

THE WORKER



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FOR EXPORT TO U.S.A. - ONE REJECTED PAY POLICY

JIMMY CARTER hardly ranks as a spellbinder, either as President or as an orator. So when it was announced that his third 'anti-inflation' statement was to be one of the most important he would ever make, the pulse of America, or of world capitalism, scarcely fluttered. And when it had been made, despite quotations from Churchill, the effect was not one of confidence in the US economy, but a further tumble in the value of the dollar on world markets.

Carter's proposals include the destruction of 20 000 jobs, some flimsy proposals on prices and a 'voluntary' limit of 7 per cent on wage increases. In what he calls a Real Wage Insurance Plan the President is proposing that workers settling within the 7 per cent figure should get tax-rebates if inflation rises above that figure. Curiously reminiscent of Heath's discredited Stage 3 thresholds. In fact the whole package appears to be an amalgam of the various twists and turns of British Government Incomes Policies over the last few years, including Callaghan's sanctions against companies which are prepared to meet their workers' demands.

So far there has been no reaction from the AFL-CIO, the US labour organisation, but it is hardly a secret that millions of workers have already fallen well behind in the fight to maintain their living standards, and that unemployment is unpleasantly high. It seems that the first big test of Carter's policy will be the negotiations over the next two months of the Teamsters union with the trucking companies.

After selling out-of-date military technology to China, the British capitalists have sold Carter a pup - a pay policy which British workers have already shown to be useless.

Ford Negotiations



Reg Birch explaining to British Airways engineers at Heathrow last year that they could only improve their own pay and conditions by openly challenging the Government's pay policy. This year the action of 57 000 Ford workers has already blown Callaghan's 5 per cent limit sky high. It is no accident that this clarity and unity should have come in a section of the working class on whose behalf a Marxist-Leninist has negotiated for many years.

Ford employers have been forced to concede something in the order of a 13 to 14 per cent wage increase, but they are trying to save the Government's face and their own high profits by making part of the increase conditional on a work attendance scheme. This has been flatly rejected by union negotiators. On Tuesday October 31st, the Ford employers have another chance to face up to the new reality created by a labour movement determined to reject Government wage-fixing for collective bargaining.

Wage fight round-up

IF BLACK ROD'S tapping on the doors of the Commons is the only knock this Parliament gets, it will breathe a sigh of relief. A sigh of relief seems unlikely, a gasp for breath being more certain. If some Vauxhall workers are prepared to listen to the anti-working class appeals of an ex-public schoolboy, that large group of ex-public schoolboys in Parliament cannot expect the same respectful ear from workers in general.

This year Parliament's opening is overshadowed by negotiations at British Oxygen Gases Division, for the 3000 drivers, handlers and loaders have pressed the employer back from his original stance. Industrial action is possible but in any event the Government guidelines have been disregarded. In addition, 1600 white collar staff at BOC have been working to rule and have stopped overtime in attempting to bring their settlement date nearer.

TGWU negotiators, representing 5000 lorry drivers in Scotland, have rejected a 5 per cent pay increase from the employers. The Scottish region of the Road Haulage Association has been warned by negotiators that its silly offer will not do. Some road haulage companies have found themselves on the Government blacklist for conceding increases above last year's guidelines, and no doubt such blackmail worries some of them into offering 5 per cent. However, they should not forget the lengthy strike by thousands of Scottish drivers in 1974-75 which the workers won, nor the strikes in Wales and the West Midlands last year which licked a hole in Phase 3. This year's claim is for 20-30 per cent. A ridiculous 5 per cent offer has

got a bunch of fives in reply.

A leaf in the wind recently has been the warning from shop stewards in Yorkshire that power workers have no interest in Government pay guidelines. The EETPU General Secretary reiterated that warning. Although the pay claim is not due until the new year, sparks will fly if the Government tries to stand in the way.

Employers up against the National Union of Seamen have had no joy either. An offer that narrowly broke the Labour Government guidelines has been turned down. The 44,000 seamen involved want substantial pay increases, more leave and higher overtime rates, overtime being a necessary evil given the nature of their work. Union negotiators concerned about their members' living standards are not listening to claims from employers that they cannot afford it. Doesn't an employer always say that?

