



STRIKE FOR STEEL!

SO FAR AND NO FURTHER. THIS IS THE NEW YEAR MESSAGE WHICH THE STEEL WORKERS ARE GIVING THE GOVERNMENT'S PLANS FOR THE DECIMATION OF THE BRITISH STEEL INDUSTRY. IT IS AN APPROPRIATE MESSAGE WITH WHICH TO BEGIN THE NEW DECADE.

THE STEEL STRIKE CALLED FOR JANUARY 2 IN SUPPORT OF A WAGE CLAIM IS A STRIKE TO SAVE STEEL. IT MUST BE SUPPORTED BY EVERY WORKER.

British Steel, in a move reminiscent of the coal owners of 1926 who reduced the wages of miners and lengthened their working day, has decreed that steel workers will suffer a reduction in their living standards. This follows unprecedented redundancies; some already carried out and more planned for the future. These measures are designed on the one hand to decimate the industry and on the other to annihilate the workforce. The prospects for steel workers if British Steel has its way are unemployment or, if employed, greatly reduced wages.

The prospect for Britain is an industrial society with a hole in the middle where a flourishing steel industry should be. The destruction of steel makes absolute nonsense of any pretensions of

this Government to be cutting back and pruning to encourage future growth. What we are seeing is capitalism only able to safeguard profits by cutting our throat.

The steel workers are saying: we do not choose to die on the altar of profit. They are joined in this resolve by the railwaymen, the miners, transport workers and others who are giving their wholehearted support to the strike. The International Metalworkers Federation have said they will block all attempts by the British Steel Corporation to import steel from abroad.

British Steel's latest offer was a further one per cent on top of two per cent already offered, with a commitment by the unions to accept a further 12,000 redundancies. This is adding insult to injury.

Thatcher's Fulton speech to provoke war

Thatcher's Fulton-type speech in the US can only strengthen our resolve in the New Year to put an end to her war-mongering acts. Churchill who made the original speech 30 years ago officially launched the "Cold War". The two decades that followed saw wars in China, Korea, Malaya, Aden, Algeria, Cyprus, Congo and Vietnam. There were savage imperialist attacks on Cuba and Suez.

Now with the belligerent enthusiasm of a Doctor Strangelove Thatcher cannot wait to engulf this country in war and offers to support US intervention in Iran. British troops in Iceland and Zimbabwe can be used to serve her savage purpose. The Iron maiden should be melted down and turned into useful objects in a modern equivalent of turning spears into pruning hooks.

The pre-election promises, as could have been fore-

seen, are no more than that. Has inflation gone down? Have real wages and salaries gone up? Has the quality of life improved? Have rents stayed level? Who can afford a mortgage?

Thatcher, who never stopped talking about her 'mandate from the people', does not talk about it now. The wave of electoral support that brought her government to office has dissolved in what must be record time. Already run-of-the-mill TV comedians crack jokes about the hard hearted cow in Downing Street and can be sure of an audience response. Mandate? That's an after-shave isn't it?

But personal and political hostility to Thatcher does not just emanate from Britain, it is international. Many European workers in particular feel threatened and angry at the incessant rat-a-tat-tat of war talk from Thatcher, directed at Russia. Any war in Europe will cost millions

of lives - that is why peace is precious and why war mongers are so despicable. Thatcher proves once again how war is a diversion from insoluble problems at home.

So Thatcher has developed a missile-mania over NATO proposals for expenditure on more nuclear weaponry. Workers in Holland and Belgium have made their feelings known - no missiles on our soil - while a resounding apathy from British workers, a disregard of the dangers, will encourage Thatcher in her object that Britain become an island fortress, an aircraft carrier, a sitting duck. Thatcher is not just bad for Britain, but her government constitutes an international disaster for workers everywhere.

For all Thatcher's big ideas, at present, that's all they are. She has stated her intentions and outlined her targets. Are we to be the hammer or the anvil?

Ebb and flow of the class war '79 as The Worker reported it

CAPITALISM CALLS IN THE TROOPS, The Worker's headline for 1979, heralded a new year of naked class warfare which was to be waged on an unprecedented scale by capitalist governments.

