the operation as it has been for similar military intervention in recent years, such as the Mogadishu operation with West Germany.

The 'rescue' operations mounted by France, Belgium, Britain and the US had nothing to do with the 3000 Europeans in Kolwezi. It is a flagrant

military intervention to rescue the reactionary corrupt regime of Mobutu. The operation in the first day alone resulted in the death of over 80 Europeans. Even Tindemans, the Belgian Prime minister had to agree that the French landing had aims other than the evacuation of the Europeans. He nonetheless is sending troops to help the French.

It is now clear that Mobutu can remain in power only by the courtesy of foreign military support. Last year France provided transport planes and other aid for Moroccan troops who went into Zaire to prop up the tottering regime of Mobutu. This is obviously no longer sufficient. Four imperialist powers have ganged together determined to maintain Mobutu and with him their extensive mining interests in

Zaire.

One thousand men of the French Foreign Legion, the crack troops of the French army went into battle immediately after landing on May 19th. 1700 Belgian paratroopers have joined them the next day to keep the road to the airport open. Meanwhile Britain is supplying medical back-up to the troops in combat with the US providing fuel and ammunition. These last two imperialist powers are calling for a peaceful settlement in Zimbabwe.

Nothing has changed since these imperialist powers used the UN to murder Patrice Lumumba and carve up the Belgian Congo in their own interests.

NUPE against wages policy

WAGES was the main issue at NUPE's 51st National Conference held recently. But other issues were public expenditure cuts (NUPE reaffirmed total opposition and determination to fight), cash limits (now part of the Labour Government's wage restraint policy) and union democracy (the principle of using every level of the union machinery in the pay fight was accepted).

Conference rejected a resolution containing an eleven point 'shopping list' to be won by November 1st 1978. It went on to approve a resolution stating that "Public sector low pay was a direct result of acceptance of pay restraint". NUPE should "reject and fight any further attempts by the Labour Government to impose pay restraint". The resolution affirmed that "NUPE members interests can only be served by 'free' collective bargaining" and went on to call for "all levels of the union's machinery to be used in the fight to secure a £60 minimum wage".

Conference went on to approve a strategy for a campaign on wages. At the same time Conference approved a resolution calling for public sector wages to be index-linked to the National Average wage. This is in direct opposition to collective bargaining leaving NUPE at the tail of other unions. Such a policy will undoubtedly be thrown out through the coming struggle for wages.

Manpower services threat to further education

THE THREAT posed by the Government's Manpower Services Commission (MSC) to further and higher education, and the Salaries question will provide the focal issues of the 3rd National Association of Teachers in Further and Higher Education (NATFHE) Conference to be held this Spring Bank Holiday in Bournemouth.

The MSC, set up by the Government in 1974, has had a meteoric growth, receiving massive injections of money at a time when education was (and still is) suffering severe cut backs. The MSC's functions in 'planning manpower' and dealing with re-training the unemployed has led to mounting interference with the long-established courses of Further and Higher Education Colleges. The growth of 'Skill Centres', providing superficial courses of limited use to the unemployed and employing 'instructors' with much poorer pay and conditions of service compared to College lecturers, represents a major threat. In addition the MSC is increasingly operating courses within Colleges themselves over which College Staff have greatly reduced control of both academic content and quality.

NATFHE National Council in March passed a motion on the MSC which expressed alarm at the continued attempts by the Government through the Manpower Services Commission to set up an alternative education structure outside the recog-

nised Further and Higher Education sector, whilst it continued to starve further and higher education of adequate funds to undertake necessary development. It called upon the National Executive Committee to request that the Government directs funds for the expansion and development of further and higher education to provide education in skills to meet the needs and aspirations of young people. The National Council also instructed the Executive to call on members to take all necessary action to ensure that the MSC and its associated agencies in no way control courses in further and higher education colleges.

It is the task of Conference to consolidate and take forward this vital struggle. This question is as important to the rest of the Trade Union Movement, which for far too long has engaged a dangerous flirtation with the MSC. Involvement with the machinations of the MSC has encouraged its development. It is time now for the Trade Union movement to withdraw its support.