The capitalists traditional mouthpiece may be gagged. The employers of Fleet Street, so often admonishing employers elsewhere for bending under working class militancy, will soon be able to show their partners in crime how it should be done.

The AUEW, EETPU, NGA, NATSOPA, SLADE and SOGA negotiators representing 33,000 workers on the Street have presented a claim for 1 per cent plus other improvements. The Newspaper Publishers' Association will get the news - from the inside. The Fleet Street claim coincides with the publication of a book by the chairman of the NPA called 'Off The Rails'. It is about his years spent managing British Rail. Perhaps his next book will be titled 'Stop Press'.

More want troops out of Ireland

APPARENTLY capitalists in Britain and America are becoming increasingly worried by the gathering momentum of the campaign for "British Troops Out of Ireland". Mr. Airey Neave and members of the Conservative Party Northern Ireland Committee are to meet with Mr. Roy Mason, Secretary of State for N. Ireland.

Their main concern, so they say, is to press home to the "British public" the consequences of British troops being withdrawn. Mr. Neave and his advisers want a new opinion poll to put questions

about British withdrawal in a different way. The question to be put is: "Do you wish to deny British citizens their democratic rights and expel them from the United Kingdom?"

What a cheek they have talking about "Democratic Rights" when detention without charge for a specific crime and conviction in a court with no jury is practised.

All seven of the polls held since 1974 have shown more than half of all voters in favour of withdrawal. The British working class need not be fooled

by any number of re-phrased questions but should realize that Mr. Neave's stated concern that withdrawal would mean increasing bloodshed, is false crocodile tears and that it is British and American capital and the "threat to Britain's defences and Nato" that most concerns his type.

British workers continue to demand, through their trade unions, that British troops be withdrawn from Ireland so that the Irish working class can determine its own future.

Iranian people reject Shah's Tower of Babel

NOW that every capitalist has seen his heaven in Iran, and all rush to invest there, preceded by politicians anxious to kneel down before the Shah, British workers too must pause to think. Why is it, for example, that the Reed Group is closing its paper mills in Kent but is paying its skilled men to be foremen and technicians in Reed's new papermills in Iran?

On the wealth from oil, the Shah has built glorious monuments such as the Shahyad Tower to symbolise his "White Revolution". The visitor is transported inside on moving pavements, to be surrounded by an audio-visual display of military power, tanks and jet fighters, alternating with joyful

dancing peasants and oil workers gazing proudly into the sunset.

The Shah, who rules by the will of Allah, and has been saved from certain death several times by miraculous appearances of Mohammed's saints, is convinced his reign will see a rebirth of the Persian civilisation of ancient times. Officially, there is no unemployment in Iran now. If the workers will knuckle under, by 1985 every other family will own a car, and three million televisions a year will be produced. And that's official!

Meanwhile, students are clubbed to death, and striking workers shot down. Flats in the capital are so expensive to rent

that a man must do two jobs to survive. Tehran, in a high-risk earthquake zone, has been rebuilt of high-rise flats which will collapse like packs of cards. Speculators have cashed in on a city population which has nearly doubled, while farms are abandoned by peasants who can no longer make ends meet. The real source of wealth, skills and education of the people, is developed only superficially, and British universities are unwilling to accept the paper qualifications of Iranian students sent to study here.

In his role of saviour of mankind, the Shah emphasises that although Islamic in religion, the

Namibia

THE WEEK

THE RECENT negotiations about Namibia's future have proved once again that a British capitalist government is South Africa's best ally. The Labour Government is consciously handing over Namibia to the South African army, to supervise December elections, and fraudulently promises that the new Government will hold a free election later. No election can give the Namibian people their independence, especially under South African rule. Under the Labour Government's alternative scheme, Namibia would be handed over to a UN force.

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SIMITH'S military command proudly announced that it had killed 1500 black people deep in Zambia's borders. Hundreds more were bleeding to death "unattended in the bush", added a spokesman with relish. Smith was "very happy" with the results of his "cull". It had been planned for weeks to coincide with the return of Smith from the USA - as if to say "See how many blacks we'll kill if you don't support continued rule by the white majority." Dr David (my friend the Shah) Owen was quick to use the massacre to distribute arms to Zambia to strengthen neo-colonialism in the area, while not condemning Smith.

