

The Worker



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New Year 1979, as workers struggle at home and abroad, **CAPITALISM CALLS IN THE TROOPS**

AS the Iranian troops, armed with British weapons, shoot demonstrators to break the nationwide strikes in the oil industry, civil service and others, British troops are undergoing training to break the threatened oil-tanker drivers' strike. The troops in Iran have not helped the Shah, neither will the British troops succeed in their strike-breaking task.

It is clear that the Labour Government considers the use of the troops as a legitimate weapon in fighting strikes. It is becoming a matter of course that the troops will be used in industrial disputes. But there must be no acquiescence by the trade union movement. The planning for military intervention is organised by a high-powered ad hoc Committee of Senior Ministers including the Minister of Defence. Defence against what? For Britain has not been invaded by a foreign enemy.

Since the General Strike, successive governments have established a special contingency committee staffed with high ranking civil servants and cabinet ministers to prepare for industrial and civil strife. Capitalism has always lived under the shadow of unrest and revolution and has prepared for it with a large police force and a massive army, airforce and navy.

But the use of troops is the ultimate weapon of any government. That this "trump" card should be used so often in recent years is a further indication of the weakness of the capitalist state and its government. If that failed, what would the Labour Government do? Would they ask, as the Shah did, for US destroyers to anchor off the shores of Britain.

The Government has for long declared war on the working class. It is time we declared war on the war makers.

NUJ FIGHTS ON

AS THE print bosses returned to their strike-bound offices and plants after Christmas, their feelings towards the striking provincial journalists must have been less than seasonal. For the month-old strike by members of the National Union of Journalists employed on daily and weekly provincial papers has been biting deep into their profits.

The employers' festive spirit has already been in evidence. Members of SOGAT at

the Surrey Mirror group were sacked a few days before Xmas after having refused to cross NUI picket lines. At Uxbridge, NATSOPA members blacked newspaper brought through the lines by non-union labour. They were sacked - at nine minutes' notice. Every striking NUI member at the Nottingham Evening Post has been sacked. The police, too, have been active - many

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British troops are as much involved in the defence of Britain as the Iranian troops in the defence of Iran. Picture shows British troops strike breaking during the dustmen's strike in 1970. Picture by P.A.

WORKERS DEFEND EUROPEAN STEEL

THE steel town of Longwy, in Lorraine, has been blocked off by demonstrations of French workers protesting against the record unemployment of nearly one and a half million. The EEC cutback of steel production has made its contribution to this high unemployment figure, hence the concentration of protests by trade unionists in a three-day isolation of this French steel centre.

In West Germany, the steel strike, the first for fifty years, is in its fifth week and the 80 000 workers who, as the employers thought, would be forced back to work by the prospect of a lean Christmas, show no sign of ending their industrial action. Indeed, they will soon be joined by another three plants in addition to the 13 already closed. The steel companies are losing £4 million a day and steel stocks are so low that the motor car industries, BMW, Daimler Benz, Volkswagen, Ford and Opel are about to go onto short-time working.

In Britain, where 17 000 steel jobs were lost last year, a battle is brewing up over the threatened closure of the Bilston plant in the West Midlands. After being saved by the threat of a national strike by the Iron and Steel Trades Confederation, Bilston is again being put forward for destruction by BSC. A trade union action committee has been set up to fight closure.

In France, West Germany and Britain steel workers are learning just what the EEC

really is - not a grouping of countries for mutual economic benefits but a grouping of capitalists to weaken the organised working class in their respective countries by attacking the their strongest base, the heavy industrial core.

Nor is the situation going to get any better. The European Centre for Applied Economic Research in Basle predicts that the unemployment figure for Western Europe at the end of the next decade will be over 12 million. And as far as the immediate prospects for steel are concerned, even higher losses are expected and European steel makers are planning even more severe cutbacks. Last year Britain produced its lowest steel output since nationalisation.