Delegates at the Conference must honestly face the problems of the annual salary claim. Settlements in the past bore little relation to the original claim. NATFHE has for long inhibited itself from entering serious negotiations at Burnham, always awaiting the outcome of the school teachers' claim which in the past has formed the basis for NATFHE settlement. NATFHE can no

REPORT FROM ALBANIA

A trade union delegate to May Day celebrations in Albania reports on his visit to Europe's only socialist country.

Conway Small Hall, Red Lion Sq.,
Holborn June 9th 7.30p.m



A SPATE of hospital closures is threatened by the government. In London alone one hundred hospitals are to be axed. As many more in the provinces are also threatened. Everyone realises that government's claims for redistribution of resources is absolutely false. Staff in London teaching hospitals warn that they are no longer able to carry out their training and research to any satisfactory level.

These plans are facing mounting opposition by doctors, nurses and other health workers as shown by the Elizabeth Garrett Anderson Hospital, St. Nicholas' Hospital at Plumstead, London and others. The Gestapo type raid on Hounslow Hospital to end an occupation may well be repeated by a government intent on destroying the health service.

Added to the opposition are area health authorities concerned about the deterioration of health care as a result of these closures. Lambeth, Lewisham and Southwark Area Health Authority has declared its intention not to adhere to the limits imposed by the government.

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HISTORIC NOTES Jolly George, 1920

THE NEWS of the overthrow of Tsarism by the workers and peasants of Russia in 1917 evoked a tremendous response among the whole working class of this country.

For two years prior to the "Jolly George" strike, agitation against the armed intervention by the imperialist countries, including Britain, against Soviet Russia had been growing. Lenin's "Appeal To The Toiling Masses", illegal in Britain, had been distributed in the docks. Vigilance against munitions being sent to Poland (the major imperialist base for the offensive against Russia) was sharp.

Whilst Bonar Law was emphatically denying in Parliament that any munitions were being sent to Poland, crates of aeroplanes and guns marked "OIHMS Munitions for Poland" appeared at the East India Docks in London, and loaded onto the Danish ship the Neptune. She left the docks on May 1st but didn't get far. Two firemen on board halted the ship. Amidst arguments with the captain, the ship was struck off Gravesend by another ship and had to be towed sinking back to London.

News of the incident soon spread to the dockland borough of Poplar. By May, Kiev had been captured by the Poles, and the British and French imperialists in jubilation began openly to support and develop the war. Also in May, cargo arrived at the London docks for a ship called the Jolly George. The cargo was once again stamped "OIHMS munitions for Poland". Would the dockers now follow the seamen's example?

They soon showed they would and promptly received assurances of support from the Dockers Union in any action they took over the Jolly George. The London dockers struck on May 10th, 1920: the coal heavers refused to coal the Jolly George the same day.

The strike met with great support throughout the Labour movement. As was said at the time by the secretary of the 'Hands off Russia' movement, which had already been formed in 1919: "the offensive against Russia goes on, but the counter-offensive for Russia gathers momentum."

On May 15th the munitions were unloaded back onto the

dockside. All across the country, Councils of Action against the war were set up. An emergency conference of the TUC was called, adopting on August 9th, 1920, a resolution which stated in part that the TUC "therefore warns the Government that the whole industrial power of the organized workers will be used to defeat this war" (that is, the war on Russia).

Faced with the threat of strike action at home and with mutinies abroad of British soldiers refusing to be sent to fight Russia, the government was forced to abandon its more obvious attempts to smash the first workers' state. Lloyd George made a speech in the House of Commons on November 19th combining an attack on Bolshevism with an acknowledgement that there were no means to fight it.

The "Jolly George" strike had been an important spark in ending open British aggression against Russia, but it did not arise from nothing: the strike had been preceded by years of anti-war agitation. It also shows the importance of the whole working class supporting workers when they take such a stand.