The year began with the army and police called in as strike-breakers, and Callaghan declaring "I myself would not hesitate to cross a picket line." Huge numbers of workers - at Fords, lorry drivers, at the BBC, public sector employees, provincial journalists - all had put the Labour Government on the run, its pay policy reduced to tatters by a beautifully orchestrated and most disciplined struggle.

The Worker warned that, magnificent though these struggles were, workers could not be satisfied with them - that it must be Our Wages Policy, not theirs, "NO STOP - GO ON WAGES. The General Council of the TUC had stood by Congress policy of unfettered collective bargaining, but workers could afford no complacency or relenting. They must be ready to take up the fight on a new level and be on guard for the renewed attacks of the enemy.

Under the headline **FIGHT FOR THE DIGNITY OF THE WORKING**

CLASS, The Worker stated that the ruling class was in crisis, but so also was the working class. The struggle was now at its most basic - at stake was the survival of the working class and those qualities of life it embodies. Now we had scored a victory and the ruling class was on the defensive, but a later issue of The Worker warned that the impending General Election was a setback which would allow Callaghan to wriggle out of the hole we had put him in, and the capitalist class would live to fight another day.

In February, The Worker said **NO TO DEVOLUTION, YES TO WORKING CLASS UNITY**, as the referendum drew near, calling for workers to reject attempts to divide and weaken them. United from their winter battles, they did just that, and told the capitalist class what to do with their plans to break up Britain. They followed this up by refusing in June to take part in the election for the European Parliament - a **VOTE OF NO CONFIDENCE IN THE COMMON MARKET**.

A horrifying headline, **CHINA: OUT OF VIETNAM!** speaks for itself of the downfall of one great

socialist country and the continued sufferings of another. The Worker expressed outrage and dismay at the spectacle of China now showing its utter identity with vicious and bestial imperialism of the world by invading the brave land of Ho Chi Minh. Throughout 1979 Vietnam's people showed afresh their refusal to be the slave of others, either in body or mind.

WITH THIS GOVERNMENT WANTS WAR, The Worker denounced the newly-elected Thatcher regime as war-mongers. Their first act was to raise the pay of police and troops, while threatening any workers who dared to pitch their voice against that of their employer, and to call for world war against Russia.

Our response, we said, must be **BREAD, PEACE, JOBS** - a revolutionary call now that those most basic of human requirements are to be taken from us. We must now carry our attack to the heart of the enemy - they say sack us, so we'll say sack them - **CLOSE CAPITALISM, NOT COAL MINES**.

As the summer wore on, the scale of Thatcher's plans showed

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The Week

IF ANY doubts still lurked in the minds of progressive people about that thoroughly discredited Pol Pot regime in Kampuchea, which remains the same after a cosmetic change in the top leadership, those doubts would be finally resolved by the statement of Pich Cheang, the regime's spokesman in Peking. He has urged the United States to join in the struggle against the Vietnamese!

A CALL has come from Michael Edwardes. It's his New Year Message to the car-buying British public. He has called for the public to support the British motor industry and stop buying foreign cars. For example, Japanese cars should not be bought here unless they're made by British Leyland!

ONE PUNDIT this week asked why even at Christmas time politicians wouldn't stay off the TV screen. He complained that Christmas was a holiday that should allow people time off without constant reminders on news bulletins of who runs the country. But every Minister we can think of seems to regard himself as Jesus Christ, as a Christmas appearance is really quite appropriate. We fully agree, so much so that we'll crucify half of them by the time Easter comes round.

THATCHER must have been green with envy during the Queen's Christmas broadcast. Thatcher's ego does not lend itself to playing understudy to anybody but Christmas saw her relegated to the role of Charley's Aunt. If we have not got rid of Thatcher & Co. by this time next year there may be structural changes to the royal broadcast 1980. You have been warned.

IF THATCHER does fail to pull off the Christmas broadcast coup there are other, if less important, seasonal roles she might play. She is shrill enough for Charley's Aunt and appropriate for Mother Goose. She has played the Ugly Sister too often to want to play it again. Somebody who can walk on the water could certainly fly the part of Peter Pan though confronted by determined opposition she might experience that sudden ageing which would exclude her from the part.