In so far as there is resistance by the workers of the Common Market countries, there is a growing basis for genuine European internationalism - the co-operation of organised workers supporting each other to defeat their common capitalist class enemy. The fight against the world capitalist system, of which the EEC is only one inter-linked part, will take the form of workers withdrawing from capitalist military and economic combines, which are all anti-working class in intent, to rebuild a firm national socialist base in their own countries. Then a genuine internationalism on socialist principles, the only foundation for peaceful relations between countries, can be established.

NEW LOOK 'WORKER'

WE PRESENT to Our Fellow Workers a New-LOOK WORKER.

WHILE the capitalist press has had a bad year, with many issues lost through industrial action and THE TIMES disappearing altogether, the newspaper of the working class, THE WORKER, begins 1979 stronger than ever. This is a reflection of the fact that the organised workers of Britain themselves begin the year stronger than ever, having administered a resounding defeat to the capitalist Government over pay.

THE WORKER began regular publication on January 1st, 1969, first as a monthly, then, for the last 18 months as a weekly. In some 225 issues are to be found the history of the British working class over a crucial decade. It was a period of increasing working class political consciousness and of a weakening of the hold of social democracy on the minds of workers.

With an improved weekly WORKER as the chronicle of our advances, we begin the new year in the company of the oldest and best organised working class in the world, confident that our struggles will take us ever closer to a peaceful socialist Britain from which the exploitation of man by man has been eliminated.

Join us in this great mission by subscribing to THE WORKER; by contributing to our letter column and writing about your struggles; by making THE WORKER available to your workmates. A happy and victorious 1979!

Historic Notes LOLLARDS - NEW OUTLOOK

The Week

"ALL wars are against the principles of the New Testament and are but the murdering and plundering for the glory of Kings." "Many of the trades of the commonwealth, such as goldsmiths and armourers, are unnecessary and wasteful." "The property of the Church should be distributed to the poor and the clergy should

keep to their vow of poverty."

These were some of the conclusions reached by the Lollard movement in 1395. Conclusions which ensured that they would be suppressed as subversives.

The Lollards, or 'mumblers' had emerged at the same time as the Peasants' Revolt in 1381, although the links between the

two movements were not direct, for the Lollard movement started from the centre of the British theological establishment - Oxford University.

John Wycliffe, a fellow at Oxford, had risen to influence as a hireling to the crown in its attempts to resist the power of Rome abroad, and the Church

within. This humourless, pedantic scholar was paid to use theology against the theologians, and in doing so found himself arguing against Church and monarchy; and ordered to 'shut up or else'.

But already his attacks on the corruption of the Church and clergy, on the mysticism of doctrines like 'transubstantiation', and the elitism of the Church had been taken up by others in the 'lower orders'. They were especially attracted to the argument that "All Christians and lay lords in particular, ought to know holy writ and defend it." For the first time the content of the Bible was translated into English and ordinary men and women could 'learn the words of the Gospel according to their simplicity'. The Church could no longer claim the authority to tell people what to think and do, and the grip of the authorities on the minds of the 'masses' would never be the same again.

The Lollard movement was more than just a religious sect. It was a fight for the right to literacy. Men and women risked heavy punishments merely for reading, writing and worshipping in their own language. In that sense, too, it was a nationalist movement. And more important, it was a movement for intellectual independence - for these blacksmiths, carpenters, ploughmen and weavers interpreted their bible in a very different way from their 'superiors'.

Surprise, surprise. Pope and King suddenly forgot their quarrel and agreed on the one thing that all ruling classes have in common: that such heresy infecting the lower orders should be suppressed, so that, in the King's words, "There may not one spark remain hid under the ashes, but that it be utterly extinguished and speedily put out." The history of Britain ever since has shown the vanity of that hope.

The introduction of the death penalty by burning for Lollardy could not persuade men and women to stop thinking their own thoughts. Bibles and tracts in English rather than Latin were smuggled out of London around the country. Literacy classes were held in conjunction with collective bible readings and discussions held in back rooms, kitchens, windswept fields... in secret. Organisation and communication between different groups was maintained - the only reason we know of the Lollards at all is because of the prosecution brought about by those who betrayed. But nevertheless, this did not stop discussions with the kindred Hussite movement in Bohemia, nor the organisation of an abortive uprising in 1413.

