



## GOVT ON DEFENSIVE AS STRIKES SPREAD

### Lorry and tanker drivers blast through the freeze

THE LORRY DRIVERS' strike is the latest move in the working class's all-out assault to restore collective bargaining over the whole economic arena — public as well as private.

The Government has been forced to retreat from its attempt to impose pay guidelines by sanctions on companies. The threat now is of sanctions imposed directly on the working class — by taxation and further cuts in public services.

The Government is now preparing to fall back on its last resource — calling in the army to break a strike. That is a rehearsal for fascism.

MANUFACTURING and service industries particularly in Scotland and the north of England, have already been hard hit by the strike of lorry drivers who refused the employers' offer even though it was considerably higher than the Government's old guideline figure. The road haulage dispute became more serious for employers and Government when Texaco's 1100 tanker drivers began a strike before dawn on January 5.

The road haulage strike began with the action of 5000 Scottish lorry drivers on January 3, following the rejection by TGWU representatives of the employers' offer of 15 per cent the week before.

Lorry drivers in the north of England joined in, along with drivers in the south-east, and within a day the strike by more than 25,000 drivers was solid. Although the most severe effects of the strike have been in the north, haulage and dock loading and unloading at Liverpool, Hull and Southampton have been badly affected and northern Ireland, where both lorry and tanker drivers are on strike, faces total disruption.

Ford's Halewood plant on Merseyside is facing a shortage of car parts and few components are leaving BL's spares plant at Oxford.

The strike of Texaco tanker drivers is likely to spread and the tanker drivers of the other big oil corporations, notably BP, have indicated support for the Texaco drivers.

Tanker drivers of four oil companies are already on strike in the North West.

What makes the road haulage strike so disruptive is that greed for profits has decreed that, in spite of the huge social cost of transport by heavy lorries, more and more freight should be carried along the roads instead of by rail. Over 80 per cent of all goods moved in Britain are carried by road.

The reaction of the Labour Government's Transport Secretary was typical. He appealed to the lorry drivers not to inconvenience over-burdened housewives (many of whom are married to underpaid lorry drivers), and not to prevent the kiddies from being able to get an education (which this Government is cutting back viciously). He attacked the unions and called on them to act in the national interest by which he means, of course, the interests of capitalist profit. Then he threatened to call in the troops and use army transport to smash picket lines.

As the Government's anti-working class pay policy crumbles on every front, private and public, Government spokesmen threaten to introduce other means to safeguard profits — punitive taxation and swingeing cuts in public service. The Home Secretary warned in connection with the latest industrial action that the Government "would not sit back" while their capitalist policies were defeated.



A hint of things to come. This army vehicle drove through a lorry drivers' picket line at Tilbury, Essex.  
Photo by Laurence Sparham (IFL)

### Are we afraid of veiled threats?

EXACTLY one year ago the firemen's strike fired a shot across the bows of a Labour Government grown arrogant because the organised working class had lain in slumber and seemed willing to acquiesce in its own ruin. The firemen's strike, conducted with dignity and fought on a principle was, seen in retrospect, the turning point. For our class the year began on the right note. We were going to fight back.

Resolutions for our union conferences poured in. No more of the straitjacket we had worn willingly as a class, for now we wanted a return to collective bargaining. Our paper's headline "Thousands of workers take up firemen's baton" was thought to be over-optimistic but in fact that strike nurtured the resistance long overdue. The TUC conference expressed the feeling of antagonism towards incomes policy, as did the Labour

Party conference shortly after.

What had been a voluntary incomes policy, but now without any volunteers, was now imposed by the Labour Government. In four months that policy has been tattered and torn and its proponents pushed on to the ropes. That is not over-optimistic, that is a fact.

So now the Labour Government treads very carefully where previously it bragged of its 'special relationship' with the trade unions. Callaghan said "no more than 5 per cent", but then the Indians didn't stop because Custer cried "halt".

This is the background against which we consider statements by Callaghan and Thatcher. Callaghan appeals for trade union restraint in 1979 or else the sacrifices of the last four years, etc. etc. The Tories berate this cowardly stance and call for firm action against trade union

power. Thatcher's pre-Christmas statement aims at closed shop trade union organisation and union rule books via the legislating of secret ballots in place of mass democracy by show of hands. But Callaghan has to deal with the unions whereas Thatcher doesn't. If she wins the election she'll be forced to pipe down whatever she says.

