



DRIVE A HARD BARGAIN!



PICKETING lorry drivers huddled around their fire in freezing winds at Stratford, East London, as they related their feelings about the strike to THE WORKER.

At the Chobham Farm depot, they are very angry about the attitude of the employers to their claim - £65 for a 35 hour week. They now earn £53 for 40 hours. One of the drivers explained that, with his rent at £25 a week and with a family to support, he must work a six day week to get a decent living wage.

Nearby, at the big London International Freightliner Depot (British Rail), pickets were kept busy with lorries arriving at the line. British Rail police were out in force to help lorries through.

Here, feelings run very high among the men on the picket line about some of the owner drivers. These are the "pirates" of the trade, who keep no record of driving hours and mileage, and often drive substandard vehicles.

However, here as at Chobham Farm the picket line is proving successful, with very few goods moving in or out. Out of 150 lorries arriving on one day, only 27 went through the picket line. GPO van drivers are also refusing to cross.

Labour - warmakers, strikebreakers

AFTER the Cabinet meeting summoned by Callaghan when he failed to persuade the unions to call off their strikes, Roy Mason, Secretary for Northern Ireland, rushed back to Belfast and signed the declaration for a state of emergency. The lorry drivers' strike in Northern Ireland was being made even more effective by 900 tanker drivers joining in as well.

Under the terms of the Emergency Provisions Act the Army was ordered to deliver essential supplies of petrol and fuel and, on January 12, drivers of the Royal Army Corps of Transport, who had been receiving special training for a month

or more to handle the huge tankers, drove into Belfast harbour. There they collected supplies to be delivered to a bakery, a dairy, several hospitals and the Lurgan gas works.

Several hundred additional troops of the Argyle and Sutherland Highlanders have arrived in northern Ireland from Catterick to act as an armed escort for the drivers who are being used by the Government as strike-breakers. More drivers, mechanics and other Army personnel are being flown in from other units in Britain. If there are any workers in Ireland who were in any doubt about whose interests the British imperial-

ists troops are in northern Ireland to serve, this should clear up the matter for them.

A member of the Social Democratic and Labour Party pointed out that the British Government which had allowed a phoney strike of right wing Loyalists in 1974 to topple the administration 'was now using the British Army to break a genuine industrial stoppage. Mr. Mason has extended his colonial attitudes to the field of industrial relations.'

This use of troops must harden the determination of the Irish workers to assert their rights to collective bargaining in the face of this armed opposition.

Lorry drivers, rejecting Callaghan's plea to call off their strike, solidly assert right of collective bargaining

Strength and clarity cause press hysteria

BRITAIN'S lorry drivers in their present struggle for a basic wage of £65 a week again show the strength of the labour movement when it is clear about its aims. It is this strength and clarity which causes such hysteria in the capitalist press.

The Government and employers cannot make up their minds how to react to a working class which is determined to have its own defence organisations carrying out their own policies. Should they call in the troops or should they have a lock-out?

The fact is that Britain's workers have created, by simply using trade unions for the purposes for which they were built, a situation where the government is ruling on a day-to-day basis and the Tories can offer no alternative.

It must be clear to everyone now that the working class, having brought down the Tories in 1974, could similarly deal with Labour in 1979. And who can show any difference between the two?

The fight against Labour is not only on the fundamental issue of wages. In threatening government control over wages it threatens the basis of capitalist government itself. Such a struggle follows from the victory against the Tories - a victory for the trade unions against the Industrial Relations Act.

The lorry drivers strike has its effect in every section. Already there have been lay-offs at Dunlop, Cadbury-Schweppes, ICI, United Biscuits and Spillers among others. Newspapers are getting thinner and the motor industry is coming to a standstill.

The problem for the government is not just the lorry drivers but the whole working class.

THE train drivers national strike on Tuesday and Thursday will be ASLEP's reply to British Rail's refusal to consider a claim of 10 per cent.

ONE million Local Authority manual workers are holding a one day strike on January 22nd, to be followed by a campaign to work to rule, for a 40 per cent rise.

Nurses are holding a mass meeting in London this week to demand 15 per cent pay rises under the slogan 'Pay not peanuts.'

Guerrilla strikes hit home to North West bosses

MANCHESTER Busmen and some workers of the North-West Water Authority have joined the many workers who are struggling for a decent wage.

The Water workers have been on a 'go-slow' but have now stepped up their action. The towns of Bury, Rochdale, and Oldham are now practically without water. Lay-offs are expected soon in the area as local capitalists sit and ponder on what has hit them.

