B.M.A. Leeches' threat to wreck Health Service

BLOOD MONEY BLACKMAIL

by the Editor

A STORM of abuse and controversy blew up when ancillary workers and nurses took action to clear out private patients from the National Health Service hospitals. In their efforts to distort and confuse the issues at stake, the defenders of privilege in Health Service care have come up with, appropriately, a bumper crop of double standards. Appropriately, because double standards is what the pay beds dispute is all about.

Even those who haven't sought to defend the pay beds system have chosen to direct their fire at the ancillary workers for stirring up the BMA hornets' nest. Instead of attacking these racketeers who threaten to sabotage the NHS, they focus their fire against the ancillary workers whose action has been the cause of their risk to the NHS from total collapse.

'Loudest'

The war over the pay beds didn't start at Charing Cross. But up to now, except for a few isolated actions in the North East, in Lewisham and in Portsmouth, there has been a war of words. TUC and Labour Party conferences have repeatedly passed resolutions to abolish this state-subsidised private practice. But it was the ordinary rank and file ancillary workers, the 'loudest of the low' in the Health Service hierarchy, who by their direct action put a stop to this game of words.

And this is the sort of action that the ruling-class hate most of all. 'Hitting the sick is wrong' they cried with one voice. A voice that wasn't half so loud as the half so strident voice that wasn't heard.

In the pay of its workers (£30 a week for ancillaries, £300 a week for consultants), and even between the well catered for teaching hospitals at one end of the scale and the run-down and overcrowded geriatric wards, or the psychiatric hospitals with their permanently drugged chronic patients who get no real treatment at all.

In the midst of all this is the running sore of private practice, heavily parasitic on the NHS resources and the other NHS consultants.

As the sleek, well-muscled cohorts of the BMA move to defend their lucrative racket, the double standards that they represent are applied to them. Nye Bevan's descendant as 'left wing' health minister, Barbara Castle, strongly attacks the industrial action of the nurses and ancillary workers who are fighting for a real health service, while the rich wretched and subsero are pampered and appeased, as they have been ever since 1947.

But their threats are hollow. They may huff and puff, but they won't in fact do anything about the house down. They haven't the resources to set up their own comprehensive medical service; and even if they can get the money together, they will still have to rely on the very people whose action now threatens their patch of the NHS — the nurses and the technicians, the porters, cleaners and cooks.

At a time when militant action against both private practice and nursing services is sweeping through the ranks of health workers, any serious attempt to set up a rival sector would be heavily undermined by hostility, blocking and direct action not only from health workers but from the whole of the trade union movement.

In fact, the whole of the trade union movement must step up its support for the present actions, whether they be on pay and conditions or against the creeping parasite of private practice.

In greater numbers than ever before, workers from factories, depots and docks have turned out in solidarity with the health workers. The flow must keep up the pressure, and bring to a full stop the destruction of the health service.

STEEL

More Craftsmen join pay revolt

A NATIONWIDE revolt of steel industry craftsmen against the settlement made by the National Crafts Co-ordinating Committee (NCC) has begun.

Craftsmen belonging to the AUEW, EETPU, Boilermakers and Roll Turners' Unions and UCATT are on strike at Lackenby (Teesside). EETPU men at Consett have voted in a claim based on the original NCC claim of a £10 rise plus time and a third for overtime, and 'Normandy Park (Scunthorpe) steel craftsmen are out for a new deal to replace their Phase 2 “productivity” agreement.

The original NCC claim was defeated without a fight by the so-called negotiating team led by Salvation Army leader John Boyd. What they concluded was the framework of a new productivity deal which would leave some workers actually worse off than at present. Most important, the new agreement — on which the regions were not consulted as all — ELIMINATES TONNAGE BONUSES and ACM (abnormal conditions money) payments, thus removing one of the most effective bargaining counters on the side of the shop floor. It is clear that Boyd and BSC were well aware of the role of the shop stewards and the shop floor in general in wage negotiations that of an obedient bystander.