Only coercion by the capitalist political parties can now deal with a working class making demands which cannot be met within the confines of capitalism. Thirty years ago under the Atlee Government, Jim Callaghan served on the emergency committee for breaking the dockers' strike by the use of troops. That was a dress rehearsal for the situation today in capitalism's absolute decline.

Troops used as strikebreakers under the direction of a Labour Government is for us the writing on the wall.

# Historic Notes Poverty and 'morality' NEB undermines engineering jobs

## The Week

"PEOPLE do not live to work, they work to live, and I would rather not live than live a drudge and a clod. Our new religion (of Socialism) tells us that the body must be nourished that the soul may thrive, and that nothing which is got at the soul's expense is cheap."

So Robert Blatchford replied to the sordid reality of capitalism in the 1890s. Right from the inception of capitalism, in fact, the attempt has been made to restrict the lives of people, their "souls", to slavery to the profit ethic. Anything more has been condemned as "wasteful" and therefore immoral.

In 1724 a pamphlet entitled "the Great Law of Subordination, or the Insolence and Insufferable Behaviour of the Servants of England duly enquir'd into" appeared, penned by Daniel Defoe.

"Husbandmen are ruin'd, the Farmers disabled, Manufacturers and Artificers plung'd to the Destruction of Trade... No men who, in the course of Business employ Numbers of the Poor, can depend upon any Contracts they make... Under a stop of trade and a general want of Work, they (the poor) are clamorous and mutinous... load the Parishes with their Wives and Children and grow ripe for all manner of mischief... In a glut of trade they grow saucy, idle and debauch'd... they will Work but two or three days in the Week."

He ended with the following little ditty:

"The Lab'ring Poor, in spite of double pay, Are Saucy, Mutinous and Beggary."

The basic attitudes of employers have remained - true often modified and disguised - through the vicious New Poor Laws and their 'Bastille' workhouses to the 1890s when a new organisation, the 'Charity Organisation Society' became one of the dominant institutions dealing with the problem of poverty. If the poor had been reasonably industrious, sober, thrifty, honest and dutiful, the COS, argued, they would not be poor. Before a desperate man could be provided with food or warmth he had to accept these moral lessons from



In this contemporary drawing, the sick man looks longingly at the writing on the wall. Reality was to turn out otherwise...

nis 'betters' - otherwise 'loafing' would be encouraged.

This argument about 'scroungers' certainly isn't new. Even in conceding welfare measures in the face of increasing working class rebellion against this 'morality' the attempt was made to undermine any humane and social concern, and turn them into a weapon to be used against the poor.

The very fact we pay contributory pensions etc., stems from the fact that legislators were afraid that otherwise we would not be forced back to work. Without such contributions John Burns, ex-socialist and President of the Board of Trade argued, "I cannot see how malingering can be staved off"... "the one moral advantage of insurance was its voluntary character; when that is superceded by compulsory contributions all the moral characteristics vanish, and you are left with a provision which is provocative of immoral motives" agreed Beatrice Webb, Fabian 'socialist' and Poor Law Commissioner.

Today our welfare state is still wrought with this contradiction, and every action we take,



... while the good angel here still has clipped wings.

for wages, working conditions or against unemployment is slandered on the same grounds. In or out of work, we are greedy and lazy. This is capitalist morality, ironic as it is. It is time a truly socialist, humane and working class morality - which values and develops the feelings and talents of the people in and out of work - was truly victorious in this country of ours.

THAT the government's sole interest in managing industry is to destroy it, is most clearly shown in the treatment of the so-called cooperatives at Meriden, and Kirkby on Merseyside. The State's acquisition of control over both concerns was an act of capitalism, however much forced upon it by workers' demands, and conditional always on the profit they could bring from employees.