The Greater Manchester Busmen have also declared their intention to fight for a rise above what their bosses have offered them. There have already been some skirmishes.

The Depots at Weaste, Oldham and Hyde Road have all withdrawn their labour just before the tanker drivers' strike. Their tactic is one of lightning strikes. This certainly makes the transport managers jittery and is hard to combat.

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Historic Notes

The inability of British Imperialism to maintain a direct presence "East of Suez" created a need for imperialism to have a new policeman for the Gulf region. The USA, tied down in Vietnam, could not maintain a large military presence either. However, the new-born "Nixon doctrine" would supply a willing party who could supply the necessary troops.

Nixon was under some pressure at this time, foreign and domestic. Casualties in Vietnam were mounting, domestic opposition to war was in the ascendant and in 1971 the US foreign trade balance showed a deficit for the first time since 1893. Exports, therefore, any exports, were now vital for US capitalism.

The October War in the Middle East in 1973 produced large orders for weapons from all sides. Oil boycotts and price increases strengthened those who had oil to sell, particularly Iran and Saudi Arabia. Arms were bought before hospitals and

NATO capitalism profits from arms to Iran

schools. In 1973, the Pentagon sold arms worth \$3.9 billion; by the following year sales had more than doubled to \$8.3 billion. In 1974, the Shah accounted for half that doubled figure!

If Iran was heavily armed, went the thinking, it would replace British withdrawal. In 1965, the Shah bought Tiger aircraft from the USA. In 1966, the McDonnell Phantom fighter, the F4D, was bought by Iran. In February 1967, the Shah spent \$110 million in Moscow on armoured troop carriers, trucks and anti-aircraft guns. This blackmail attempt worked and the USA offered more arms to keep the Russians "out of Iran". Lockheed, Boeing and McDonnell all cashed in.

In May 1972, on their way back from SALT disarmament talks in Moscow, (what irony) Nixon and Kissinger called off in Iran to sell the Shah the Grumman Tomcat. They were successful. From this point arms sales to Iran really took off.

In February 1973 the Pentagon sold the Shah weapons worth \$2 billion, including 175 jet fighters, 500 helicopters and also surface-to-air missiles. Four months later an American-Iranian arms lobbyist was offered a \$28 million bribe if he could ensure the Shah's purchase of the Tomcat. Doubled oil prices were seen by some as a 'victory for the Third World' when in Iran's case no worker or peasant benefited at all.

By June 1974, the Shah had 80 Tomcats on order, costing as much as a small hospital. The Iranian arsenal, by 1975, included 300 British Chieftain tanks with another 1,680 on order, 860 medium tanks with 250 British Scorpion tanks on order, 3 destroyers with 6 more destroyers and 3 submarines on order. He had 238 combat aircraft and 349 fighters on order, including Tomcats.

The Shah's total arms expenditure for the following year alone was \$10,405 million,

one third of Iran's gross national product. Nor does it stop there and by now the list is overwhelming. In August 1976, Kissinger, recent winner of the Nobel peace prize, visited Iran. Following that visit the Shah was allowed to buy 160 F16 fighters costing \$3.4 billion and missiles worth another \$600 million.

Not surprisingly the main target of popular demonstrations has been such expenditure. Iranian and British people alike will be delighted that the Shah may be forced to cancel the following British orders: £400 million for a tracked Rapier anti-aircraft missile, £500 million for Chieftain tanks, and £50 million for 4 British Shipbuilders support vessels.

The Shah, now surrounded by enemies, said, in 1974, from a position of power, "the strength that we have now in the Persian Gulf is ten times, twenty times more than the British ever had". How much strength does it take to keep a Shah in power?

Fight against wage-fixing

A SERIES of strikes has been organised by the trade unions in Spain to back claims for higher wages. They are an expression of the working class's determination to end wage-fixing by Government guidelines of a 14 per cent limit set last December. Wage-fixing by government decree is the real mark of a fascist state whether carried out by a Franco or his successors trying to look like social democrats. As in Britain, the "socialist" and "communist" parties are appealing that wage demands be moderated so that they can gain in the March election. Workers are more and more turning a deaf ear.

In Portugal too, the Government's 20 per cent limit is under attack from the trade unions. What is being shown is that workers can take hold of trade unions and make them serve their traditional purpose of forcing employers to grant a higher price to labour power. As long as the membership of trade unions is the working class no amount of legal or illegal tampering with their structure and leadership in the interest of capitalism need be allowed to divert them from their proper course of defending working class interests.