Pollution of THE WEEK poison spray

NEW SCIENTIST magazine recently reported the US tactics being used to try to prevent the growing of marihuana in Mexico. The US Government's action, Operation Condor, has endangered the lives of millions of American and Mexican people.

Some 50 million dollars were spent to finance Operation Condor. Thirty thousand acres of marihuana fields have been sprayed with paraquat, at levels two thousand times stronger than tolerated domestic levels. This leads to irreversible lung damage if the affected marihuana is smoked - and a recent survey in California indicates that it is being smoked. In Mexico too, spraying at such high levels is seriously affecting the health of the local Mexican people where not only the air but locally grown fruit and vegetables contain toxic levels of paraquat.

Operation Condor, whatever its objectives, has led to widespread poisoning and pollution. In a country where the average annual income is \$ 200, the fact that a farmer growing marihuana can make \$ 5000 or more per annum from his crops is a strong and overriding incentive which will lead to its continued production.

Whilst capitalism survives the pollution, the profiteering and damage to human life will continue. What the Mexican people need is not the investment of \$ 50 million in an attempt to halt marihuana production, but responsibility for their own agricultural production, for their own country, which can only be achieved by socialism.

"THE PARENTS, teaching staff and ancillary workers of Hillbrook Primary School Tooting are to be congratulated in organising a public meeting to oppose the proposed cuts in teaching staff at the school. Wandsworth Teachers Association is opposed to redeployment and is fighting the reduction of the teaching force at my school. Should staff wish to move, we feel that they should be replaced, thus safeguarding and wherever possible improving education in our schools. We are categorically against the compulsory transfer of teachers.

The situation of falling rolls provides an excellent opportunity for an improvement in education. By keeping staff where they are the size of classes can be reduced. Moreover, should the LEA maintain the teaching establishments of its schools then it will have to take on additional staff thus giving work to some of the thousands of teachers who are unemployed."

-extract from a Wandsworth Teachers' Association statement.

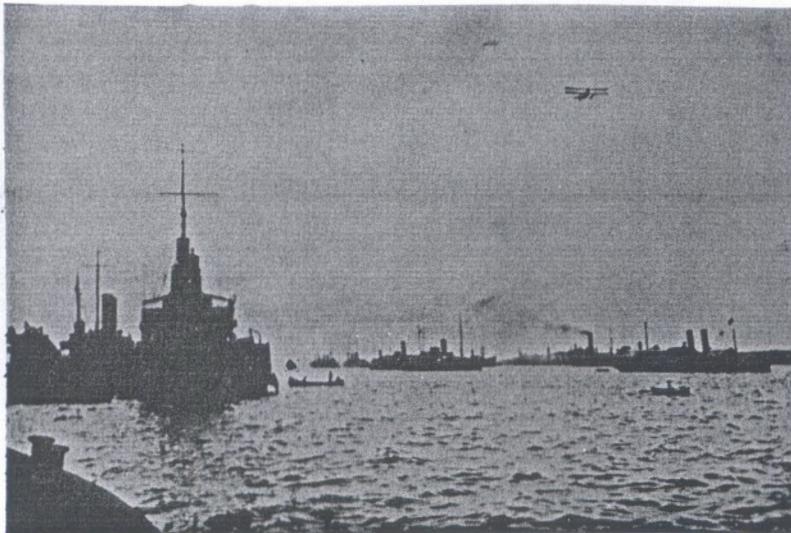
WHAT the government means by saving a hospital is revealed in their plans for St. Nicholas, Plumstead. Repealed in December, the proposal now is that the hospital should lose all but 80 of its 277 beds. There are more ways than one of killing a cat.

GOOD news from the Police Federation Conference. It was claimed that officers were leaving the force at a rate of 20 a day. This is hardly surprising considering the repugnant duties of riot control that policemen are being trained for and the injuries sustained during that training, to which delegate strongly objected.

SIXTY advanced fighters to Saudi Arabia, 50 fighter bombers to Egypt and 100 fighter bombers to Israel... Who can fail to be reminded of "peace in our time on hearing of Carter's new "peace" plan in the Middle East recently approved by Congress.