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THAT military defence is as much directed against internal subversion as against a hypothetical external enemy was shown in the role of the RAF in Ireland. They have regularly foiled tunnelling escapes from prisons there with aerial photography. The public, who are so often incensed at the danger to life posed by military aircraft, have just learnt from the reporting of an enquiry, that planes must fly over 200 yards from any spectators. How many schoolchildren have risked injury from the irresponsible antics of recruitment displays? Yet it took collision of a helicopter with a ship with royalty aboard for the current enquiry to take place.

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THE PRICE of milk has just gone up, again. The EEC has decreed it. If they can get people in Britain to drink as little of it as they do elsewhere, it will be easier to cut production and slaughter the herds. Their latest figures are that production is 15 per cent above "demand". One fifth of the price of a pint goes to the upkeep of the EEC bureaucracy, and the cost of maintaining a dried milk mountain.

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Kent fishermen are opposing a plan to remove 700,000 cubic metres of sand from the Goodwin Sands for a land refill scheme in Ramsgate Harbour because it will destroy fish beds and set up new tidal patterns.

In the same area, Tilmonstone Colliery may have to close because there is nowhere to dump the waste shale. If this happened 837 would lose their jobs. It would be possible to use the shale instead of the sand, but at a cost of 10p per cubic metre.

The Kent fishermen and miners must unite to see that sense rather than 'economics' prevail.

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AT THE time when the Israeli Cabinet has decided to strengthen Jewish settlements on the West Bank of the Jordan to tighten the Zionist grip on occupied territories, the bestowal on Begin of a Nobel peace prize must rank as one of the most ironic awards in history.

Socialist Albania celebrates Enver Hoxha's birthday

MARXIST-LENINISTS all over the world send warm fraternal greetings to Comrade Enver Hoxha on the occasion of his 70th birthday. Comrade Enver is the only living Communist leader who led his people to a great revolutionary victory over the fascist ravagers of Europe and Asia and has since presided over his country's consistent development of socialism on the basis of Marxism-Leninism.

At various times in Albania's recent glorious history Enver Hoxha's leadership has been crucial: in the armed struggle against the Italian and German forces of occupation; in the struggle against the Yugoslav revisionist attempt, with the collaboration of a few traitors in Albania, to transform Albania into a province of Yugoslavia; in the struggle against the plots of British and US imperialism to restore capitalism in Albania and make it a base for their control of the Mediterranean; in the struggle against the schemes of the Soviet revisionists to make Albania a tool of Russian imperialism, and, most recently, in the struggle against the new anti-Marxist regime in China which tried to use aid to Albania as a lever for forcing the Albanians to connive at their betrayal of world socialism.

From his youth Enver Hoxha has shown his love and concern for the working people and his understanding of how they could achieve by their own efforts their liberation from exploitation. He was born in southern Albania, on October 16, 1908, in Gjirokastra, a romantic old city on the lower slopes of the Mali i Gjere which clusters about a majestic fortress looking out over the valley of the Vjosë River. It was also the birthplace of the brothers, Brano and Cerciz Topulli, who played a heroic part in defeating the Ottoman troops and liberating Albania from Turkish rule.

After finishing secondary school in Korca and coming in contact with the communists there, Enver Hoxha spent six years studying and working in France and Belgium. He contributed articles denouncing Zog's regime in Albania to the French communist press and, subsequently, Zog's agents in Europe got him dismissed from a post in the Albanian Consulate in Brussels.

He returned home in 1936, a convinced communist, and pledged at the grave of Bajo Topulli that he and all young Albanians would fight for a free and unified country. He taught for a time at the state school in Tirana and then at the state school in Korca where he played an active part in the communist group there. Sacked in 1939 by the Zog regime which was collaborating with the Italian fascists, he went to Tirana where he was charged with the responsibility of organising the anti-fascist movement in the capital and surrounding districts.