THE SOVIET UNION'S use of troops in Afghanistan and resulting change of government has had the ironic result of making Carter and Ayatollah Khomeini fellow supporters of the Afghan defenders of Islam against the godless Russians!

THE FINAL DAYS of Judge King-Hamilton were marked by his unusual directive and telling-off for the jury (vetted) in the recent trial of four people charged with offences of which the jury acquitted them. That there was insufficient evidence to convict surprised the judge. In the same week the office of the Director of Public Prosecutions announced that no charges would be brought against oil companies for Rhodesian sanction-busting (since 1966). Hardly a case of lack of evidence!

A gang of fanatics rules in Iran

IF THE people of Iran wish to look for agents of imperialism they need look no further than Khomeini and his gang of Ayatollahs. Ignorance, superstition, racism, chauvinism - the hallmarks of the fanatic rulers of Iran are the main weapons of imperialist exploitation. US imperialism has nothing to fear from the Ayatollahs who are even more anti-communist than the Ku Klux Klan.

Khomeini and his gang came to power by usurping a truly revolutionary movement in Iran and turning it into its opposite, a base of reaction which must be the envy of the Shah himself. Behind the slogan "Down with the Shah" the people of Iran destroyed one of the most repressive regimes in the world. The fall of the Shah was the signal for a new slogan "Down with the Ayatollahs". The revolutionary forces, due to lack of strength or foresight, were either unable or unwilling to make that turn in direction so vital if the revolution was to succeed. The friends of yesterday become the enemies of today at such crucial junctures.

The Anti-imperialist pretensions of the new ruling junta of Ayatollahs and mullahs should have been exposed as such.

Immediately after usurping power the Ayatollahs proceeded to institute the most reactionary measures seen in Iran ostensibly based on Islamic laws. In fact they were a direct response against the revolutionary zeal of the people. The people's genuine desire to settle accounts with the notorious secret police and the personnel of the old regime was diverted into summary trials and executions. Guilt and innocence have no meaning for the mullahs whose only desire is to punish a people who dared to rise up against their rulers. Petty thieves and prostitutes received the same treatment as hardened criminals of the secret police who shot at unarmed demonstrators.

Women who played an important role in the revolution were to face the most concerted attack reducing them to mere appendages of the men. National minorities, the Kurds and the Turks who suffered under the Shah and who joined the revolution to end that

national oppression, were to suffer further under the rule of the Ayatollahs in an effort to create an atmosphere of national chauvinism. Freedom of speech and the press were suspended by edicts from the "Holy City" of Quom. All opposition was to be silenced by such a government.

But this was not enough to secure the medieval rule of the Ayatollahs. They had to plan what is by now a certain debacle, the occupation of the US Embassy in Teheran and the holding of over forty staff as hostages. Thousands among thousands of the people of Iran many of whom are unemployed, unhoused and underfed were to march up and down in front of the US Embassy calling for what they have already achieved, the downfall of the Shah. The Ayatollahs are hoping that by reviving an old slogan they present a new one emerging.

The raison d'etre of terrorists has always been an "enemy" more avowedly terrorist than they are. Hence the Ayatollahs and US imperialism. The war weary US imperialism, still licking its wounds from its defeat

in Vietnam, internationally disgraced, economically disoriented has so far refused to oblige the Ayatollahs with military intervention in spite of war-mongering Thatcher urging them to do so. The Ayatollahs' hope for a bloodbath as a final solution to the revolutionary forces now looks unlikely. The Ayatollahs have overplayed their tactics bringing shame and disgrace to the people of Iran. Releasing the black hostages finally showed the Ayatollahs to be the racists they have always been.

What next for the Ayatollahs? A diversionary war in the Gulf emulating the Holy Wars of the Khalifs fifteen centuries ago or the building of concentration camps throughout Iran?

What is now taking place in Iran cannot be but a passing phase. Prayers whether to a statue of the Virgin Mary or Allah have never fed a hungry child, housed a homeless family or found a job for an unemployed worker. Iranian Proletariat, rise up and throw out this aberration of mullahs and Ayatollahs.