The Meriden experiment involved an unconditional gift by the government of £4 million of taxpayers' money to the shareholders of the former Norton-Villiers-Triumph, while the former managing director of Jaguar and Labour MP for Coventry NW also stepped in to help. The grant of £4 million to fund the new venture and its workers was, of course, absolutely conditional on their providing return to their employers, in this case the government and those such as GKN and GEC, who have been associates in the mismanagement of the enterprise. How long before persistent government threats to close Meriden down as unprofitable are turned into fact? The Government's agent, the British Steel Corporation, is demanding immediate payment of debts.

Same story at Kirkby Manufacturing and Engineering. Williams, Minister of State for Industry, was jeered by the 700 workers when he came and explained how the Government had mismanaged the enterprise. The Government has shown no concern for the fate of £5.5 million of taxpayers' money invested, nor for the workforce, whom it has tried to palm off to another employer, Worcester Engineering, with total lack of success. Meanwhile, the Government's own agency, the National Enterprise Board, refuses to discuss the possibility of helping to maintain production.

Only workers' unity and organisation now, as before, will prevent the sequence we are so sadly accustomed to - capitalist mismanagement, nationalisation and state control, followed by destruction.

regardless of the countries' national needs.

The CAP also has a strategy (The Mansholt Plan, after its Belgian Minister Innovator) to cure overproduction - basically by destroying whole sections of European agriculture. Britain has the especially honoured position of bearing the brunt of the cuts.

The things British agriculture is most self-sufficient in - milk, eggs and meat - are the ones most severely restricted by the EEC. There is a ban on milk investment, with grants given to switch from dairy farming.

Danish pig products are dumped under subsidy in Britain, so that the British pig herd is down by over 20 per cent and the number of producers by 40 per cent since joining. In Scotland the number of beef cows is falling at a rate of 10 per cent per year. Egg production too is being cut in the EEC.

Finally, we have to pay for the privilege of seeing our agriculture destroyed. Last year Britain, 7th in the economic league of the 9, was the 2nd largest net contributor, with the prospect of being virtual paymaster of the EEC by 1980.

£51.5 MILLION of taxpayers' money has been handed over to Chrysler by the government since 1975. Now the company, unabashed, are asking for compensation of up to £15 million to cover their latest losses! No wonder Peugeot-Citroen are taking over Chrysler's operations in Britain on 1st January.

PROFESSOR Alan Pritchard, president of the Association of University teachers, opened their recent conference by speaking of the 'universal outrage' caused by the government's handling of their last year's wage claim.

EIGHT per cent rises in electricity and gas prices are planned next year in order to maintain current profits of £133 million and a record £180 million respectively. Instead of the old statutory duty merely to cover costs and provide adequate reserves, the industries will aim openly in 1979 for profit margins of 10 and 6.5 per cent.

PLANS for industrial action have already been discussed by the National Union of Teachers in support of a proposed pay claim of 25-30 per cent in order to restore salary values to the levels of 1974. The teachers' unions are united in the belief that such rises are absolutely necessary.

The general secretary of the NUT has said "Any attempt to hold us to five per cent would be totally unacceptable."

Teachers feel they have a strong case, as do their employers, the local authorities, who say they want to restore differentials. The government, however, has insisted this can only be done as and when financial circumstances permit.

The unions are prepared for this and recognise that they shall "probably face a tough negotiating situation".

Since the summer, workers at the Department of Employment have been refusing to handle requests for work permits from Garners Steak Houses as long as the strike for trade union recognition continues. The workers who have been sacked by Garners, along with their supporters, will be holding another mass picket of the Oxford Street and Haymarket restaurants on 27 January.

PENSION fund trustees told the Wilson Committee on the City that they are not obliged to concern themselves with any outside interests, even the public good. Just another indication that capitalism is really about profits, and not social investment.

ALTHOUGH the media tried to show that the recent bakery workers strike was ineffective, the employers have now been forced to admit just how effective it was. At a recent meeting of shareholders of Rank-Hovis-McDougall, the Chairman of the company revealed that profits are still being 'severely affected' by the strike: and that it cost RHM and Associated British Foods about £5 million each.

## CAP helps somebody but not workers

AFTER the conquest of Western Europe in 1940, the Nazi Minister of National Economy, Funk, elaborated a plan based on Hitler's vision of a "New Economic Order". The idea was to ensure food production by giving high profits to agricultural capitalists, whilst keeping overall control of food supplies under the authority of the Nazi state.