This would be bad at the best of times. Right now it's criminal. Workers who refuse to knuckle under to
The Real Price of Oil

IF ANY country has gained from the current crisis of world capitalism, it is South Africa, the world’s major gold producer, the racist state of South Africa. With the market price of gold as high as $384 per ounce in February of this year, South Africa’s annual production of approximately 900 tons provides the world with three-quarters of the gold supply.

The role that gold plays in the capitalist system is largely in the sphere of international trade. When nations trade with each other and debts and taxes, the money to pay for the settlement are either the export of commodities, which gives the debtor country a favourable balance of trade, or the transfer of gold reserves.

In supplying the world with gold, South Africa is giving itself with foreign exchange of 610 million dollars in gold. In the trading between South Africa and foreign countries, and there is plenty of it, the foreign exchange resources well exceed South Africa’s annual trade deficit.

Two-tier

Since 1965 there have been two prizes for gold. The so-called “official” price of $35 per ounce (that is the price at which the central banks are committed to buy and sell gold among themselves); and market price, currently around $142 an ounce. (Only private and industrial sectors may trade in gold on the free market.)

The two-tier system brought in in 1965 still means that the market price of gold for stocks were tied to the official price. But even so, free market speculation on the rest of the stocks has massively increased the value of South Africa’s gold exports. While all gold was transacted at the official price, South Africa’s gold (each ounce totals approximately $2 billion per annum). By 1973 this value increased to $1.5 billion, and the chances are that it will increase further during 1974.

50% up

For South Africa, the higher gold price means much more than just a sudden rise in payments. It also means that South Africa has a new source of tax revenues, and accordingly new increase in its military expenditure.

Thus, the uncertainty introduced by the Portuguese controlled areas and the possible intervention in these areas and the creation of closer economic and political ties between Rhodesia being a member state of the Union of South Africa.

The provision of military hardware could be a matter of survival or destruction, life or death, for Southern African racism.

For international capital, on the other hand, the rising price of gold means that on the world’s stock markets (where the crisis of capitalism is reflected in depressed share prices) the price of gold stocks has increased and continues to increase. Recently the dividends payable on gold mining shares have increased by up to 50%.

However, with rising profits and dividends for the bourgeoisie, the Black South African working class whose labour creates all this wealth is at the receiving end of increased exploitation and racist terrorism. This terrorism comes from: Firstly, the combination of bare subsistence wages and cruel, hard and intense working conditions underground, form the basis of existence for South Africa’s 370,000 gold miners. In these conditions, violent accidents and deaths are everyday occurrences. The miners are worked in two daily shifts and at least one death is recorded for every year.

Under the Apartheid system, black workers have been geographically dispersed to different areas of the country and in the process have had their roots, homes and families brutally smashed. Their families are not permitted to live with them where they work, and they are contracted for long periods to live in mine barracks. On top of this they suffer from the unspoken indignities and harassment meted out by this racist state with its jailing, slaughter and Nazi-style concentration torture directed to preventing black political or trade union activity.

In the past few weeks, for example, at least six miners have been murdered and many others injured by the police during demonstrations. Gas, water cannon and dogs are in common usage by the police to prevent any black workers from acting.

Despite wage increases in the last year of up to 60%, miners still only receive $2.50 a month, even though the ‘poverty line’ has been decided at $50 per month. These subsistence wages of the miners are equivalent to less than one-third of the gold share dividends paid out to investors.

Demand

The rising demand for gold on the world’s markets came about not because more people were purchasing gold teeth or gold jewellery but found a new use for it, but because the crises of the international monetary system demanded it.

Originally at a conference in Breton Woods in 1944, international capitalism agreed a plan whereby the American dollar would be redeployed in gold at $35 an ounce. Other currencies would then be pegged to the dollar at fixed exchange rates. The dollar, having the direct backing of gold, could then be held by any nation as a reserve currency. In this way the international monetary system was centered around the dollar, which it felt was as good as gold.