HEPWORTH and Grandage of Bradford have announced 150 redundancies because of a drop of demand from the motor car industry for its pistons, piston rings and pins. Simultaneously comes the news that British Leyland is to import 10,000 foreign made minis because home production has little hope of meeting an expected boom. Slump or boom it seems are both used by the employing class as a pretext for the destruction of our jobs and skills.

THERE have been 3316 more babies born in Britain from January to May this year than there were last year. This confounded statisticians who predicted that the birthrate would continue to decline indefinitely, and the government departments who used the predictions as a pretext for cuts.



British warships in the harbour of Archangel during the intervention of imperialist powers to try to strangle the October Revolution soon after its birth.

IMF is exploiter around the world

THE International Monetary Fund interim committee has held a week-end meeting in Mexico City to deal with the problems of the world-wide decline of capitalism.

While the main industrialised countries were dealing with questions of currency stabilisation, the "group of 24" developing member states were concerned with the hopeless task of improving their developmental prospects within the framework of the present international economic relationships - in other words, the insoluble problem of how to end imperialist exploitation without breaking with the imperialist countries.

One of the ways the developing countries sought to "square the circle" of trying to achieve progress while remaining in the capitalist world was by seeking greater voting power in the IMF. This is exactly like workers in British Steel asking for places on the BSC Board so that they can participate in making themselves redundant. The developing countries also

requested adequate prices for raw materials and the removal of trade barriers erected by the industrialised countries. But the industrialised countries of the IMF are the imperialist countries whose interest in the colonial and semi-colonial world, the developing world, has always been as a source of cheap raw materials and as a market for their own manufactured goods.

Britain's Denis Healey at this

meeting argued that the price of joining sterling to the European currency "snake" would be a transfer of resources within the EEC, West Germany playing the role in the European Community that the US played with the Marshall Plan after the War. No doubt it suits British capitalists to combine with German, as they have with American, in the destruction of British industry. It does not suit the British working class.

Dockland unemployment and waste

IN THE FACE of the massive rundown of London's Dockland area, plans have just been announced to pretty up the decaying parts with recreation facilities using over £3 million of our money. An example of a vital, labour intensive industry being replaced by projects which, however attractive, are not a means of employment.

Despite tonnage on the Thames being up, many of the Docks are

shut - leaving the Port of London Authority claiming bankruptcy and Boroughs such as Newham, Greenwich and Southwark desolate. Inhabitants also have to face closure of large scale manufacturing. And to compensate for this? Container work is being offered 25 miles downriver at Tilbury.

Proposed public playing fields in place of docks are no compensation for the unemployed.

Shares in capitalism

WE CAN ALL breathe a sigh of relief. One of the most pressing problems facing the country has been the absence of funds for investment in British industry. Capital has been exported from Britain at a tremendous rate to foster industrial enterprises all over the world while Britain's own basic industries have been starving. But at last a solution has been found.

The source of investment funds, to do what the North Sea oil profits were supposed to do and are not, has been found - us, you and me. If capital is needed for British industry and if an organised working class has made British industry too unprofitable for capitalists to want to invest in it, then the answer is obvious. Let the organised working class provide the funds for investment.

The proposal for workers to become "profit sharers" by owning shares in the companies in which they work is the price exacted by the Liberals for their continued support of the Labour Government. Naturally the Labour Government was delighted to buy more time in power by granting such a meaningless concession. The proposal is embodied in the Finance Bill and will apply from April next year. The way it works is that any full-time employee with five years or more service must be given the opportunity to acquire shares in the firm where he works, and he will be given income tax relief for an amount of up to £500 which he invests out of his pay. This is called in old fashioned liberal parlance "a property owning democracy".

EDITORIAL

ONE of the characteristics of a pre-election period is the assumption by the competing capitalist parties of a high moral line.

Margaret Thatcher talks about the need for law and order to defend old ladies from muggers, for lower taxes as an incentive to the business men who should be justly rewarded for supplying society's needs and for greater racial harmony among whites and blacks by rigorously keeping out black people.