The Funk Plan guaranteed high prices for food commodities by the use of state subsidies, isolating world competition by import levies to ensure that the prices remained high.

Immediately after the defeat of Nazism this plan found a new home in the Common Agricultural Policy of the newborn EEC. The CAP is the lynch-pin of Common Market strategy - more than two-thirds of the entire EEC budget is spent on it, and to date it has remained true to its origins.

The CAP guarantees high prices for food (called "target prices") and promises to buy even surplus produce at a per-

centage of the target price (the "intervention price"). Its effect is overproduction of those commodities with the highest target price and intervention price. For example, in 1967/8 EEC sugar was 438 per cent the price of world sugar, butter 397 per cent, wheat 200 per cent, beef and veal 175 per cent. In 1971 the EEC "overproduced" by 15 per cent in hard wheat, 10 per cent in butter, and 5 per cent in sugar. Old figures, but the principle remains the same.

These surpluses become the EEC mountains. They cannot be released to the consumer because by supply and demand they would have to be sold at lower prices. Instead, they are allowed to rot, are used in animal feeds, are exported out of the EEC under subsidy, or simply destroyed.

Last year, 201 000 tonnes of fruit and vegetables were destroyed, at a cost (of destruction!) of £16 million. It included 30 000 tonnes of cauliflowers, 23 000 tonnes of tomatoes, 60 000 tonnes of peaches,

41 000 tonnes of pears, 2 800 tonnes of apples, 16 000 tonnes of oranges, and 28 000 tonnes of mandarins. This £16 million however, is only a tiny fraction of the estimated £1,860 million spent last year in disposal of EEC food surpluses. Not only do we pay high prices to subsidise overproduction, but we also have to pay to get rid of the surpluses.

This dumping of surpluses abroad has another sinister aspect. The subsidised prices (eg butter sold to Russia at less than 10p per pound) can destroy the economies of other countries dependant on food production. For example, in 1969 the EEC contributed to the crash on the sugar market which caused starvation amongst many poor producers by refusing to accept a limitation on sugar sales.

In 1976 this food weapon and arm-twisting 'aid' of £1,900 million secured a deal with 46 countries in Africa, the Caribbean and the Pacific for production geared entirely to the demands of the EEC markets,

## Editorial

A correct attitude of the organised working class toward elections and voting depends on its understanding of democracy; and this understanding, in turn, depends on taking a class view of the matter.

There is bourgeois democracy which, from our working class point of view, is the velvet glove form of the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie and there is the working class democracy of a socialist society whose political form, as far as the overthrown bourgeoisie is concerned, is the dictatorship of the proletariat.

But these two political conditions are not equally valid. Democracy, literally, means "the rule of the people", the rule of workers who are the vast majority of the population, and it can only exist when the working class has assumed state power and eliminated the exploitation of one class by another. It is equally true that only when proletarian democracy genuinely exists can a socialist society prevent degeneration into some form of bureaucratic capitalism as is happening now in China.

'Bourgeois democracy' is not democratic at all because the vast majority of the people are disenfranchised on the one issue of any consequence to them: they are not allowed to vote on whether they are to go on being exploited or not. Bourgeois democracy is only called 'democratic' because it retains certain of the forms, like Parliament and general elections, which were once democratic in relation to the feudal dictatorship, based on ownership of land, whose overthrow was symbolised by the chopping off of a king's head.

### The General Election

Some time this year there will be a general election, which in a country like Britain is a completely capitalist institution. It is a cardinal Marxist principle that socialism cannot be achieved by bourgeois parliamentary means. Evidence of this is that British workers will be offered a choice between two political parties both capitalist, both committed to the continued exploitation of workers. This is no choice at all and must be indignantly rejected by all workers with any class political consciousness. We will not vote in such a sham election. We will go on organising ourselves to overthrow our oppressors, who can rule equally well through a Tory or a Labour government. The attempt to make one party seem slightly less noxious than the other from a working class point of view is no choice either. It is merely the 'lesser of two evils' delusion which has helped sustain an exploitative system.