In Italy, France and other countries organised workers are taking action against unemployment and wage-fixing.

Unions fight textile cuts

THE International Textile, Garment and Leather-Workers' Federation is in the process of drawing up counterproposals to the EEC commission on the textile and clothing industry's future.

The textile industry which provides over 10 per cent of EEC industrial jobs has over a period from 1970-6 been cut from 2.3 million to 1.7 million jobs. Future job loss estimates are of 500,000 by the mid-1980s.

For the National Union of Dyers Bleachers and Textile Workers, together with the Amalgamated Textile Workers Union the commission's guideline are an export of jobs which is extremely disturbing. In stronger plainer language it was described as a "death certificate" by West German Textile Union spokesmen.

The commission's guideline for restructuring are designed to do more than a temporary restructuring. As in the Steel and Shipbuilding sectors the aim is for a concentrated high profit industry in Europe. This will mean destroying textiles in those areas where relatively high wages have been won by organized workers.

The control of textile import under the Multi-fibre Arrangement, which limits the imports of cheap goods from outside of the EEC, is to be slackened by the commission, and would be one way to put pressure on individual countries that did not obey the commission's dictate.

But textile workers must be very weary of being diverted on the issues of how high or low a limit. The enemy is not other textile workers but those whose interests are diametrically opposed to the textile workers and who gain the most by weakened textile unions - the capitalist class and its EEC commissions

Foreign capital loses in Iran

THERE CAN be no question that Iran was at the top of the agenda at the recent Guadeloupe summit talks. British and US capitalists stand to lose enormous weapons orders alone, never mind the other civil contracts that have now been suspended.

The mass opposition to the Shah has repeatedly pointed to the astronomical sums spent on valourous armed forces while the economy suffered gross imbalance and workers and peasants experienced rampant inflation and suffered a severe drop in living standards. Thus the latest Iranian government, in attempts to pacify an enraged people, has announced the review or suspension of current weapons contracts.

Britain, having the largest

weapons industry in Western Europe, stands to lose more than lost pride over Iran. Many companies that are household names, (Laing, Wimpey, Massey Ferguson, Rolls Royce), have withdrawn personnel from projects halted anyway by fuel shortage and closed banks. What is striking is the dominance of military projects being worked on even by civil engineering contractors.

Work by Laing and Wimpey at the Isfahan military-industrial complex has been suspended where previously they had anticipated a large slice of the £800 million due to be spent there. Chrysler UK has suffered setback also, while British Petroleum has lost an estimated 35 per cent of oil supplies for the first quarter of the year.

VOLUNTEER archeologists spent Christmas in a frantic effort to gain information about Roman and mediaeval London, having to use blowtorches on the frozen ground at a site near Mansion House. The property developers refused to delay building a new office block, and a rare view of London's earlier settlements is now being buried for ever.

In brief

SMITH'S provisional government looks like being more provisional than they intended. Conscripted for 18 - 25 year olds provided demonstrations throughout the country. Of 1544 Africans called up, 300 turned up.

Killer oil brings pollution to European coast

THE DEATH of 51 people in the exploding oil tanker at Bantry Bay shows capitalism at its worst. The incident comes after hundreds before it, minor or major, where lives have been at risk, and many actually taken - yet still conditions for transporting oil are lethal. The Irish Government had to use the repeated threat of closure of the oil terminal before Gulf Oil condescended to do something about safety. Oil spillage at the terminal was so bad that tankers had to be boarded by Gulf men before docking. In this case, the man checking died along with the others. Completely unrepentant, Gulf is pressing ahead with plans to rebuild the terminal, at a cost of 15 million pounds. Such are their profits. Can they be allowed to do so?

Nearly all of Ireland's oil supply was stored nearby, and only by a miracle did not go up in a fireball. On Canvey Island, Essex, 33000 people live by one of the world's largest depots of Liquid Natural and Petroleum Gas. This was the

product that killed 200 holiday makers in Spain, when only one lorryload exploded. Why should lives be at risk in this way?

The French tanker did not have a system to pump in inert gas to replace the oil. The excuse; that the Betelgeuse was ten years old, so no wonder that it was unsafe. Futher proof that the tankers, like every other advance of technology, under capitalism, from mining to microbes, were irresponsibly developed. We have a disgusting spectacle of the oil companies pointing the finger of accusation at each other in an effort - over dead bodies - to ensure that their profits remain untouched by the added cost of safety. As the Gulf spokesman reportedly said, "It was not our vessel and not our oil. It was a Total vessel. There was an explosion and a fire on their vessel." So that makes it all right?