His position as organiser of the Tirana branch of the Korca group was useful in bringing about the unity of the communist movement which was the only force potentially qualified to lead the liberation struggle. He made contact with two young activists of the Shkodra group, Qemal Stafa and Vasil Shanto, who shared his views and were prepared to work with him to pull the movement together. This was very necessary because Trotskyists and anarchists were characteristically spreading such absurd ideas among the youth as the impossibility of forming a communist party at all since there were not enough industrial workers and too many peasants, or the possibility of joining fascist organisations in order to fight the enemy from within.

Enver Hoxha was not calling for a federation of the various communist groups but for their complete fusion into one party, and he realised this could not be achieved simply by the groups agreeing to shed their peculiar views nor even by the general acceptance in the abstract of a Marxist-Leninist programme. Common revolutionary action against the fascist enemy would do more than any amount of theoretical discussion to weld all professing communists into a unified fraternal force.

In applying this understanding Enver Hoxha personally led a great patriotic demonstration at Tirana in front of the office of the quisling prime minister on October 28, 1941. The communists were involved in fiercely contested street battles with the Italian fascist police, and the need to fight and defend each other without regard to who belonged to what group was the best possible preparation for the convention of communists called for the first week in November. As a result of the demonstration a sentence of death was passed by fascists on Enver Hoxha "in absentia."

The meeting held in Tirana under the closest security arrangements from the 8th to the 14th of November was attended by 15 communists. The decision was taken to disband the three groups and form the Albanian Communist Party on the basis of Marxism-Leninism. A programme was adopted in the form of a resolution setting out the tasks of the new party (later to be called the Party of Labour of Albania). This resolution described the political task of the Communist Party as the mobilisation of the popular masses of Albania in the armed struggle against the fascist invaders and their collaborators for the national independence of the country. It was explained



that this mobilisation of workers and peasants had the aim not only of liberating Albania but after Independence was won, of ending the rule of businessmen and landlords and establishing popular democratic rule.

Enver Hoxha's whole life has been dedicated to those aims set out at the foundation of the Party, as whose head he has served for 37 years. It gives us great pleasure and pride to salute Comrade Enver on his 70th birthday and to wish him a long life to continue to enjoy the love and respect felt for him by socialists everywhere.

EDITORIAL

MUCH attention is being focussed on talks which have been taking place between representatives of the TUC Economic Committee, the Nedd Six, and the Prime Minister and other members of the Government. There is reference to pay talks, talks about an agreement on pay. One thing should be made clear - these talks can be about a lot of things, but they cannot be about pay. Composite 12 placed a firm instruction before the General Council - not to enter into or accept any wages policy either statutory or voluntary.

Why talk to the Government at all one might ask? Well, because like the employers, they are there.

There are plenty of things to talk about. Healey, stuff your 5 per cent - and your wage controls - drop the sanctions on companies who pay more than 5 per cent - what about unemployment - what about public expenditure on health and education - what about your so-called economic strategy? These are some of the main issues which Congress has charged the General Council to pursue with the Government and to report back next year.

But of course it doesn't take much to guess what those opposed to the new Congress line want. Some sort of agreement or joint TUC/Government statement which can be pulled together - if not for the Queen's speech, then for the forthcoming general election. A face saver maybe? Or something more sinister? What Callaghan and Healey will be saying is how do we continue to control inflation? (For inflation, read 'the trade union movement' and you have it more exactly.)

And what other items will be thrown into the No. 10 melting pot? Low pay, a statutory minimum wage - beware of all the false militancy being expressed on this one. The £6 policy was based on setting those who had won through struggle against those who had yet to get off their knees. It can happen again.

Fair play' on pay negotiations in the public sector - fine if you mean "Healey, lay off with your cash limits policy". But is that really what would be involved in an understanding with Government? More like some corporate pay machinery which would be even more difficult for public sector workers to break through than at present.

Then there are prices - new laws to control price rises? A revamping of the Price Commission? Surely the least effective of all the semi-government bodies erected by the present Government and one in which the trade unions have practically no influence whatsoever and in which larger representation would serve no useful purpose.