### The Devolution Referendum

Soon there will be the referendum on Scottish devolution. The real purpose of these devolution schemes is to split the British working class along national lines that have no more than cultural significance, in order to weaken that working class in its

## Guadeloupe Summit blues . . . as students revolt

WORLD IMPERIALIST leaders met in Guadeloupe under the shadow of revolt at home and abroad. As Callaghan, Carter, Schmidt and Giscard d'Estaing meddled in the affairs of countries all over the world their thoughts must have gone back to the desperate muddle in their own lands.

In Britain the working class revolt is threatening to paralyse industry and troops are being trained to move in as strike breakers. MPs of both parties are demanding that Callaghan stop sunning himself and summon an emergency session of Parliament if need be.

In Germany steel workers continue their strike and the German miracle has turned into a bubble about to burst as all capitalist miracles do. In France there are massive strikes against unemploy-

ment. In the United States Carter is so discredited that everybody is throwing his hat in the ring for the next presidential election - including don't-be-vague Hnig.

They could take no more satisfaction in the world scene. The new government in Iran installed by permission of the Shah and hastily supported by Carter makes no impression on the Iranian people, who are still calling for the death of the Shah.

The British-US plan for Zimbabwe is completely discredited and the real struggle for Zimbabwe liberation is on the battlefield. The so-called peace agreement in the Middle East between Begin and Sadat, having been rejected by all the Arab countries, remains just a piece of paper - which Sadat would like to cash in for billions in aid.

stand against British capitalism. As in the case of the referendum on Britain's entry into the Common Market, which was also an anti-working class move by the British bourgeoisie, we urge all workers in Scotland and Wales to register a resounding "NO" to devolution. The present lorry drivers' action which is not divided by any ancient border is the answer to devolution.

### Elections to the European Assembly

On the other hand, when it comes to voting for Britain's representatives to a European Assembly, we will have nothing to do with such an attempt to consolidate politically the anti-working class capitalist combine of the EEC. We will use the occasion to raise the level of the fight to take Britain out of the Common Market altogether, a fight which is attracting more support every day as it becomes increasingly obvious in whose class interest the EEC was formed from the start.

### Secret Ballots

Even though the establishment of an overall democratic dictatorship of the proletariat has to wait on a successful socialist revolution, there are limited areas where we can and must operate it even under the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie, just as there are areas of life in which we practice our working class morality in spite of the prevailing individualistic, self-seeking morality of a capitalist system. We operate a dictatorship of the proletariat in our unions and on the factory floor in respect to the withdrawal of our labour.

The Tories are launching a New Year offensive to spread the use of secret ballots in trade union elections. The purpose of this is to take the decision away from the workers' collective in their trade union branch where they can discuss with workmates the best candidate to help them in class struggle and leave the choice to individuals in a non-working situation, cut off from any sense of solidarity with their fellow workers. Even in a general election, sham that they are, most people at least have to make the effort of going to a polling station. We must make it absolutely clear that no one tells us how to conduct our union elections. Their democracy is our responsibility.

But the form of secret ballot the employers most want to see on the statute books is one made as a precondition for a strike to take place. What the bourgeoisie fears most is the show of collective strength at a factory gate meeting, or its equivalent. Here, workers, conscious of their might in unity, decide to withdraw their labour to make the employer recognise the value of the work they do. It is much better from the capitalist point of view if the workers can be isolated from their mates, cut off from the mass like Antaeus lifted on high, and, after being subjected to all the pressures of the capitalist media, made to vote on whether they, all alone, want to go out on strike or not. The open mass meeting is the democratic form rather than the secret, not to say sneaky, ballot.

The socialisation of labour in the factory, the workers' collective, is the source of our working class morality, our working class ideology. We will not allow any capitalists to decide how that basic working class ideology is to be expressed.

AT THEIR 13th Congress in December 1978 the Association of Guadeloupean Students condemned the repression of trade unions and peasant organisations by the French colonial regime, and renewed their pledge to continue the struggle for national liberation from French imperialism.