Britain in the world of finance capital, part 1

Based on a public meeting 'Britain in the World'

GREAT EFFORT is put into persuading us that the destruction of this country's industry and resources is an unfortunate side effect of the wane of British capital. The remedy is simple of course - tighten our belts, endure sacrifice and abstinence from some of our most basic needs in the name of the national interest, put capitalism back on its feet - and in no time we will all be entering the land of milk and honey once again.

But the fate of the British economy is, on the contrary, the result of the subjugation, over decades, of the needs of this country and its people to the very needs of that capital - the needs of the profit motive.

British capital is, indeed, alive and well, and living in the City of London. Its tentacles stretch far and wide across the globe; a now covert, now overt

influence in a world of gigantic multi-national companies and international finance organisations. It is in fact still a power, and it possesses great acumen, cunning and experience.

The flight of capital away from Britain - of which we now reap the disastrous consequences - and the scheming of the EEC are the tactics of a ruling class seeking to throw off an argumentative working class and search out new pastures for the accumulation of profits, not bedevilled by our refusal to declare a truce in the daily battle.

British capital sits at the centre of a vast spider's web of intricate and often hidden interconnections. The beast we face is a many-headed hydra. One head rears over the endless thread of investment across the world - British firms abroad and their subsidiaries, subsidiaries of subsidiaries, and

their subsidiaries. The names may differ, the links may take some tracking down, but in the end the threads will come back to a common root in the hydra's lair - the City of London.

As a result British firms own gigantic production facilities abroad, as does also the City of London itself, not only in the traditional commonwealth countries (originating from relationships established under the Empire) in the Middle East and in Southern Africa, but now also a growing stake in the US and Europe.

But the largest foreign investor in the US. Explore any thread and it will lead you from country to country, from industry to industry. There are the familiar ones - Shell, BP, Brooke Bond, Tate and Lyle, Lonrho, British American Tobacco, Consolidated Goldfields... the list is endless. There are also gigantic hybrid trading companies with a foot in insurance, like Inchcape.

But the hydra has other heads. There is a much more sinister and insidious web involvement on an international scale - a web of credit and debt management, loan relationships, stocks and shares marketing, of insurance and underwriting services, of the manipulation of vast, speculative flows of money. Here it is not so much the raising of money for the final investment which is the significant objective. It is the movement itself that is the goldmine - the channelling of finance, bids, bonds, guarantees, currency loans, and the like, through the bands of the middle-men, - the banks, the credit and insurance agencies, private and government, national and international. The scope and scale of this aspect of finance capital makes the role of investment for production by the multi-nationals appear comparatively innocuous. And look a little closer at the multi-nationals themselves - the power behind the throne there is also in the hands, ultimately, of the finance houses.

Examples are not difficult to

detect, and by not much more than a cursory scanning of financial pages of the national press. British banks are financing and managing finance for national electricity boards in South America - for sugar plantations in the Camaroons, for a steel rolling mill in Yugoslavia, for oil exploration through an American company, for hotels in India, for share issues in America, Sweden, Portugal, Czechoslovakia, in Hungary - and these are just the examples from a single scanning of one week's newspapers.

The historical role of sterling has meant that the Bank of England has become in effect a super-central bank, holding the reins of other countries central banks - mainly in the traditional Commonwealth countries. But also, as a financial centre for the world, the City of London has brought massive transactions of the kind described within the scope of the British Banking system and the institutions of the London Capital market. There has been an increasing integration of the European capital and money markets and London has emerged as a focus for Euro-dollar activities.

Add to the direct involvement of British banks organisation such as ABECOR (Associated Banks of Europe Corporation), or the European Banking Company Ltd. - with British banks as active, if not leading members, or Stabex and Minex, (both aid-trade hybrids which operate through insurance against adverse movements in commodity prices for exporting companies) and the cobweb becomes even more complex, the interplay of control and influence even more insidious.

The overt international expression of this world of finance capital is found in such organisations as the IMF and the World Bank - international credit agencies which act, in effect, as a powerful supra-national government - an executive for international finance capital. The role of this executive will be discussed in part 2 next week.



WE ended 1979 having allowed the worst capitalist Government this country has ever had to be imposed on us. We begin 1980 with the firm resolve to get rid of it, to throw out Thatcher and all that she represents. This we owe to our class and to whole generations of young people yet to come.