So the list goes on - involvement of TUC in monitoring economic developments and so forth. But whatever the virtues of the various arguments, one thing our movement has said quite clearly and must continue to understand - we are not going to have another sordid arrangement where empty commitments on aspects of trade union policy are the basis for yet another period of wage control whether in the form of 5 per cent or guidelines on responsible collective bargaining. Only trade unions can decide how they will discharge their collective responsibility.

Another thing which needs to be understood and guarded against is that it is not up to a few members of the TUC Economic Committee of whatever view with regard to Composite 12, to cobble together an 'agreement' with the Government to gild the lily of a Labour Party Election Campaign. Like all representatives of the TUC they are responsible to the General Council who in turn have their responsibilities both to Congress and their own unions. No hotch potch of half truths and deceptions dressed up as an agreement on pay restraint shall be foisted on the General Council as a decision simply to be rubber stamped. They have the responsibility to decide democratically in light of Congress policy - which this time was hard won and is not just guidance but 'firm instruction'.

But more important are the expectations of our movement who are now on the march asserting their basic rights to bargain with the employers about the one price over which we have any influence: the price of labour. This is where the policy of our movement will really be decided. In the coming months all workers including the General Council and all in positions of stewardship must think carefully about the contribution which they are going to make.

Wildlife environment upset by backwoodsmen

"MILITARY training and a national park are discordant, incongruous and inconsistent..." it was stated in the 1975 enquiry into Dartmoor. Yet massive damage is being done: heavy cratering by artillery and mortar fire (in excess of 50 holes per acre in some areas), the shattering of many ancient monuments, danger to the public, and the denaturing of wild landscape.

The National Trust, one of Dartmoor's landowners, and others, are not prepared to see this continue and have either refused to renew their licences to the MoD or have cut them

down to yearly renewal. Not so the Prince of Wales's Duchy Council, which owns most of the live-firing areas on the moor. Disregarding all protest and doubtless under heavy pressure from MoD, the Prince's Council renewed its licence for another seven years.

Despite all pressures the MoD has lately announced that not only will they continue on Dartmoor but that ranges will be extended!

Are we now to be denied use of our National Parks in the cause of training troops for British Imperialism?

Keep schools open as rolls fall - Hull

EARLIER this year the NUT's National Executive asked the Union's local Associations to set up working parties to examine the consequences for schools and education of the decline in child population in the 1980's.

Hull NUT saw this task as of crucial importance, and in its recent report to the Executive, the Association makes it quite clear what it believes the Union's attitude must be: "Use falling rolls to reduce class size and improve educational provision for all pupils".

With Hull's school population falling by 13½ per cent by 1982, maximum class sizes in primaries can be reduced to 25 (the NUT's recommended figure at present is 32). As the fall in numbers works its way up the age range, class size in Hull's middle schools can be cut to 25 by 1984, and in senior highs by 1986. These improvements depend on staff numbers being kept at their present level in every school.

As for the future of individual schools as their rolls fall, the report firmly rejects the idea of closure. A recent NUT survey of Hull schools showed that many buildings are overcrowded. Primary schools in particular have long suffered from the peculiar logic that the smaller the child, the less space it needs. Who can gauge the psychological effects on children of inadequate room to move and express themselves? Now, falling rolls provide the opportunity of extra space per child, but only if all schools remain open and all classrooms remain in use - for play space, work room, reading room etc."

But surely a school needs to

contain a certain minimum of pupils to be 'viable'? No, says Hull's report. "Education is not limited by pupil numbers but by the input of resources, both human and material. Adequate coverage of subjects depends on the number of teachers, not the number of pupils". So, as rolls fall, class sizes get smaller and children get better specialist teaching and a fuller curriculum. "The whole debate boils down to one question: How much do we value the future generation?"

But won't parents' choice suffer if some schools lose pupils much faster than others? Precisely, says the report, and therefore calls for a balanced reduction in intakes in each school, to enable all schools to benefit from the opportunities provided by falling rolls. As class sizes are cut, educational standards will rise, whereas, to close a school is "the most extreme reduction in parental choice".

Wouldn't the solution to falling rolls in primaries be to use the extra space for expanding badly needed nursery provision? The report is clear on this one too. Of course, we want more nurseries, but not 'on the cheap'. They have their own specific requirements, while the primaries need the 'extra' space and teachers in their own right.