Under this arrangement, for much of the post-war period the capitalist nations of the world have held dollars as a reserve for their own currencies. But over the last decade more and more countries, and particularly France, have stopped the practice of maintaining their reserves in dollars and have reverted to keeping an increasing part of them in gold. In practice this has meant that the United States treasury has been presented with more and more demands by various countries to change their dollars into gold.

As the demands increased, the U.S. gold stocks decreased. Whereas in 1955 the U.S. held nearly $22 billion in gold, by 1965 it had only $10 billion. At the same time dollar assets held by other countries amounted to $31 billion. This is why Nixon and the United States government abandoned the 1944 Breton Woods Agreement in 1971 and placed a ban on gold exports.

It takes a death to keep a myth alive

AFTER the death on July 1st of Juan Peron, president of Argentina, Fascist Spain declared three days’ official mourning. So did revolutionary Cuba.

With Peron gone, the ruling class of Argentina will be hard put to find another leader who can serve its interests so well while retaining support from the far Right Mrs. Ford came to the Left.

Bringing Peron back from his 17-year exile was in the first place a gamble by a ruling class that was running out of solutions. After the revolutionary mass strikes and street fighting in 1969, the military regime was shorn of popular support. To try to bring the situation back under control, they called elections in March 1973, and allowed Peron to re-enter Argentina. Peron had been in exile (mostly in Spain) since he was overthrown by the army in 1955. But he had retained a lot of support among the people of Argentina, based on his activities throughout the early years of his rule, in the 1940s.

Peron’s nominee Campora was elected President in March 1973 and had only resigned in favour of Peron. During Campora’s few months in office some substantial reforms were brought in, but with Peron himself in the presidential seat repression increased. Leftist papers were closed down, and in Cordoba the provincial governor was deposed and replaced by a right-wing hardliner.

Recently three Trotskyists were kidnapped and killed by right-wing thugs, and there have been numerous other right-wing attacks on the premises and on the militants of left wing groups both inside and outside the Peronist movement.

Myth

Peron’s death might serve to keep the lastalling “Peron myth” alive for a while longer. Certainly the ruling class hopes so as all its factions. That they had to cop with panic, have hastened to give their support to Peron’s wife, the new President. She has been supported so far by General Lanusse, former head of the military regime. Ricardo
**Benefits**

A country such as Italy, for example, would face a balance of payments deficit of around £330 million per annum, and which cannot raise long term loans on the world market because obviously if she could she would not need such a large full market price.

The benefits to the market of such reserves will probably remain largely ephemeral in the short run, but that long run projection of the lifting of the ban means it will be the same as the purchase of gold stocks.

**Plans for coup were behind UWC strike**

**The only answer: just get out now!**

WORLKS FIGHTING BRITAIN should withdraw from the Six Counties and Ulster (UWC) or any part of Ireland, or any part of Britain, especially if it was not yet prepared to get its nose out of the affairs of other states.

The World Commission on Human Rights has been unable to publish a report on the human rights situation in the Six Counties and Ulster, since it was not yet prepared to get its nose out of the affairs of other states.

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**Stability**

South Africa sees the international crisis and the increased political pressure as threatening to the stability of the white minority government, and not only the government, but the whole of South Africa's economy.

**LATE IN 1973 several individuals came together to launch a new organisation called the Community League of workers, which led to the formation of the Community League of Workers and the formation of the Community League of Workers in South Africa.**

The Community League of Workers was a small and more manageable organisation, with key positions in the power and economic sectors of the country. Such a group would be ridiculous, even if it was required to give industrial relations to what was basically a political party.

The South African ruling class was not prepared to use violence to keep the workers in line.

**The best way to get a long-term solution to the problem of the six counties was to get a revolutionary work to be done by the workers who were the most affected by the situation.**

By standing for the Six Counties and Ulster, the British government would be forced to recognize the Six Counties and Ulster as a territory which it was going to occupy.

The Six Counties and Ulster were not interested in the fact that it was a direct threat to their self-determination and independence in the Six Counties and Ulster.