France finds Guadeloupe important as a bridgehead in the Caribbean and is determined to suppress any popular movement which would shake their colonial rule, as in the brutal action in 1970 when over 50 Guadeloupeans were killed and many more wounded or thrown into prison.

As in all colonies, the people are poor and unemployment is high, over 20 per cent generally and 50 per cent for young people. Forced emigration is reducing the indigenous population while more and more French people are coming in to take administrative posts in the public sector, to open shops or to assume the skilled and much better paid jobs. Thus there is being created, as is imperialism's way, a growing number of people from the metropolitan country who will resist all moves towards independence.

One of the main industries

on Guadeloupe is sugar cane. The French authorities are trying to cut back sugar cane production and closing down refineries because the world price of cane sugar has gone down and there is not enough profit in it. But it is also the case that some of the most militant opposition to French colonial rule comes from the sugar cane workers. No alternative employment is offered to those who are deprived of work by the destruction of the sugar industry.

Guadeloupe under the exploitation of French imperialism is yet another example of the utter falsity of the claim by the 'third world theorists' that second order imperialist powers like France, Britain or West Germany can be of assistance to the colonial and semi-colonial countries. These have to assist themselves by liberating themselves. The Congress of Guadeloupean Students, condemning the arrests of September 20th as the first tentative move by the French colonial regime to liquidate the patriotic movement for independence, went on to declare: "Our people are standing up and are ready to go on all the way to the end to achieve national liberation."

## Arming of police threatens workers

EVER since Sir Robert Peel, the police, along with the army, have been the ultimate coercive weapon to be used by the bourgeoisie against the working class. But the current momentous changes in the force (public complaints against the police have risen consistently in the past few years) are an attempt to make it a force devoted, as never before, to counter-revolution.

Above all, they want to change the fact that the British police were an unarmed force. Now, the methods of the French CRS and the American cop, are being introduced, moves that will be bitterly opposed by the bulk of policemen, who have a long record of agitation against the introduction of weapons into the force. Everyone knows the situation in Los Angeles where over a hundred people are shot dead in the streets by police each year, and still the crime rate rises.

According to the national press, police with weapons are trained not to shoot to wound, but to kill. They aim at the chest. If they do kill, they are not automatically brought to trial, to be acquitted like anyone else if it was a question of self-defence. The incident is simply investigated by a superior and reported to the Department of Public Prosecution. At least one in ten metropolitan policemen are now weapon-trained, and holster pockets are becoming part of the uniform. They are issued with sniper rifles, for example the L39A1, whose bullets can penetrate concrete walls and ricochet for half a mile. A new technique for indoor firing ranges has been developed and many have been built. One recently opened in West Yorkshire cost £175,000.

"Terrorism" or a rising "crime rate" is used as an excuse to arm the police. Yet their own figures for the rising numbers of armed crimes show that arming the police, far from being a deterrent, is an incentive to malefactors to carry weapons. The introduction of up to 20,000 troops in northern Ireland has been the main contributor to the murder and all forms of violence there in the last ten years. So with police arms.

As well as arms, they are introducing a paramilitary third police force. This at a time when military training, in Ireland in particular, is being focussed on control of civilians. The list is almost endless: an "Anti-Terrorist" squad of 150 (only?), the notorious Special Patrol Group, so vicious at Grunwick, who are the nearest thing to storm troopers we have seen in this country, DII, a specialist firearms squad with blue berets and the latest in arms, groups to protect VIPs and vital installations, and others whose existence we will only learn of after they have been used to lethal effect - like policemen's guns.

The Government acts out of fear - fear of the working class. Opposition so far limited must extend to the whole Labour movement. The Government's new policy is an attempt to intimidate the working class, and terrorise us into submission. The present massive deployments of police for "public protection", on picket lines or in the streets, are being trained for repression and civil war.

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### NATFHE finalises 28 per cent claim

ON 9 December, NATFHE National Council firmly set the sights of the membership on achieving a 28 per cent wage rise, together with major salary structure changes, in its claim for April 1979.

The claim, resulting from discussion amongst College lecturers at Branch and Regional level throughout the country, is an accurate indication of our aspirations at the present time. The Government, whilst espousing a major role for Further and Higher Education, is not prepared to provide facilities (build-

ings, furniture, materials) or, more significantly, to employ and pay for the most vital cog of the education machine - teachers.