Callaghan talks about voluntary pay restraint on the part of the working class for the good of society as a whole, the need for looking after lower paid workers who might suffer in competition with those organised in the big powerful unions and the necessity for all of us to pull in our belts a little tighter for a little longer for the good of our children and our children's children. All but the capitalists, of course - their high profits are what keep 'socialist' Britain going and it is a mark of Labour's maturity not to be afraid of the idea of profits any more.

What turns all this into the most sickening cant is that the capitalist system which both parties serve so faithfully in their respective ways is a thoroughly immoral and unjust system. Its very supporters defend it on the grounds that human nature, which they claim cannot be changed, is so depraved as to deserve no other system.

Capitalism's earliest apologists like Adam Smith never tried to justify it in moral terms. They argued that if all men strove mightily and selfishly in a completely individualistic way to satisfy their own ends, the market place would sort out all their competing claims for the general good of society. But after several hundred years of such an amoral approach what we see is a world of the grossest inequality, with over a third of the population undernourished or actually starving, with incessant wars culminating every so often in world conflicts in which millions upon millions are immolated.

Greater hypocrisy

That is where production for the profit of the few rather than production to meet the needs of the people directly has taken the world. That is the system the Tories urge us to support by portraying it as a system of freedom as opposed to totalitarianism. But Labour is guilty of an even greater hypocrisy. They urge us to support exactly the same system but insist that when they are in office it is not really capitalism at all but socialism. This rotten, corrupt, evil, unjust system is, they tell us, what the great social reformers and utopian idealists wanted for us, only we could not appreciate it until Callaghan & Co. awakened us with a kiss and we found that the two million unemployed, the destruction of Britain's industrial base, the whittling away of all our hard won social services, the selling out of the country's sovereignty were all just a nightmare!

In all the times that the Labour Party has enjoyed political power not one step towards socialism, not one, has been taken. Britain is as thoroughly capitalist as ever and the only difference is that it is a capitalism in world-wide decline. Many unions like the AUEW have written into their constitutions a pledge to move toward socialism, the ending of the private ownership of the means of production, the end of exploitation of man by man. How then can they go on supporting a political party which so obviously flouts these principles which are the morality of the working class?

Marxism-Leninism is the ideology of the working class and only a Marxist-Leninist party can express the morality of the working class in its drive to realise socialism and its willingness to commit itself to everything which that realisation entails. It is thus no moral arrogance on our part but a simple statement of fact that the CPB(ML) is the only political party which the British working class, from its own moral point of view, could possibly vote for. And we do not ask our class brothers for their vote - only for their common allegiance with us to the cause of socialism.

NALGO no to devolution

NALGO CONFERENCE in 1976 endorsed a white paper on Devolution, supporting the principle of devolution for Scotland and Wales, and also the division of England into regions. But quite a number of NALGO members are now growing concerned at the prospect of dividing England into regions.

NALGO's South Western District Council has long opposed the principle of regional authorities in England. It opposed the Labour Party's consultative document 'Regional Authorities and Local Government Reform'. This suggested transferring power back to the 'Big Nine' cities, which is a first step towards abolishing county councils altogether, replacing them by regional authorities and rearranged district councils. The South Western District Council took a principled stance that NALGO must oppose such a move, which would involve great loss of jobs to local government officers. (The

disruption of jobs caused by the 1974 reorganisation is only too fresh in members' minds.)

But whilst recognising the corporatist and destructive intentions of English regional government, the attitude of the South West District Council towards the same consequences befalling Scotland and Wales is that it's for the Scots and Welsh to decide. As if NALGO were three separate unions rather than one national union whose concern is for all its members wherever they are situated in Britain. Thus even before devolution is a reality, the divisive effects are seen.

There is a pressing need for NALGO members to think again on devolution. Capitalism plans tighter state control through devolution and if our counter to that is a fragmented union, then so much harder is our task. But a united NALGO, opposed to the division of Britain, is a challenge to any government planning to implement devolution.