The Betelgeuse itself was diverted from Lisbon harbour because of a harbour obstruction. But no word in the media that

US workers reject contract for limiting their wages

"FOR EXPORT to the USA - one rejected pay policy" we wrote last November. The British capitalists have sold Carter a pup - a pay policy which British workers have already shown to be useless. The wage limits policy is being rejected by workers in the USA as well.

The threat of strike by 60000 oil workers has forced the employers to grant a cash offer of eight per cent now. This is said to be 'within' the seven per cent guidelines which, like the British original, become suddenly flexible under stress. However, the oil workers have forced the employer to reopen negotiations at the beginning of next year, so making a mockery of an incomes policy which depends on contracts running for two or three strike-free years.

March will see 400000 truck drivers of the Teamsters Union pressing their claim which, according to their president will be

at least as much the 37 per cent over threeyears won by the epic miners' strike.

380000 construction workers and 67000 rubber workers claim more in April, followed by 55000 California food processors, 140000 electrical equipment workers and 74000 meat packers in the summer. September sees the expiry of the contract of half a million auto workers. The leader of the 1.4 million United Auto Workers Union has already said they may abandon the idea of a three-year contract in favour of a shorter contract. So much for Carter's long-term wage plans.

German unions strengthened by strike

THE 44-day strike of West German steel workers ended on January 11 when the great steel companies of the Ruhr with such familiar names as Krupp and Thyssen granted a 4 per cent wage increase and had to make concessions on a reduced working week.

This move toward a 35 hour week will influence the engineering industry's wage talks due to begin soon.

But the most important gain of the strike for the German working class is the shattering of the so-called "social contract" between employers and workers which gave the employers a large measure of industrial peace and the workers so little that they had to take to industrial action to squeeze even 4 per cent out of the steel bosses. This was what was called "the German miracle" But the present dispute has rocked the whole negotiating machinery designed to prevent strikes and has let it be known that the miracle is over.

German steelworkers have shown again that trade unions are not to be written off as part of the capitalist state machine but are basic defence organisations which can only be diverted from this task if the members allow it.

Lisbon harbour is impaired almost every week by ships running aground in the vicinity. As well as the world's seas, the whole European Atlantic coast is threatened by these floating bombs. On New Year's Eve the Patria exploded off Corunna. Thirty people were killed. One of Europe's finest fishing grounds has been, perhaps irreversibly, affected, and hundreds of fishermen are without livelihood as a result of 30000 tons of oil escaping. The rest is "safe" in what remains of the ship, towed 200 miles to be pumped out, as the cargo is too precious to lose. It contains 200000 tons of Iranian crude oil, owned by BP. The pumping ships are the BP owned British Promise and British Dragoon. "Cleaning" costs are put at nearly one million pounds, and the Admiral in charge, who has decreed that no more mopping up needs to be done, says that he is "delighted" with the success of the operation. How long can this go on?

WE Marxists have always said that capitalism, a competitive system motivated by greed, is a cause of war and that socialism, in eliminating the exploitation of man by man, eliminates war at the same time.

The bourgeois press have been using a complicated international situation to try to refute this charge. They point to Africa where Soviet intervention is no different from the operations of imperialist powers like Britain, France and the US or to southeast Asia where China and the Soviet Union are nakedly backing different countries in their hostile competition with each other as proofs that socialist countries are just as imperialist and warlike as capitalist countries.

These examples do not represent a failure of socialism to live up to its ideals but a failure of certain countries, notably the Soviet Union and China, to preserve and live up to socialism.

The Soviet Union while it was socialist, from the time of the October Revolution till after Stalin's death, liberated all the peoples who had been kept in subjection by the Czarist empire, supported liberation movements all over the world against western imperialism, withstood the armed intervention of all the great capitalist powers determined to strangle socialism at birth, offered an alliance to those same powers to check Nazi Germany's plans for world conquest and when they refused, carried out its own diplomacy to be able to engage the world's enemy at the most suitable time. After playing the major part in defeating Nazism on the battlefield at great sacrifice and in liberating Europe, the Soviet Union, anticipating the hostility of the capitalist powers once the fascist menace was removed, quickly built its war shattered economy, broke the US monopoly of atomic weapons with which it was blackmailing the whole world and was able to give enormous economic assistance to countries trying to develop socialism.