NATFHE National Executive has provided the members with a lead by issuing a document on sanctions in support of the claim. The document must be taken to heart, discussed and acted upon. The time for passing resolutions on what the union will and will not do in case the claim is rejected is over. The task for the coming months is all out for action on the claim with no holds barred.

# Print unions aid strike

JOURNALISTS at the Kentish Times Group of newspapers have been on strike now for 6 weeks. The strike is solid and effective, stopping more and more newspapers. Up to date, about 50 titles published by the Westminster Press in various parts of London have stopped appearing.

The strike is in support of the NUJ national pay claim. The employers' Newspaper Society is keeping up a front of 'refusing to negotiate while the strike continues', but has already increased an original 5 per cent offer to the non-union Institute of Journalists to 13 per cent. This is not enough for the NUJ, (fully qualified young journalists earn £61 to £65, with no chance of bonuses or overtime).

Apart from the question of wages, the action has brought about increased solidarity among the various unions involved in local newspaper production. The Kentish Times is a group of local newspapers in south east London

suburbs and parts of Kent, partially written in local offices, compiled and composed at Sidcup, then printed at Uxbridge along with other newspapers from other parts of London. Different unions are involved at each stage of the process.

When the journalists first struck in the Kentish Times offices, the NGA at Sidcup refused to handle copy from non-union editors in various local offices. Then London SOGAT van drivers refused to cross picket lines. Finally, NATSOPA in Uxbridge refused to handle paper from non-union drivers, following a refusal by TGWU drivers to carry it. The printers were locked out, but this meant stopping about 50 local papers for all parts of London, plus the highly profitable British edition of the International Herald Tribune and El Arab.

This support from other unions has enabled the Sidcup journalists to have token pickets there and to go to the assistance of members

hard pressed elsewhere, including Edenridge, Kent. There, van driver assisted by police, had broken through an all-night picket after a four hour delay and a fifteen minute scuffle between journalists and police. (This is the works of the National Chief negotiator for the employers, therefore a test case).

But on January 4th, the reinforced picket was determined to stop the six titles of the Surrey Mirror series emerging. In the event, this proved unnecessary as the printers held a long chapel meeting until it was too late to start printing it.

Mutual support will be crucial in the future. The NGA, who will negotiate pay in April, have previously been able to take effective action independently. Since the new video-display technology gives journalists the means of direct input, bypassing NGA compositors altogether, it could soon be the journalists' turn to support the print unions.

# Harrier deal go-ahead

IT IS typical of the grovelling which Labour Governments always do to the United States that the first person to be told about the go-ahead to sell Harriers to China was Carter. The news reached Britain via Guadeloupe. Poor old Callaghan! For months, he held up the sale in deference to the American embargo on China in respect to strategic weapons, only to find that the USA had gone behind our backs and recognised the country.

Any idea that the Cabinet was holding up the deal because of Russian pressure was of course rubbish. And those who would hail the deal as a blow to the Soviet Union are playing with fire. This includes the present Chinese government, who talk as though the prospect of a war with Russia was

not only probable, but also desirable.

It is true that the Western bourgeoisie are united in their wish to build up the Chinese war machine as a block to the Soviet Union. The Harrier, by no means the purely defensive machine it is made out to be, is part of this strategy. But war is of no benefit to the working class of China, Russia, America or Britain - or anywhere else in the world for that matter.

Supplying weapons of destruction, it seems, is a pre-condition for lush contracts in the civilian fields. China lies now like some rich sardine can, waiting to be opened up, and waiting willingly too. And the merchants of death are making ready to ply their profitable trade.

# Workers must take responsibility as capitalism gives footwear the boot

THE UNDERLYING trend of decline in the footwear and leather trades augurs a bleak future for workers in the industry.

The workforce has fallen drastically - from 96 000 in 1971 to 75 000 in 1977, and is threatened still more by the import of shoes from abroad.

The much publicised import of shoes from Eastern Europe and the Far East is not the problem for the employers. As the Chairman of the Ward White group said, "If we don't sell them somebody else will."