At the other end of the scale, the report says that senior schools must fight to keep their sixth forms and not be taken in by reactionary arguments that sixth forms must be 'viable' on the basis of some arbitrary minimum number in each class. Falling rolls in fact provide the opportunity for greater individual attention at sixth form

level. Any cutting back on its sixth form is a first step to destroying a fully comprehensive secondary school.

Looking at the question of teacher training, the report points out that "a constant and undiminished supply of newly qualified teachers will be required to maintain staffing establishments. Further cutback in teaching training would sabotage the positive use of falling rolls".

Finally, the report looks to the future. Will the current upturn in the birthrate become a long term trend? Will, as the DES demographers now suggest is possible, the school population in 1996 be as high as the peak year of 1977? Who knows? If it is, then even keeping all the teachers and schools we have now won't be enough if we want real improvement. Whatever the case, Hull's report says that if the Education Authority closes schools and reduces teachers through the 1980s, they will be using falling rolls as "no more than an excuse for cuts".

The NUT cannot and must not tolerate this. The question is, after all, simply, 'How much do we value our children?', a simple question of humanity.

Hull's plan will now go to Humberside Division NUT, and to the Education Authority. If, as they say, they are so concerned about standards, even our employers surely cannot miss such a golden opportunity for improvement? For, as every teacher knows, 'the most effective way to improve educational standards is to have smaller classes'. Smaller classes learn more!

Manpower Services liquidates jobs

WHILE Government spokesmen crow over the recent fall in unemployment figures, delegates to Bristol Trades Union Council will have no illusions about how this apparent reduction has been achieved. In a debate about the detrimental effect that Manpower Services Commission schemes have upon the education system, many delegates described their own experiences of the ways in which TOPS, YOPS, Work Experience and Job Creation Schemes, etc., are being used to remove people temporarily from the unemployment register, and permanently cheapen the skills of the working class, undermining the trade unions in the process.

MSC courses at the local colleges are being run by those who have no teaching qualifications,

and whose pay and conditions are worse than the lecturers of the regular courses. These short courses can give only the barest understanding of skills which take much longer to acquire adequately.

Young people on Job Creation Schemes provide a continuous stream of free labour to employers who gleefully accept them when the government pays the £19.50 per week that they cost.

The motion under discussion was "This Trades Council firmly upholds the NUT view that 'we should look at the 14-19 age range as a unit and cater for the varied educational needs of the whole group rather than concentrating on devising remedial measures for unemployed youngsters. In accordance with this, we condemn

the activities of the MSC and its agencies, where they threaten the maintenance and development of regular educational facilities, especially at a time when these are being undermined by public spending cuts."

A few voices were raised in support of the Commission and an effort was made to remit the motion on the grounds that it was confusing, but delegates showed how clearly they understood the situation by passing it overwhelmingly.

It is now their responsibility to take the motion back to their branches and discuss its implications, since it is for them to remove the only thing that has given the MSC any credence -- the support of the Trade Union movement.

Britain sells arms to world reaction

THE RECENT Chinese announcement that future trading relations with the capitalist countries are to be based on their willingness to supply high technology armaments, should make Britain's role in any possible trading partnership abundantly clear. Earnings from British arms sales have risen from £500 million in 1975 to over £1000 million this year and many reckon it to be one of the most important sectors of the British economy. With the growth of defence electronics, such household names as GEC-Marconi, EMI, Decca, and Plessey, not surprisingly, are reluctant to

disclose the exact contribution of these activities in their balance sheets. The "anti-terrorist" technology developed on the streets of Northern Ireland comes in for special praise.

While the Labour Government makes hypocritical noises about "restraint" in arms sales, a department of the Ministry of Defence - the Defence Sales Organisation - (set up by the Labour Government in the late sixties) is busily equipping "floating supermarkets" with the best of Britain's weaponry and sending them off in search of customers, to such countries as Nigeria, Brazil, Colombia

and Tunisia, whose governments maintain a tenuous hold on arbitrary power by spending more on "defence" than on education and health combined.