**MOMENTUM**

May 14th heralded the accession of the Confederation of Ireland and the Northern Ireland Assembly. The Six Counties and Ulster were the only British parliamentary assembly in the country. The government was not interested in the fact that it was going to be a direct threat to the independence of the Six Counties and Ulster.

EMERGENCE

The UWC strike was operated by workers in its less dramatic form, generated by individuals and groups of workers who had improved by their past activities, who had been subject to the complete exclusion of the political working class in the Six counties.

The emergence of the Six Counties and Ulster and the UWC, both en route of the Six Counties and Ulster, led to the emergence of the Six Counties and Ulster, both en route of the Six Counties and Ulster, both en route of the Six Counties and Ulster.

Men in dungarees may have got a good strike, but the government were demanding them not to reform or be progressive action. They were demanding them not to reform or be progressive action. They were demanding them not to reform or be progressive action.

**TIPS**

To be faced with the international situation is not at all pleasant. But that is not to say that the right of our political position threatened. They have the right to use their new firearms and weapons if required. At present they are presented to this country. North and South, for such an event help and ensure that it happens in support of fascism and the government may indeed the working class in the Six Counties, and that, as a matter of fact, it is the responsibility of the government to ensure that that is not possible.

The strike is over and the workers at the UWC headquarters in the Six Counties, and indeed the working class in the Six Counties, has made it clear that what we witnessed during the UWC strike was objectively an extremely well organised and disciplined display by royalist workers and para-military organisations.

The Six Counties and Ulster are not a contradiction, but that the government's declaration of independence is not possible, in opposition to any further action within the Six Counties state.

We believe the Peoples Democratic Party has always said that an objective political condition is necessary for a reformed political order in Northern Ireland, meaningful reforms of that state was impossible. The UWC strike has reinforced that belief so much so that we now believe the two major opposing political viewpoints i.e. anti-Unionism and pro-Unionist in the Six Counties are so contradictory that they cannot be reconciled. The only logical outcome of such contradiction is civil war.
Steel revolt.. The Poverty’s still hurting government pay laws have two weeks against the steel workers to reach a steel cartel, which is recovering with the Steel Federation’s first pact in principle to. But then, they have been left with the organizational strength to pull it off. The steel workers, many of whom are demanding bonus and other additional incentives, have pushed the “blanket veto” of a wage moratorium, escalating industrial conflict.

The steel revolt began at Lackenby, where there is a long history of fighting Bond’s infamous “pension money” and “floating rates” for ACAs. They rise with the basic rate at a one for one ratio. At Lackenby, lockouts, rally turns, joiners and bowlers have begun imposing sanctions, including guerrilla strikes, for short periods.

Finally management demanded that those tactics cease, and the men were then taken off pay that is locked out.

Consett

On Monday 5th, the Lackenby men decided at a mass meeting of their own action despite official union’s sanction on management. The same evening at an informal meeting of leaders, the AUEW leaders and Consett EETU leaders, the Consett area executive committee had decided to put in a claim of action, and then lead that support to the 500locking-out men. This had the further effect of facturing the electricity managers, who had in any case been continuing to floor because they were the only craft union still to put in a claim of action. This claim has now been put forward with the demand to lock out the bosses. This stop shows up very clearly the men who are sweating to save the job. They who do not work are waging a big battle. The men who do work are waging a big battle with their superiors, and a big battle against the machine.

Why? The answer is simple. The present management does not have the public will to support the struggle to avoid the fact that the Consett steel is not an effective regional steel, and is on the North east coast that would break down BSC’s attempts to model bargaining on its own group structure.

There is a real possibility now of the creation of a North East Coast Steel Company, including Consett on regular craft shop stewards meetings.

Such regional organization would be only of advantage towards an effective and united organization for the working class. The most important fact is, the present claim of action, to get some solidarity BISAKTA, some of whose members are the mates of helpers of the other coast. BISAKTA members must black all communication of solidarity, and refuse to work with any employers, unless they make the same commitment on BISAKTA’s side.

TONY DUFFY
Acting Chairman, Lackenby AUEW Consett Union.