China, while it was socialist, from the founding of the People's Republic in 1949 till after Mao's death, was able to feed, clothe and house its huge population who had for so long been at the mercy of natural and man-made disasters. When the US attempted under the aegis of the UN to make all Korea part of its economic empire, China allowed its people to volunteer to fight shoulder to shoulder with their Korean comrades and together, they drove the US forces back to their colonial enclave in the south. India, at the US's instigation, tried to occupy disputed territory on their border with China. The Chinese Liberation Army soundly repulsed the attempt but behaved towards the defeated Indian troops with the greatest magnanimity and did not hold onto one square yard of land belonging rightfully to India. And during the US's aggressive war in Indo-China the people fighting to liberate themselves were urged to regard the whole of China as their own rear area, completely at their disposal till the enemy was expelled. When the Soviet Union ceased being a socialist country and withdrew support from countries trying to remain independent from imperialism, China hastily filled the gap with its own technological achievements and skilled personnel.

Albania, where socialism continues to thrive, is no threat to anyone, not even its closest neighbours who at various times have attempted to take it over or at least to nibble off chunks. Tiny Albania with a population of 2½ million has defended its socialist system against US and British imperialism, against the Soviet Union when bureaucratic capitalism was restored and it became an imperialist power. As China, with which it had enjoyed such close fraternal relations, went the way of the Soviet Union, Albania willingly gave up all aid and assistance rather than compromise in any way its Marxist-Leninist principles.

But though socialism makes war on nobody it does not allow anybody to trample on it. Socialism's answer to the aggressive war waged by capitalist countries is people's war - a whole nation arming itself to throw out the invaders. The greatest example of people's war in our time is that waged by the Vietnamese people who in 30 years of fighting defeated and drove out Japanese, French and US imperialists. Only socialism could have achieved such glorious feats of defensive arms.

Socialism is the only way to peace and it can defend itself against all the capitalist warmongers who are now, and till their overthrow will remain, the merchants of death. Here in Britain the struggle of the working class to put an end to their exploitation by overthrowing capitalism and establishing a socialist society is also the fight for peace, for ourselves and for our fellow workers everywhere.

THE Executive of the Confederation of Shipbuilding and Engineering Unions are presenting a new claim to the Engineering Employers' Federation, demanding a rise in the craftsman's rate from £60 to £80 a week, with corresponding increases for other grades.

TWO men accused of damaging Nelson's Column which they climbed in protest at apartheid were, to their own and our delight, found innocent. The State in its vindictiveness spent £40,000 on legal costs towards a prosecution it could not sustain, and one of the men, although innocent, was ordered to pay £75 towards legal costs.

SOUTHWARK'S Labour Councillors are like the Labour Government in miniature, even to the extent of defying their own party. They have one of the worst records in the country for demolishing houses. Yet they insist they will spend £50,000,000 wrested from the ratepayers who still live there (it has the fastest declining population in London) to build a new town hall. To administer the rubble?

ARTICLE 11 of the European Convention of Human Rights is being invoked in a submission to the European Court at Strasbourg, in an effort to negotiate the closed shop enforced by Hill City council employees.

PRU NO INSURANCE

LIKE other public sector workers, Civil Servants are coming into direct conflict with their employer over pay. They are acutely aware that the Government is going to try to use them as an example to the rest of the working class.

Despite nominal opposition to recent pay restraint, Civil Service unions were satisfied to call for the reintroduction of the Pay Research Unit for the April 1979 pay settlement. The Government has conceded nothing by allowing this comparison exercise to go ahead, but has unsurprisingly declared that it will not honour the findings.

Workers in the sector are now faced with a fight which highlights two traditional weaknesses of the PRU. That it is essentially a parity claim is self-evident and it encourages reliance on other sections of the working

class to do the fighting. It also perpetuates the idea of fairness under capitalism, that an "independent" body can decide on a claim for a union or that anybody's pay can be settled away from the field of class conflict.

Despite this self-imposed weakness, Civil Servants can break through Government limitations if they are united and clear. Being directly employed by the state they know its weaknesses as well as feeling the keenest lash of its policies. To do so will strike a double blow at the ruling class. They will help to smother the idea that "comparability" ought to be used for the whole public sector. More importantly Civil Servants will have gained the strength understanding and independence necessary for their future struggles.

Water Authorities cut pollution standards

TODAY many parts of our sewage and drainage systems are beginning to fall apart from old age, and we need new investments in sewage processing and prevention of flood and drought. Yet we waste millions of gallons of water and pollute millions more.