Britain is only one of a number of countries involved in this frantic search for customers and the activities of the USSR and the USA who account for 70 per cent of the arms traffic show the recent negotiations for strategic arms limitation in true perspective. The only force for peace in the world is the working class and only revolutionary development will spike the guns of the merchants of death.

Oil pollutes beaches

THE most recent case of an oil tanker coming a cropper and spilling its contents into the surrounding sea with resulting damage and destruction to the environment raises a number of questions. These questions are always present, and always go unanswered by the political pundits in the capitalist press. For instance, how is it that we are capable of organising our skills to such a degree that we can ferry men to the moon and yet we appear to be incapable of designing an oil tanker that is fit to meet any more than the most minimal safety requirements?

The sea is fraught with dangers for ships of any size. The bigger the ship, the more likely, one might think, that it will run into problems. A tanker like the Amoco Cadiz carrying 230,000 tons of oil ran into just such a problem and dispersed its cargo into the sea bringing with it the devastation to wild life and people's livelihoods that each spillage causes.

The most recent case, that of the Christos Bitas off the Welsh coast, brought a response from the Commons Select Committee on Science and Technology that disasters of this kind are likely to become increasingly frequent, that this had to be accepted as a "fact" of life, and that Britain must

spend far more than the present amount on preparing contingency plans in advance.

The emphasis therefore will not be on how to prevent such disasters occurring, but rather what to do after they have actually done their damage. Although huge amounts of capital are sunk into the oil industry due to the oil monopolies' need for ever higher returns, any saving that they can make they will implement. This means that the transportation of oil is going to be done on the cheap no matter the resulting cost to the people and their environment, or to the workers on the tankers themselves.

The rational solution is obviously to build tankers that are designed to transport oil with the maximum safety. This might even mean, dare we say it, smaller tankers. The monopolies seek to get the largest amount of oil from one place to the next in the shortest possible time, for this means lower production costs and therefore more profit.

Unlike the Commons Select Committee, we should not be wasting our time chasing after the proverbial horse that has bolted. If we are concerned at all for the future we have no choice but to get hold of the key to the stable.

NHS PLAN TO STOP STRIKE

A PLAN to set up panels of peacemakers in each health region was proposed in a government document published this week. It is intended that the teams would stop local disputes provoking industrial action.

Mr Ennals said he deplored any action that put patients at risk and the new procedures were an attempt to fill a gap in the NHS, which did not have the right machinery to deal with many staff difficulties!

The "peacemaking" team would consist of three representatives of the employers and three of the trade unionists. These three union officers would not, however, be directly involved in the dispute, although the management members would be drawn from the health authority involved.

This is another attempt to dilute the power of the union to negotiate on its members' behalf and as such should be rejected.

In the end, should the panel be unable to agree or should either party not accept the decision, the dispute would then be referred to the Advisory Conciliation and Arbitration Service - another body which attempts to destroy union sovereignty.

Victory for supervisors

HOSPITAL works supervisors by their industrial action have forced the local health authorities to accede to their claim. They have been granted a 15 per cent increase even though it has been hedged about with some face-saving conditions.

It was the Labour Government wage policy which prevented a settlement of this dispute many weeks ago while they tried to blame the consequences of their Health Service cuts and wage restraint on workers.

'For God's sake go back to work and stop playing with peoples' lives' declared a distraught Mr Ennals at one stage of negotiations with the five unions involved. He went on to accuse these workers of being to blame for peoples' death and of causing untold misery to thousands of people both in hospital and forced onto waiting lists. Such an accusation is slanderous and should not be tolerated. The accusation is all the more appalling when it comes from such a person - the so-called minister of health.

Mr Ennals' activities in this capacity would take pages to chronicle and would warrant the death penalty in any society truly interested in peoples' lives. The pages of THE WORKER have long carried articles on

hospital closures, of attacks on nursing and other medical skills, of old people being shunted from place to place, of medical research being cut to a minimum, of nurses and doctors joining dole queues and of the appalling conditions that exist in our hospitals up and down the country, despite the valiant efforts of health service workers.