Government plans the destruction of education, skill and apprenticeship

PROPOSALS by the Engineering Industry Training Board to introduce a possible two-year on-the-job apprenticeship in engineering reveal how drastically the purpose of this body has changed since its formation.

The EITB was one of the many industrial training boards (ITBs) set up under the 1964 Industrial Training Act to ensure an adequate supply of trained men and women at all levels of industry and commerce with the power to levy employers to share the cost of 'i' is training.

However in 1973 the Employment and Training Act greatly modified the operation of the ITBs and placed them under the control of the Manpower Services Commission, a new Government body which, under the guise of 'planning manpower' and 'tackling the unemployment problem' has consistently sought to undermine British Trade Unionism and to de-skill and de-industrialise Britain.

These latest EITB proposals clearly fit into this scheme: a reduction from four years to two

In the period of apprenticeship with a consequent reduction in training and technical education: the apprentice would only spend possibly one year at work before being a 'fully-qualified craftsman'. The EITB also calls for specialization during the last two years at school. Secondary education is to become vocational.

The EITB says its proposals are necessary to stimulate the training of skilled workers for whom the present four year apprenticeship acts as a deterrent. This is not so for evidence shows that there are more young workers seeking engineering apprenticeships than there are places available. The EITB plan is a thinly disguised attack on skill and tells much of the extent to which planning a de-industrialised Britain has progressed.

Engineering workers have been warning employers for years of the damaging effects of the loss of skilled craftsmen to the engineering industry. The notion of shorter training does

nothing to rectify this loss. To learn quickly will not do justice to our youth. It isn't just possible to be a craftsman in two years in the full meaning of the word. It requires not only academic learning but also a practical knowledge gained over a number of years.

The proposals will not produce the craftsmen the industry needs. The most it will produce is dilutees and a debasing of the real skill of engineers. It is a device to satisfy the Government and the employers, desperate for makeshift solutions, and will negate both the struggle of engineers and of Further Education teachers in establishing high standards of apprentice training.

The correct step towards filling the ranks of the engineering industries is for the Government and employers to be made to understand that recognition must be given to the high degree of skills of the workers and to tackle the growing cynicism among skilled craftsmen over the inadequate rates of pay and conditions of employment.



Trade union forum: independence crucial

"In its struggle for power the proletariat has no other weapon but organisation."

- Lenin, 1904

THE STEEL Industry Management Association, representing some 12,500 middle and senior managers in the British Steel Corporation, has applied for affiliation to the TUC.

This is because the worker participation structure to be introduced in BSC would result in manual workers being represented on the new worker-management board to be set up but not these managers in SIMA. If SIMA follows up a two-year old mandate to seek affiliation to the TUC then its members can become recognised as workers and thus be eligible to sit on the board!

Part of the argument used by the Managers Association for taking their place in the new worker participatory structure of the BSC is that they are as much victims of the programme of closures in British Steel as manual workers. As Marxists, basing our definition of classes on the relationship to the means of production, we would say that these managers, dependant on their jobs for their livelihoods, live by the sale of their labour power, their capacity to organise and supervise, and are, in fact, workers, members of the working

class. What we would deny is that manual or any other kind of workers by sitting on one of these phoney Bullock-type boards get changed into members of the property-owning and controlling class - even though they will have ceased to be effectively organised workers.

Let all steel workers whether organised in associations or in trades confederation, whether their skills are manual, clerical, graphic or organisational, join together to prevent the destruction of their industry by a government whose own class allegiance to capitalism is obvious in everything it does.

* * * *

MRS WILLIAMS' Education Department is following in Mrs Thatcher's footsteps. The plan to bring Student Unions under state control in 1971, after her bold stroke of stealing free milk from the children, was Mrs Thatcher's contribution to the political life of the country. This Industrial Relations Act for students was shelved after massive protest, only to reappear now in new proposals by the Department of Education for the financing of student unions.