One rebellion, scores of executions, and over a hundred years later the tradition of democratic debate, learning, organisation and independence of mind in opposition to the state was still thriving with the Lollardy movement.

A GREATER danger to EEC governments than their Christmas disunity over farm policy is industrial unrest - not just in Britain. The Spanish government, seeking entry to the EEC, must impose its 11-14 per cent wage limit by decree, as agreement with the unions cannot be reached. In France, the Barre plan for restraint is under attack from many quarters, while in Holland the two largest unions are pressing, as in Germany, for a 35 hour week. In Italy, not only did the opposition force the government to delay entry into the EMS, but the Engineering and Metalworkers Union has just decided to press for substantial wage increases.



An anti-terrorist squad equipped with light machine guns and unmarked cars is operated by the Metropolitan police, 5000 of whose officers may be carrying guns at any one time, it has been reported. Will the increase of weaponry be any more successful in combating terrorism than 17,000 troops in Ireland? Hardly. Any sane person must wonder why it is apparently so much easier now for criminals to obtain weapons and explosives than before.



HARLAND and Wolff, the Belfast shipyard, is faced with over a thousand claims against it for industrial deafness. Damages in the first seven cases awarded by the courts have averaged £10,000 each. Contrast the firm's scrooge-like lack of concern for its workers with the payment of £200,000 to the Danish ex-director, I. Hoppe, to compensate him for the loss of his job.



FORD workers' militancy last year does not appear to have carried over to British Leyland. A secret ballot was agreed, and a majority accepted a paltry wage increase which virtually denies any improvement to the highest paid factories. An acquiescence to the employer which is the first step to accepting the company's demand for 7000 redundancies in the coming year.



NGUGE wa Thiong'o, the author of the excellent novel about independent Kenya, 'Petals of Blood', has been released from detention. Ironically, this world-famous writer, who in plays like 'The Trial of Dedan Kimathi' had told about the role of the Mau Mau in liberating Kenya, was gaoled by the Kenyatta government for a play about social injustice in present day Kenya.

Imperialist rule shaken by uprisings in Iran and Turkey

AS THE reign of terror by the Shah approaches its end another cornerstone of imperialist military strategy in the Middle East under threat of insurrection. This of course is none other than another member of the CENTO pact, Turkey. Martial law was declared and troops are sent into the streets.

While the Shah prepares to flee the country (the millions he stole are already in Swiss banks) the US in an open attempt to intimidate the people of Iran have ordered their Seventh Fleet, aircraft carrier and support craft, to sail to the Indian Ocean,

A number of US destroyers are already stationed in the Gulf. The Soviet Union complements the US gunboat tactics by insisting that any US intervention would be matched by Soviet action. The so-called rivalry is quickly transformed into collusion when faced with revolution.

The people of Iran are supposed to shrink at the thought of these 'super' powers fighting for their spheres of influence and economic exploitation on the soil of Iran. Those who were not frightened by the prisons of the Shah, the torture of the Savak, the tanks, the paid gangs ram-

pageing in the streets killing indiscriminately, will not be intimidated by imperialist powers who have as much trouble at home as abroad.

The outcome of the unrest in Turkey remains to be seen. In Iran, however, the Shah who prepares to go 'into exile' hopes to repeat 1953 and make a come back by courtesy of the US and Britain. Only fools allow history to repeat itself and the people of Iran are no fools. They will settle for nothing less than a democratic republic whether Carter and Brezhnev like it or not.



Young Turkish demonstrators being subjected to brutal repression.

NO LIMITS TO ARMS RACE

FOR SEVERAL years now the USA and USSR have been conducting, within the framework of the farcical SALT talks, discussions which are purported to have eliminated the possibility of war in outer space. However, the facts clearly show that outer space is being rapidly transformed into a massive military parade ground.