Nor is it the only problem for the workers since shoes are also imported from the EEC, with Italian shoes making a high proportion of total imports. The real problem is that imports are used to maintain profits instead of using the existing skills of

British workers. In the years 1973 to 1977, there was a fall in production of British shoes from 190 million pairs to 162 million.

The story in the leather industry is just as grim. The price of leather for shoes has gone up, and with the closure of tanneries, increased imports are reported.

The price of hides has increased too, and further tanneries are expected to close. Tanneries have closed and layoffs inflicted in Cumbria, Bolton, and as reported the THE WORKER, in Beverley, where the NEB gave the order for the closure. It is up to the workers and the National Union of Footwear, Leather and Allied Trades (NUFLAT) to take sole responsibility for saving the British footwear and leather industries.



BP tankers stopped by lorry drivers' picket. Some tanker drivers have already joined the strike called by Texaco tanker drivers. Photo by Laurence Sparham (IFL)

# HULL DOCKS STOP

IN HULL 1500 lorry drivers voted on January 2 to strike immediately in their fight for £65 for a 35 hour week, having been offered only £60 for a 40 hour week by their employers.

The pickets on the docks and factory gates were quickly organised and were 100 per cent solid.

The owner drivers who are also picketing are in full support of their work mates.

Already more than 2000 workers have been laid off because of the effectiveness of the strike. The docks are at a standstill.

Pickets are being sent to other areas to help strengthen their position.

## A pinch of SALT

ACCORDING to a Soviet Marshal, the neutron bomb is aimed "pre-eminently at the expense of the people". He forgot to add that the same must be said for the nuclear and other weaponry of his own country. The SALT negotiations show how little the imperialist powers care for disarmament.

# STRUGGLE SWEEPS EUROPE

## Germany

OVER 100,000 steel workers are now either on strike or locked out as the steelmen's action enters its sixth week. Already, supplies to industry are causing widespread shortages. The giant Volkswagen works is threatened with a stoppage of all work at the middle of this month if the situation does not improve.

## France

UNIONS are making plans to resist redundancies in Renault's commercial vehicles division, which makes Berliet and Saviem trucks. Meanwhile, a national struggle is going on against the unemployment situation and high social security charges:

shortly before Christmas, newspapers were paralysed, and the postal, rail and other services badly hit in protest. Struggles are still going on over payment for enforced idleness when a nationwide power cut hit the country.

## Spain

IN SPAIN, the government's newly-announced 11-14 per cent wage ceiling has been defied by the two largest unions in the country. Already, action has begun at SEAT, the factory which produces the Spanish-made Fiat cars. SEAT is the largest industrial employer in the country, and they have a saying among the workers that "When SEAT moves, Barcelona trembles."

The claim at SEAT is for 17 per cent.

## Sweden

THE SWEDISH Parliament has authorised a 20 per cent reduction in shipyard capacity. As in Britain, the shipyards are almost totally nationalised.

## Italy

THE THREE-year labour contracts which are a feature of the country's industrial life are up for renewal soon. The unions seem set on a collision course with the government, who say that they cannot meet the workers' demands without jeopardising Italy's involvement in the European Monetary System.

# New booklet by Enver Hoxha

ALBANIA has produced a beautifully presented and tightly argued demolition of Yugoslavia's workers' self-administration system. This 100 page booklet is entitled Yugoslav 'Self Administration' A Capitalist Theory and Practice and is written by Enver Hoxha.

It is without doubt the clearest and best expose of Yugoslavia's fraudulent claim to be a 'special' 'democratic' form of socialism. The history, the foreign investment, influence and control, the private agriculture, inflation,

international debts, unemployment, 'guest working' and emigration are all covered.

Facts, figures, quotes from Marx and Lenin and from the Yugoslav revisionists themselves, all demonstrate irrefutably that Yugoslavia is not a socialist country.

We owe a debt of gratitude to Enver Hoxha and the Albanian people for this timely book. This leopard has definitely not changed its spots visits from Hua norwithstanding. A gift at 35p, available from all CPB(M-L) bookshops.

## NEW FROM ALBANIA

Yugoslav 'Self-Administration' -  
A Capitalist Theory and Practice  
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