The Labour version of the plan for establishing "accountability for the expenditure of substantial

sums of money" is the same two-tiered system as the Tories wanted to introduce. Part of the union subscription will come from student voluntary contributions; but the greater part will come from a grant by the college or university authorities which will be arrived at by negotiation and which the local students union will have to account for. What brought matters to a head is the rise in the contributed funds at the union's sole disposal from about £3m in 1970 when Mrs Thatcher was deciding to take action to some £13m last year. Mrs Williams' Department of Education says that local student union representatives are not qualified to administer such sums of money and, furthermore, these subscriptions have been used either locally or through the National Union of Students to support "semi-political activities of which neither the tax-payer nor many members of the students unions themselves may approve."

This attack is political. It strikes at the root of trade unionism in this sector of the working class: the right to organise and to decide independently of any outside interference what is in the interest of members. The entire NUS membership must be mobilised to defeat the DES proposals and assert the autonomy of the Union.

Metal workers, civil servants, ASTMS Conferences

THE NATIONAL Union of Sheet Metal Workers, Copper-Smiths, Heating and Domestic Engineers has some 182 motions on policy and general subjects to consider at its national biennial conference on June the 5th.

The most dominating issue of the conference is that of wages with some 15 motions calling for the immediate return to free collective bargaining, with the condemnation of government interference in wage negotiations, with the call for opposition to any wage norms, guidelines, ceilings and thresholds.

Linked with the wages fight is the call for a 35-hour week, although somewhat confused with the demand for improved premium time payments and the belief that a 35 hour week would create employment.

The future perspective of the union which is bound up with amalgamation is proposed by the NEC and supported by 7

other motions calling for amalgamation with the ALEW or TGWU. This is seen as necessary for the future development and strength of the union in industry.

In line with the growing opposition by the mass of workers and trade unionists to racism and fascism, there are 6 motions on opposition to racism and fascism with a call to prohibit any member of the NF or the British Movement and other racist organisations from holding National District and Branch office as this is against the interests of the union and the working class generally.

The conference also notes with concern and dismay the failure of the TUC to aid sections of trade unionists when facing attacks from employers and other agencies within the framework of a capitalist society. This statement together with "increasing use of the police force as a strike breaking force as at Grun-

wick" as described in motion 179, clearly shows the class nature of the state.

The last motion hints at this class nature: "In view of Britain's particular vulnerability, conference calls for the banning of all forms of nuclear weapons as a first step to world peace. Conference calls for the fullest public discussion on the plans for dealing with a nuclear attack, as it is thought they could be put into operation to deal with any so-called emergency"

ASTMS

AT Brighton the other weekend the ASTMS Annual Delegate Conference overwhelmingly reinforced its opposition to wage restraint. It said, "Conference deplores Government back-door methods aimed at the restriction of collective bargaining, against the overwhelming majority

decision of the trade unions. In this context. Governmental attempts to interfere with free collective bargaining violate the best traditions of British democracy. . . ."

Further, "to make the Department of Employment the arbiter of whether sanctions should be applied in relation to agreements freely entered into by employers and trade unions is dangerously close to undemocratic rule by decree." The motion itself was put in the correct context by an amendment, "instructing the NEC to encourage branches and groups to actively pursue claims made in accord with their own guidelines. . . ."

It is only with the membership fighting for claims based on their needs that total defeat lies for the Social Contract. This must include members in the 'public' as well as the 'private' sector.

Taking another step forward delegates rejected the NEC's proposed changes in the voting system in national elections which would have led to less democracy in the union as well as the postal ballot - though this latter change will have to be confirmed next year.

As policy moved forward so it also moved backwards, for the opposition of ASTMS to the EEC shifted, delegates approving the support of MPs in the EEC elections and increasing involvement of the union in the EEC legislature.

SPCS

DELEGATES from the 105,000 strong SPCS last week attended their Annual Conference in Bournemouth, and came out strongly opposed to any form of Phase 4 pay-restraint. On the main pay motion the Deputy General Secretary called for opposition to any further incomes policy, whether by a TUC/Government agreement or the use of arbitrary cash ceilings in the public sector.