At this time the United States has more than 2000 military satellites in orbit, and recently the Soviet Union launched missile no. 1100 in the Cosmos series. But this is not the whole picture, for there are many other military satellites of different types, and about 10,000 of these have been launched by one or other country over the last few years. There are currently about 20 satellites in orbit engaged simply in spying on the main shipping lanes of the oceans. No one is fooled by their protestations that these satellites are allegedly being used for meteorological, oceanographical or geographical purposes.

Even now, in so-called 'peace time', dangers are posed by these satellites, because many

of them contain nuclear reactors and every few years a potential catastrophe occurs when one of these objects crashes to the earth because of some defect or other. Examples of this are the Russian Cosmos 954 which crashed on Canadian territory in January 1978, the American nuclear satellite which crashed over the Indian Ocean in April 1964, letting off dangerous nuclear substances, and the American nuclear spaceship which plunged into the Santa Barbara Channel in 1969.

Now the Americans have admitted that one of their Skylabs will break up and hit the earth some time after mid-1979. But don't worry - the chances of anyone being killed by a piece of this flotsam from outer space are 'only' 150 to 1: the chances of it killing you are 150 times the population of the world to 1. You can be fairly certain, a NASA spokesman has assured us, that it will kill somebody else.

Just what will eventually emerge from the interstellar deliberations between the USA and the USSR remains to be seen.

But if the results are anything like those now emerging from the more down to earth parts of the SALT negotiations, then the elimination of war in outer space will require a massive arms race. For that, it is now becoming clear, is what Strategic Arms Limitation is all about.

The recent SALT talks in Geneva focussed on missiles. The idea is not to limit the amount of missiles already in existence, but to 'limit' their future growth. This is especially the case with the so-called multiple warhead missiles. Once one of these rockets is in the air and flying towards a country, it then launches 5, 6 or more separate missiles, each capable of wiping out the population of a fair-sized city. The limits, of course, enable all-out production to take place for years to come.

Anyone with a sense of history will remember the Anglo-German Naval Treaty which similarly 'limited' the number of Dreadnought battleships each navy could have prior to World War One. Such is 'detente' among imperialists.

Malcolm Caldwell will be remembered

IT IS tragically ironic that Malcolm Caldwell, of the School of Oriental and African Studies, who has always been such a good friend of the peoples of Indo-China throughout their successful liberation wars, should have been murdered on a visit to libe-

rated Kampuchea.

He will be remembered by all progressive people for his consistent championing of anti-imperialist struggle which often led him to cross pens with reactionaries in the pages of the British press.

Editorial

WE BEGIN a new year with the organised workers of Britain successfully asserting their own pay code, based on collective bargaining, against the Government's capitalist code of fixing wages in the interest of maximum profits.

The lead in the private sector was taken by Ford workers and though some workers have been content simply to cash in marginally on the 'sacrifices of their more militant mates, over the whole private field the Government's pay policy is in tatters. Callaghan cannot even vent his wrath anymore on individual employers who cave in.

But this has not prevented the Government from thinking it might recoup in the public sector what has been lost in the private. When the lorry drivers were going to withdraw their labour, hundreds of troops were alerted immediately to be used as strike breakers. When the broadcasting workers in the BBC broke through the guidelines, Healey carpeted the Director General for blaming the trouble on the Government's pay policy and threatened to withhold licence fees.

This is the pattern of capitalism's first reaction to the working class's successful smashing of the Labour Government's pay policy. As council workers and others in public service industries move into industrial action over pay, the Government will throw in whole armies of scabs to try to roll back the assault. It looks like being a very hot winter.

Tory 'Law and Order'

Meanwhile the Tory opposition, from the wings, will take advantage of the chaos to make ominous noises about imposing law and order to keep the working class in its place. Capitalism's intention is that once more the prospect of a coercive Tory Government will swing the labour movement into acceptance of capitalism as administered by Labour.

But that game is played out. The working class has shown by its actions that it is ceasing to be taken in by the delusions of social democracy. Capitalism will have to think again and we must be ready for it.

How do we prepare ourselves? We press on with our national purpose of saving Britain, the Britain we have made by our skills and energy. We prevent the capitalist ruling class from destroying us by destroying our industry and the public services we have fought for. We begin to establish our ownership of the means of production by saving and caring for them. They are the basis of a decent socialist Britain, which the capitalists would get rid of, as no longer profitable, and as the creation and support of their enemy - us.