Hypocrisy seems to be the by-word of this Labour Government. While they claim to care about peoples' lives they publicly applaud the fascist regimes around the world and close hospitals as fast as they can at home. It is only the efforts of workers, much like the workers being accused of murder in this present dispute, that prevents them closing them as fast as they would like in the interests of an economic system on its knees.

The real reason why Mr Ennals is not prepared to see that people do not die as a result of this dispute is that to 'give in' to the just demands of these workers, in his own words, would mean that the government pay policy 'would go out of the window'. What a terrible thing that would be. Workers have to die in sick health service and other workers accused of their murder - all in order to make Labour's economic policy work.

NATFHE : false situation on claim

MEMBERS of the National Association of Teachers in Further and Higher Education must consider very carefully the next step in their salary and restructuring claim. For the last four months NATFHE members have been engaged in pursuing an interim claim for the merger of the two lowest grades, Lecturer grade 1 and grade 11, which was lodged following a conference decision last May. Action to support the interim claim has been very timid. The lesson of initiative at the place of work has yet to be learned. The enthusiasm and support for the claim was allowed to be dissipated. The National Council which was to lead the struggle drew back at the last minute. The members, having set their sights on a lead from that body stood by astounded. The ingr-

edients for 'Executive bashing' are all there to further dissipate the energies of the union.

In spite of all that, the actions, as limited as they have been, and the discussions throughout the union, have created a situation for advance in the future, especially with the next salary claim so near.

At the meeting of the Burnham Committee, the management panel delivered what amounts to a total rejection of the interim claim. Not entirely unexpected considering the lack of local initiative at college and regional level. The interim claim has been taken as far as it is likely to go. It must not turn into a fetish to distract the union from its other tasks. The reason for submitting an interim claim was clear and was outlined at the last National Conference of NATFHE. The

inclusion of the merger of the two grades within the main annual claim has in previous years raised the divisive question of whether the merger should be treated as a priority at the expense of other parts of the claim. It thus threatened to divide the membership which includes all those who in work in further and higher education.

Hence the interim claim. To take the issue out of the salary package and fight for it between the annual salary claims. With the main salary claim now only weeks away insistence upon the interim claim would defeat its specific intention.

It must now be postponed lest it turns into its opposite, a claim to unite the members into a divisive one that threatens to destroy the unity of the union. Above all it must not become a stick to beat the union with.



Ford workers demonstrating their determination to maintain their industrial action until their claim is met irrespective of the limits the government is trying to fix. Photo: John Butler

Worker Interview

WORKERS at the Economist Bookshop have been operating an overtime ban and lightning one-day and half-day strikes since the beginning of October in a fight for union recognition. The Worker interviewed them on their highly successful picket line.

Question: What are your demands?

Answer: We are fighting for recognition of our union, ACTS. The low level of organisation of workers in shops and unemployment have been used by the employers to keep wages down. Organisation in trade union and the recognition by management of our right to negotiate on pay and conditions are vital for us. We are also demanding a basic rate of £3,000 per annum, four weeks holiday a year and a proper job structure.

Q: How effective has your action been so far?

A: Very effective. Sales have been cut by two-thirds at the busiest time of the year for academic bookshops. However, the management has not yet responded in any serious way to our demands.

Q: What about support from other unions?

A: All the unions at the LSE are supporting us: TGWU, NALGO, EETPU. Also all the major deliveries have stopped delivering.

Q: How do you feel about the outcome of the strike?

A: We are united and determined to win recognition. The employer will be forced to understand that and negotiate.

Bookshops

Bellman Bookshop, 155 Fortress Road, London NW5
 Main Trend Books, 17 Midland Road, St. Philips, Bristol
 Brighton Workers Bookshop, 37 Gloucester Road, Brighton
 Northern Star Bookshop, 18A Leighton Street, Leeds
 Basildon bookstall Tues Fri Sat Marketplace
 Liverpool bookstall - every Saturday at Paddies Market, Great Homer Street, Liverpool
 Hull Bookstall - Old Town Market, Saturdays 9.30-4.00



Public Meeting

The autumn series of public meetings held in London and organised by the Communist Party of Britain (Marxist-Leninist) will be continued.

Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, Holborn, November 3rd, 7.30 p.m.:

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