The motion called for the full implementation of the 1978/79 Pay Research Unit report and, if necessary, for a campaign of industrial

action with other Unions. Conference went on to ask for a review of the desirability of remaining party to the National Pay Agreement and therefore the PRU pay system. This line, if correctly pursued in 1979, will be an important political step forward.

A call for a ballot on any intended industrial action was rejected and the NEC was instructed to investigate the relevance of the Whitley system to the Society. This system has only served to smother direct action and is an attack on the sovereignty of individual unions.

On unemployment, delegates condemned the indifference of Government and TUC, and resolved to banish overtime from the Civil Service. They called for a reduction in hours to provide as many more jobs as possible.

This was a Conference showing good sense and foresight. The decisions reached will, if correctly pursued, have important political significance for trade unionism in the Civil Service.

AUT settles

IN RESPONSE to the AUT's threat to boycott all marking of university final exam papers, the government has at last conceded a wage agreement which has been outstanding for three years. The introduction of the social contract in 1975 gave the government an excuse to break a negotiated agreement for a 17 per cent wage increase.

The AUT asked for rectification this year but the government offered only arbitration and putting the anomaly right by 1980/81. But the AUT threatened to carry out their action throughout the period of arbitration. On 5 May the government offered to pay the full settlement over the next two years, with 12 per cent to be paid this October. The AUT have learned a valuable lesson that the only way to bargain is to threaten direct action. Maybe the government felt they couldn't rely on troops to mark exam papers!



Zimbabwe guerrilla fighters establishing a base in a woodland area for their war of liberation. The Zimbabwe 'leaders' who have betrayed the liberation struggle by associating themselves with Smith's "internal settlement" have also associated themselves with the mass murder of unarmed people when Smith's racist security forces fired on a meeting of Zimbabwe villagers.

Beverley workers oppose closures

A BEVERLEY tannery is about to close with the loss of 700 jobs. It is part of British Tanning Products, which was set up last year with £3m in aid from the National Enterprise Board. But it closes now by government order.

300 jobs had already gone at the Bolton Tannery when it closed down. In January the closure of Hodgsons Gelatine was announced: 70

jobs are to be axed in this subsidiary company producing an important by-product.

Then the NEB offered BTP another loan of £1.5m. The condition attached was that they closed down the whole Beverley Tannery.

The employers are holding a carrot of 50-60 new jobs at Holmes Tanners in Hull and the stick the closure of all the Groups' tanneries if they do not get

their way. The fact is that the closure means nearly 800 people will find there are no jobs to be had.

The town of Beverley has, in the last two years, experienced a rapid exodus of industry, with the run-down of caravans, the closure of a major haulage company and the shipyard.

The NUFILAT (National Union of Footwear, Leather and Allied Trades) is not fighting from favourable ground: it did not oppose all the redundancies immediately they were announced.

But now it sees it is faced with another step in the destruction of the leather industry. This is a clear cut example of the corporate state in action. But the union is not acting in the subservient manner the employers wished for, and is trying to save as many jobs as possible.

NATFHE Conference (continued)

longer trail behind the National Union of Teachers. It will be of benefit to both if NATFHE demonstrates its seriousness by refusing to delay the salary negotiations and enter the battle for teachers' salaries if battle it is going to be.

Within the salary claim Conference will consider the next step towards achieving the long standing claim for the

merger of Lecturer Grades I and II. In the 1978 negotiations the employers once again refused to make any concession in that direction. If the strong feeling for this claim is to produce the desired results, conference must consider an interim claim to highlight this overdue change and give it the only real possibility of success.



Bookshops



Bellman Bookshop, 155 Fortress 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

YOU are invited to come to public meetings organised by the Communist Party of Britain (Marxist-Leninist). All meetings will be held at 7.30 p.m. on Friday evenings at: Bellman Bookshop, 155 Fortress Road, Tufnell Park, NW5. (Tufnell Park tube)

Next meeting:

May 26 Conservation: safeguard the future

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