British Aerospace in pursuit of profit at the expense of British industry

ON JANUARY 1st 1979, British Aerospace (BAe) formally enters Airbus Industry (AI) - the European consortium that manufactures Airbus - with a 20 per cent shareholding. They are using £325m of our money (40 per cent of total British investment in civil air projects), which allows them to share in the profits from the Airbus venture according to an agreed formula, and reduces our working in the constituent companies of BAe to the status of sub-contractors to AI who can be cut off at a moment's notice.

The work proposed as part of this deal is 17 per cent of airframe construction on the larger versions of Airbus (A300 and A310), plus a greater share in construction of JET2 (the smallest in the range, and the one for which no launch date has yet been set). None of this work is guaranteed, however. German firms have alternative designs in hand which they say are better than ours, and, if they are accepted, part or all of our share of the work will be taken away from us.

Rolls Royce has also reached an agreement with AI to supply RB211 engines as an option on Airbus. According to this, BAe will share the £25m cost of modifying the engine for Airbus with either AI or General Electric of America, who have supplied Airbus engines in the past. Again, the work is not guaranteed, but is entirely dependent upon orders being placed for the British-engineered version. And no doubt, whoever shares in putting up the price to modify the RB211 will expect some form of reward,

most likely picking up the technical expertise to produce this best-selling British engine for themselves.

Once membership of AI is complete, BAe will then review its commitment to the remaining civil air projects in Britain. Proposals for the cancellation of the 146 'bus-stop' jet are already on the agenda, only months after work on this project was finally resumed. Since 40 per cent of the work on 146 is already sub-contracted abroad, BAe no doubt thinks that cancellation will be a lot easier than it was five years ago. The Dutch may then be willing to show their appreciation to BAe in some way for removing the main competitive obstacle to their own F28 airliner.

A decision about the long-term future of Rolls Royce will then be imperative. At the moment official approval for their main development project (the DASH 535 version of the RB211 engine) is contingent upon BAe negotiating a joint development deal with Boeing. But since the proposed Boeing 757 airliner which would use DASH 535 as its lead engine is in direct competition with JET2 Airbus and BAe is already committed to the Airbus project, further delays are inevitable. Once sufficient uncertainty has been generated for BAe to get away with a repeat performance of the 1971 redundancy situation at Rolls Royce, of course, they will feel much freer to go ahead with their collaborative venture in the way they always intended to - using a 'streamlined' workforce.

NO TRAINING-NO SKILLS

THE SHORTAGE of skilled labour "has indeed worsened", according to Albert Booth, Employment Secretary, and his department may yet bring itself to admit that a problem starting it in the face does indeed exist.

Although there are over a million unemployed, industries all over the country are crying out for skilled manpower. An indication of the extent of the problem is provided by a tiny survey of 284 companies in the North West by the CBI. It revealed that there were some 3000 unfilled vacancies in these companies alone. For example, the British Aerospace factories at Preston and Wagston in North Lancs need 90 electricians, and as many fitters, as well as 150 other craftsmen. British Nuclear fuels at Windscale needs 350 engineers of various kinds, and so it goes on, with shortages in all trades throughout the country.

The situation is entirely of the employers' making. And not just because they refuse to employ the skills of the huge pool of unemployed. Both the employers and the government have deliberately created an absolute shortage of skilled labour, and are determined that this shall continue.

Nearly 40,000 teachers are unemployed, while redundancies among the teachers of teachers will rise to 3000 as training colleges continue to close. This makes it difficult for children to stay on at school to acquire more knowledge, and is allied to a strategy of excising from as many comprehensives as possible

the chance of post-16 education. On the other hand, the employers refuse to employ hundreds of thousands of school leavers on the absurd pretext that they are insufficiently educated. They enter a labour market where the employers have followed to the letter the government's policy towards public education.