In many cases legislation against air pollution has resulted in firms finding ways of putting the pollutants into our water. The sulphur that used to go into the air around power stations now tends to go into the water and this water is often hot enough to kill off the life of the rivers it enters. Instead of re-processing manure to keep the soil healthy, farmers pour 120 million gallons of this valuable substance into our rivers, wasting nitrogen and phosphates and at the same time de-oxygenating the water, again threatening aquatic life forms, and people who drink it.

Britain, they used to boast, treats more of its sewage and effluent than any other nation. But, in the words of the DOE, "a large proportion (of the 40000 million gallons of sewage and industrial effluent) fails to conform to the consent conditions required by river authorities". Because there are no general powers over discharge to the sea, pollution of our coastal waters continues unabated.

The 1974 Prevention of Pollution Act professed many a good intention but was legally

toothless, for any prosecutions had to be endorsed by the River Authorities - and they are Britain's major polluters, for lack of resources to do their job. Capital expenditure of more than £100,000 has been prohibited unless 'public health' was deemed to be at risk.

Who defines pollution? For the past couple of months the River Authorities have been busy revising downwards the official standards (by which prosecutions against pollution are made). The North West Water Authority, for instance, has proposed to increase permitted pollution levels to four times present standards. Thames Authority has admitted that two thirds of its plants would be liable to prosecution, as would half of the Anglian Authority's plants.

Again, we need more clean water for our agriculture (only ten per cent of land area which would benefit from irrigation receives any at all). We need it for our inland transport system, for developing fish farming, for recreation purposes, as well as for our industries and homes. To do this, not only must we stop polluting, but we must invest in catching and using our rain properly. As THE WORKER (Issue 44 1978) pointed out, over thirty three pence in every pound spent on water goes to the pockets of financiers - and the total amount actually being spent at all has suffered from the cuts.

Social workers-time for rethink as strike continues

SOCIAL WORKERS are still on strike in 14 branches of NALGO whilst several others are taking selective action in support of the claim for re-grading and the right to negotiate improvements in pay to reflect increases in responsibility on a local basis, in common with the vast majority of local government workers. Some social workers have been on strike since August.

NALGO has called a special Local Government Group Meeting (equivalent to a national conference for local government workers) for 26th January where a decision

will be taken on whether the social workers should return to work. It is likely that a modified version of the November offer will be considered.

The social workers are unlikely to be offered all their original demands at the meeting on 26th January, but the time has come for them to return to work united and with dignity: they must be prepared to fight another day.

Important lessons have been learnt by the social workers, not least the true nature of social democratic employers, whose tactics have often resembled those of the most ruthless capitalist.

'Parental choice' hides more cuts

THE EDUCATION Bill being presented in Parliament by Mrs. Williams attempts to steal the Tories' thunder by raising the slogan of "parental choice". Yet the intention is the same, to take advantage of the fall in pupil numbers to cut further our education system.

Part of their attack is the Taylor Report proposals for increasing corporate controls over education by increasing the number of lay-men to school governing bodies, including representatives from industry to influence what is taught in schools. This is not intended to allow parents more say in what happens to their children but is an attempt to shake schools, and to herald a more restricted utilitarian education controlled by government.

All this has been done in an atmosphere of hysteria as the government and industry accuse teachers of incompetence and school leavers of stupidity.

It is the absurdity of capitalism which creates unemployment for school leavers.

While Mrs. Williams makes noises about the neglect of the 16-19 year olds she cuts millions of pounds out of the education service and helps the government fiddle its unemployment figures. The grants proposed for young people staying at schools will of course be inadequate.

The greatest challenge to all this comes from a resolution to the National Union of Teachers 1979 Conference. This calls for no school closures and a balanced reduction of rolls, so that falling rolls mean smaller classes for all.

The only real parental choice is to join teachers in this fight and so stop the mad scramble for the "best" places in the "best" schools which only leads to school closures and less choice.

College merger cuts standards

ONCE UPON a time, in the city of Exeter, there was a teacher training college with 1200 students. There was also a University with a small teacher-training department. The wise people in Parliament decided that because class sizes were only 35-plus there were too many teachers and the college should be merged with the university. There are now only 800 student teachers, but Shirley Williams is giving a public lecture to inaugurate the "enlarged" School of Education. Do they really believe that they can fool us into thinking that cutting half a college is expansion?