All forms of apprenticeships, training and acquisition of skill have been cut. Often, those that get jobs are employed for a couple of years of drudgery until they reach 18, and sacked to be replaced by another batch of recruits. According to the Engineering Industry Training Board, 19,000 new craftsmen are needed each year simply to replace those leaving. Nothing like this number is being trained.

A glance at the government's plans for "retraining" the unemployed shows why the skilled labour shortage exists. They will neither bring back apprenticeships, nor use the Further Education system specifically set up to provide technical education for school leavers. Rather they could cut back both, to replace them with the substandard and inadequate schemes of the Manpower Services Commission, whose great discovery is that skills which take years to acquire can be taught in a few months.

Yet the government itself admits that the MSC has done nothing to improve the situation, since they have just launched a new venture, a "skilled workers mobility experiment". Under this, certain skilled workers, in return for the trifling business of moving house and family,

would receive the princely sum of... £500. Employers have offered more in removal expenses. Even if the project worked, it would only displace shortages from one area to another. But it is not intended to work. The government, like any other employer, will offer thousands of pounds in bribes, but only to achieve things dear to their heart - closure of factories and industries.

The thorn in the employers' side is the intransigence of the Trade Union movement. Wherever organisation at the workplace is such that the employer cannot employ dilutees from this or that "training" scheme, the employer is forced either to train its own apprentices, or see to it that the local Further Education system do so. Thus Rolls-Royce are having to increase apprenticeships from 80 to 150, while the number at British Nuclear Fuels has risen from 420 in 1974-5 to 740 now.

This is no more than a drop in the ocean. The government remains determined to deny industry even the trained manpower it needs to carry on in its present enfeebled state, so great is the desire to destroy industry in Britain. Hence bitter attacks on the National Union of Students, which has decided that the 250,000 school leavers who pass through the MSC should be unionised. Then these too, who are unemployed in all but name, can unite with the unions of secondary and further education, and the union movement as a whole, in demanding real, and not ersatz training.



1979 is the Year of the Child. The picture shows Vietnamese children, who have the advantage of growing up in a socialist country, giving a music recital. Other children are uprooted from Vietnam and borne away to the hardships of leaky boats and an uncertain future so that capitalism can make propaganda out of them.

NHS staff need unity in the fight against hospital closure

CHRISTMAS generosity from Liverpool dockers provided £18,000 of their back pay to local hospitals, but working class generosity is countered by government's cruel destruction. £6000 of the money went to a kidney unit at the Royal Infirmary, while one of the country's leading centres for kidney replacement in West London, was put in mothballs.

Closures such as these will go ahead so long as health workers do not fight in unity, and gain public support. In this context, the industrial unrest in West

London hospitals, reported in the last WORKER, gives food for thought. Three NUPE members were sacked for turning off part of a hospital's boilers on the issue of back pay.

The fact that they were unsupported by their own members, except on paper, or other unions, the closure of the boiler itself made it easier for the employer to isolate the men from the public. An industrial tribunal has ruled punitively against re-instatement, with tragic consequences possibly not confined to the livelihood of the men concerned.

We need a united campaign against the government's policy of wage restraint and closure.

We face a new year where waiting lists are at record levels, witness the situation in Essex. Those waiting for hospital beds in 1975 totalled 11,525. In 1976 15,209 and in 1978 17,805.

What unity can achieve is shown in the heartening news about the Jubilee Hospital, Essex. Here the unanimity of opinion of public and staff alike ("no cuts here or anywhere") was such that the Authority is beginning to backtrack.

COUNCIL BUDGET REJECTED

OXFORDSHIRE County Council (presiding over the worst overall pupil-teacher ratio in the country) has refused to employ any more teachers in the coming year. In October,

the County's Education Committee set out its immediate priorities for improvement; they included: continuing education for educationally sub-normal pupils beyond the age of 16; improved secondary school staffing; extra further education staff, and admission to school for those children who reach school age just after September, and therefore would miss nearly a year's schooling.

The Council's "Capital Sub Committee" criticised these

proposals for breaking County policy. All the priorities demanded more staff and they had already decided upon a complete clampdown on educational manpower. A councillor appealing against the decision said it showed that Local Government is run by "a bunch of managers" who "know the price of everything and the value of nothing".