Are we going to tolerate such cuts in the future? Members of the National Union of Students in Devon will be at the "inauguration" presenting the facts about what the Labour Government's policies have really done for education in Devon in terms of class sizes, building programmes delayed, grants going down in value each year, and the latest attempt at government control of student unions as outlined in The Worker No. 42 last year. Clearly Shirley Williams' Department should be known for what it is, the D.E.S. - Destruction of Education and Science.

Worker Interview

TEXACO tanker drivers at the Hemel Hempstead Buncefield Oil depot, who have been striking for more pay, were interviewed by THE WORKER. Their story is revealing because it shows the extent to which the dispute was distorted by the capitalist press.

Question: What is the background to the dispute?

Answer: Well if you read the papers you will hear that we are being offered 15 per cent. This is rubbish, in effect we are only being offered 4½ per cent for this year. Texaco's other 10½ per cent is a rise agreed to already in 1977 to be consolidated in November 1978 bringing our basic rate up to £75 per week. For the 1978/9 agreement they want us to accept a £78 per week basic rate which in effect is 4½ per cent. Do you know what I take home? About £67 per week. We are going to stay out till we get a living wage - we're holding out for a basic of £90 per week.

Q: What do you think of the settlement agreed to by other tanker drivers?

A: Well they have voted to go back to work for a basic of around £78 per week. Actually that isn't too bad for them because they get plenty of overtime and that can bump their wages up to around £120-140 per week, mind you who wants to do all the hours under the sun to get a living wage? We do not get the same overtime opportunities as other drivers. If we win our claim, they of course will benefit, their basic rate will go up immediately. The other drivers are not crossing our picket lines here.

Q: Callaghan said he would use troops to drive oil tankers. What was your reaction to this?

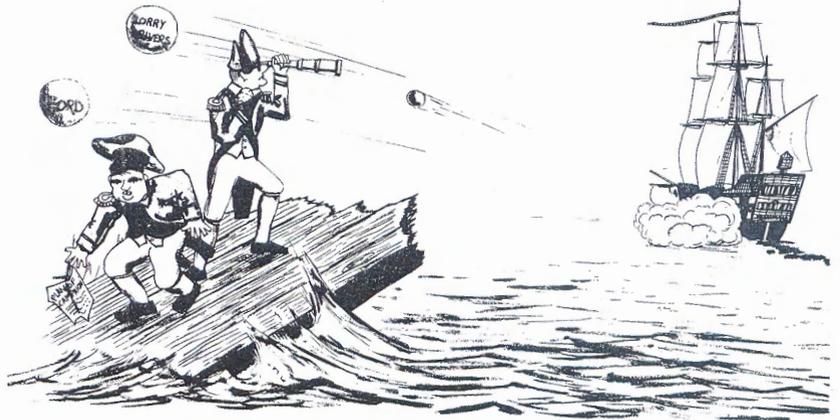
A: He said it to frighten us. There is no need anyway, we are allowing all essential supplies through, e.g. to hospitals, schools, firemen etc. - they won't be able to use that against us.

Q: What do you think of the 5 per cent?

A: Bloody disgusting - 5 per cent of nothing is nothing. Look at the profits the oil companies are making for example.

Q: Do you regard yourself as a special case for breaking the pay code?

A: No. Everyone has the right to a living wage - nurses, firemen, etc.



CRISIS? I CAN'T SEE ANY CRISIS

Hull milkmen fight over bad conditions

WHILE the media incite us to curse strikers (or worse) we should reflect a moment on an aspect of the present 'troubles' which hasn't been pointed out: that it's only when a section of workers stands up for itself and act that the rest of us learn just how bad most conditions of work are.

Though not headline news, how much do we take for granted the pinta on our doorstep even in the most atrocious weather?

In Hull, Northern Dairies milkmen have stood up and forced us to take notice. Since 10th January when a milkman slipped on ice and seriously hurt his back they have been on strike demanding a special

payment of £2 a day in snow, ice or other dangerous conditions. Working in snow or ice can add 15-20 hours per week to a milkman's job, but Northern Dairies milkmen get no overtime pay. At the same time rationalisation following the take over of Clover Dairies by ND has increased the average round from 400 calls three years ago to 600 today.

Management are refusing to talk about any extra payment. They say they might consider an 'ex-gratia' payment for long periods of heavy snow but consider the snow so far this year as normal!

Northern Dairies bosses are well known in Hull for their anti-union attitudes to their own workers. For well

over a year they resisted any special payment to their fork lift drivers, arguing that anyone could drive a fork lift. When the drivers turned in protest to humping by hand the managers who took over the 'simple task' littered the loading yard in spilt milk and smashed bottles!