At its last meeting, the Oxford District Association of the NUT voted to send a motion to their divisional council which rejects "the County Council's budget strategy for 1978/79 as damaging to the educational interests of Oxfordshire children" and demanded "the restoration of staffing standards and financial provision cut since 1976/77". They also moved that a public meeting should be called drawing attention to the worsening service and the future cuts.

Waltham Forest journalists win support

JOURNALISTS on the NE London newspaper "The Waltham Forest Guardian" have responded to the strike call from the Executive of the NUJ with 100 per cent solidarity. The paper, much reduced in size and content, is now being produced by a handful of non-NUJ staff. The strikers are putting out their own local news-sheet, "The Independent Guardian", which has enthusiastic support from press contacts and advertisers.

Picketing is being concentrated on the print works in Rochford, where a permanent 24-hour picket is being mounted by NUJ members, aiming for support from print workers and union drivers. There has been considerable friction when workers crossed the line, and three NUJ members were arrested for "wilfully obstructing the highway". However, local NGA members have now expressed their support and made a donation to the strike fund. A major success for the picket in the last week has been the prevention of a large supply of newsprint from being delivered to the works.

In Waltham Forest the journalists have received warm support from other unions; from SOGAT handlers at the distributors based in Walthamstow; and from other unions - among them the Post Office Workers, NALGO, and the Medical Practitioners - refusing to handle press inquiries.

Warmest greetings to German Party

WE EXTEND our warmest fraternal greetings to the Communist Party of Germany (Marxist-Leninist), the KPDML, on the tenth anniversary of its formation and the sixtieth anniversary of the founding of the German Communist Party by the great communist martyr - Ernst Thälmann. May their struggle against German imperialism and resurgent fascism grow stronger, and the emerging working class militancy throughout West Germany become more powerful.

Hull journalists produce paper to advance strike

ORIGINALLY the Hull Daily Mail's NUJ Chapel informed their national executive that they were opposed to a strike. But when the call was made, every member of the chapel came out, and have shown their discipline on the picket lines outside the Daily Mail offices.

Supply of paper is running low, and despite the management getting some through in private cars, the NGA blacking has nobbled that ploy.

The Hull journalists are producing their own paper, "The Hull News", on a regular basis. It covers local events, and keeps people abreast of developments in the strike. The hope expressed in their first issue that it would be the last was linked to a pledge to keep on publishing till the dispute was won.

Hull Trades Council has called on member unions to use the journalists' paper to publicise their own struggles, both helping the NUJ and getting their product recognised as the local paper of Hull workers.

VICTORY TO BBC WORKERS

BROADCASTING workers in the BBC turned an overtime ban into an all-out strike when management suspended members of their union for refusing to handle blacked material. The workers ended up with a 16½ per cent wage rise when the Government had been determined to hold them to 5 per cent.

The BBC dispute was a matter of considerable interest because, just as the Ford workers' claim is the first each year in the private sector and sets the tone for other claims, so the BBC claim is the first to come up in the public sector. That is why, when BBC management agreed to a 7 per cent rise, only 2 per cent more than the Government limit, the Government weighed in immediately and made BBC management back out of the deal.

The Association of Broadcasting Staff called an overtime ban which soon began to blank out television programmes. Management's suspension of BBC staff resulted in an immediate all-out strike, as solid as that at Ford's, which would have put all BBC television and radio programmes off the air right through the Christmas holidays.

The first thing to happen after the strike began was that management made its offer unconditional on Government approval. The next thing that happened was that the Central Arbitration Committee, which had been investigating the discrepancy between BBC rates of pay and those in comparable bodies like the ITV, suddenly speeded up its procedure and awarded BBC workers a 12½ per cent rise with an extra 4 per cent to take care of anomalies. BBC management and the ABS, meeting under the auspices of ACAS, settled for the rise; the suspended men were reinstated and there was no victimisation for strike action. The broadcasting workers can take proletarian pride in knowing that they have not let down their fellow workers in the public sector.

Provincial journalists determined to win (cont. from page 1)

Fathers of Chapels and at least one member of the National Executive have been arrested on picket lines.

The number of titles which have been and are being stopped, continues to grow - hence the employers' vicious reaction to the strike and to supportive action by print workers. At the Surrey Mirror, where the SOGAT workers were sacked after three weeks of observing the NUJ picket, around £100,000 profit has been reportedly lost already.

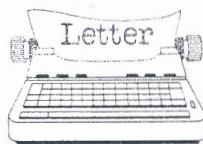
The national press, how-

ever, is trying to pretend that nothing is happening. The reverse is true: picketing is being tightened, and money is coming in to the journalists - who have no strike pay - from all over the country. And many strikers are raising their own funds, either by organising jumble sales and social events, or by producing their own local papers.

One argument has already been won. The employers, who always used to hide behind Government pay policy, have been forced to concede that

they are now bargaining "freely". The NUJ, of course, has, since its last conference, had a policy of free collective bargaining, and has consistently refused to abide by any Government guidelines or policies.

This is a salutary lesson to all those who believed the bosses when they said that they'd love to pay more "but the Government says no". The employers have not yet offered any more money. They will, but only after a fight: no employer ever willingly parts with money.



DEAR EDITOR,

A couple of weeks ago in an article in this paper you talked of a "burnt earth policy" being pursued by capitalists. It caused a lot of discussion because it seemed to be too general, missing out particular problems. Of course, we all realise that industry in this country is declining, and that the results are unemployment and less training to replace skilled men, but at the same time there is still some investment going on (the £100 million government money for silicon chip technology for example). How does this tie up with a policy of decline as you say?

The company I work for (Monotype - printing machinery) can serve as an example of what goes on. Earlier this year it collapsed and had to be rescued by the NEB and Barclays Bank. But it turned out later that the company wasn't really unsound - it was the financiers (principally Kaiser Ullman) who undermined it by pulling their money out to make fast cash elsewhere.

You might have thought

that this is evidence that decline is being fought against. Unfortunately you'd be wrong. The first thing the NEB did, as a precondition of putting in any money at all, was to have more than 200 people thrown out of their jobs - 15 per cent of the workforce. Not only is that a bit sick coming from a government body when the government swears that its out to reduce unemployment, but it turns out that the number was totally arbitrary, and that throwing them out has probably damaged the company's efficiency.

Next thing, pay negotiations were made a non-starter when the NEB renewed its threat - as a government body, if asked to sanction an increase above 5 per cent, they would simply pull the plug out on the company.

Although it's not clear what the reaction to the pay offer (7½ per cent because it's six months late) will be, as you can imagine the climate of insecurity and confusion is a big negative factor. But even if the government manages to win this round on the issue of pay, I hope that this letter to our paper will help other workers to see the truth as far as the NEB is concerned, and also when it comes to the government hypocrites who claim to care for working people.

Yours fraternally,
A CRAWLEY WORKER

'The Times' NGA members counter employer's efforts to weaken union

NATIONAL Graphical Association members view events at THE TIMES as one battle in the ongoing campaign of the employers to weaken the power of the unions. The issues of new technology and government pay controls have appeared as heaven-sent weapons to be used to the fullest effect in this offensive.

The union has won at least two important victories against management's attempts to impose its own terms on the working of new typesetting equipment - at the Mirror Group and Portsmouth and Sunderland newspapers.

In response, the employers' organisation in general printing, the BPIF, has set up a £1 million fighting fund to help employers in any office where the Union refuses to operate new machinery

without satisfactory wages and manning agreements. They have also drawn up a black list forbidding BPIF members from employing NGA members who have worked at a firm in dispute.

Against this, print workers will need solidarity and determination if they are to win. The NGA and SLADE which, management hoped, would wear each other out in demarcation disputes involving new technology, are already balloting on amalgamation.

NGA workers on Fleet Street have pledged £5 a week each for THE TIMES workers in their lock-out. We stand by the words of our General Secretary: "There can be no surrender. We fight for our members. We fight for our Union. We fight until we have won."

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