The same 'superior' bosses' outlook underlies their attitude to the milkmen. They should be 'grateful' to charitable Northern Dairies for giving them a job in an area of high unemployment.

But the milkmen have refused to be taken for granted. In so doing they are taking their part in the general declaration of the working class that bad conditions, long endured, are no longer acceptable.

NUJ PAY ROUNDUP

STRIKING PROVINCIAL newspaper journalists have wrung a 14.5 per cent offer out of their employers association, the Newspaper Society.

But the strikers are refusing to consider the offer until the N.S. agrees to return jobs of 200 journalists and 100 printers sacked during the dispute.

The N.S. has so far refused a pledge of 'no victimization'. They demand instead that the NUJ agrees not to discipline any of its black-leg members following a return to work!

Last week the N.S. made an excuse to call off negotia-

tions with the NUJ so that they could first make their 14.5 per cent offer to the Institute of Journalists, which has not been on strike.

But journalists are not fooled by the employers' tactics. The offer was made only because NUJ members have been taking very effective industrial action.

14.5 per cent does not meet the striking journalists demands for a £20 a week increase. But their decision on whether to accept it will be based on an assessment of their own strength and determination at the time.

Journalists determined to win in Hull dispute

MEMBERS of the National Union of Journalists in Hull remain firm in the Union's battle for increased wages, despite disappointments on the picket line.

Before Christmas, picketing had effectively stopped newsprint reaching the HULL DAILY MAIL, with members of the Transport and General Workers Union observing the picket lines and refusing to cross.

However, the MAIL management overcame that problem by using non-union drivers and by management men supervising the unloading. A protest from the NUJ chapel to members of the NATSOPA Union inside the building met only limited response and production continued.

Despite this setback,

morale remains high with journalists determined to hold out for a reasonable offer. Their resolve has been doubled by the dishonourable way the Newspaper Society has acted during the dispute.

In an editorial in HULL NEWS, the newspaper being produced by the journalists while they are on strike, attention is drawn to the Society's statement to the Department of Employment, which was printed in most of the newspapers affiliated to the society, saying that only the Department prevented it from giving higher wages.

The editorial condemns the Society for failing to act on its own case once Department of Employment approval was no longer required.

Bristol NUJ

WITH the NUJ's provincial journalists entering their 6th week of strike action, Bristol members of the National Union of Journalists are more determined than ever to win their claim. The daily, THE EVENING POST, ceased to be published from Christmas week, leaving only the WESTERN DAILY PRESS in circulation, due to the work of management and non-NUJ staff.

Pickets are maintained on a 'round the clock' basis and despite the lack of strike pay, morale is described as being very high. As the stocks of print and paper become exhausted and the strike begins to 'gnaw' rather than bite, the NUJ are well prepared to enter a higher level of struggle should the employers continue to refuse to submit to their claim.

The advance in clarity, which has resulted from this national action, is very heartening. With the understanding that self-reliance is primary, the union has shrugged aside the apologists who claimed that NUJ members were too weak to strike. At the same time, Bristol journalists extend their gratitude to other unions, notably the NGA and TGWU, in helping them to deliver a hefty blow to the employer in their fight for a decent wage.

Bookshops

Bellman Bookshop 155 Fortress Road, London NW5

Main Trend Books 17 Midland Road, St. Philips, Bristol

Northern Star Bookshop 18A Leighton Street, Leeds

Brighton Workers Bookshop 37 Gloucester Road, Brighton

Hull Bookstall Old Town Market, Saturdays

Basildon Bookstall - Tues, Fri, Sat Marketplace

Liverpool Bookstall - every Thursday Liverpool University

The Worker

155 FORTRESS ROAD, LONDON NW5,
6 months £2.50 (including postage).
1 year £5.00 (including postage).

NAME

ADDRESS

Public Meetings

London

Jan. 26	The world in ferment-	Bellman Bookshop
Feb. 9	Pay policy smashed: What next?	Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, Holborn.

Feb. 23	Devolution and the EEC: whose benefit?	Conway Hall
Mar. 9	Out with the Labour Govt.	Bellman Bookshop

All meetings are at 7.30 p.m., venue as stated.

Oxford

Wed. 31st January	For an Industrial Revolution
Wed. 7th February	The Struggle for Health & Education
Wed. 14th February	Our Trade Unions, our decisions
Wed. 21st February	Seizing the Assets

All starting at 8.00 p.m., Cowley Community Centre