What is this system which the Thatcher gang has enabled us to see in all its ferocious anti-people character? It is simply capitalism, production for the profit of the few at the expense of the many, unmodified by any of the ameliorative measures like a national health service which we have managed to force through in the interest of our working class who make up the vast majority of the nation.

The reforms which we have managed to win and which are now under threat of disappearing altogether never really changed the nature of the system: they merely made it more tolerable. It is the claim of Thatcher that certain socialist deviations from capitalism, introduced by Labour Governments in the past, are being corrected so that capitalism could be restored in its pristine purity. It has been the boast of Labour Governments that they have introduced socialist measures like the "nationalisation" of industries or the National Health Service resulting in what they called a mixed economy - part capitalist, part socialist. But nothing done in the Parliamentary arena has put up or can put up the slightest barrier to prevent Thatcher from destroying the country's industrial base and whipping away from us any shred of protection for ourselves and our families which we have won in the past. Health, education, housing and the very unions which have been our main defence against the most vicious exploitation will be snatched away by perfectly 'legal' Parliamentary means unless we are prepared to fight for them by any means at our disposal extra-Parliamentary or not.

There is no such thing as a mixed economy - though anybody in Britain today could be forgiven for thinking there was such a thing as a mixed-up economy. In any developed society there is a predominant form of incentive which colours the whole character of the economy and also of the relations of that society with others. In capitalist society that incentive is the profit motive. All production is undertaken not to meet the needs of the people but to exploit the people to provide profits for a privileged class. It is assumed that human beings are solely motivated by selfishness and greed and therefore the only incentives are the materialist ones of self-gratification - a society ruled by the stick and the carrot in the hands of successful profiteers.

So prevailing is this code that when steel, which was supposed to have been taken out of the realm of strict considerations of profit because it is so essential to an industrial society, falls in price on the world market, its production is scrapped, no matter what happens to an industrialised Britain as a consequence. If we want to know whether a country is capitalist or socialist we look at the predominant form of motivation. It is like a signpost pointing the direction in which that country is going. Is production geared to the people's needs; are people urged to modify their selfish interests by a concern for the good of society and for generations yet to come; is it assumed that people freed from exploitation are capable of co-operating for the collective good of all? Then that is a society moving towards socialism and peace.

There can be no doubt about what is on the signpost pointing to where Britain is going under the direction of that shrewish voice which is setting all our teeth on edge. We had better get the signpost pointing in a direction promising a decent and satisfying future for ourselves and our children and banish that voice of irate, hectoring, mean-spirited capitalism from our ears for good.

Perinatal mortality increase

A REPORT written by Health Specialist has recently been released in the North East. It is based upon information from 23 consultant obstetric units in the North East. The report points to the alarming rate of infant mortality in the region.

The information which has gone to all consultant paediatricians, obstetricians, gynaecologists and child experts in the region, covers shortage of skilled staff, equipment and hospital places (cots).

The report analyses facilities at neo-natal intensive care units which cater for infant surgery cases, those at risk, those needing breathing machines, and malformed children; of the 23 regional special care units half lack specific isolation facilities and only nine have purpose built accommodation for mother and child.

There are three intensive neo-natal care units at Sunderland and Newcastle general hospital. Only three of the 23 units possess equipment for discovering if an

infant needs breathing support, while over a third of the units have no facilities for carrying out important blood and gas tests.

The intensive care units at Princess Mary and Newcastle general lack a supply of compressed air for their cots as well as a shortage of equipment for critical tests on children.

The excuses traditionally used to cover up for the high infant mortality rate in the North East have been, bad diet, women working for longer periods leading up to birth and a general lack of knowledge in natal and neo-natal care. There is some basis to this, but at the same time that this is used, the successive cuts in health spending has led to shortages of staff, equipment, wards closed and beds lost.

The resistance to further cuts in the health service and the restoration of what has previously been destroyed, is growing rapidly, with the consciousness that it is our future at stake.

School Inspectors vindicate teachers

THE INSPECTORS of schools, in the biggest ever survey of secondary education, have failed to support government accusations levelled at the teaching profession.

The press are always trumpeting the same tune that teachers need strict national guidelines to stop a neglect of basic subjects - that there must be more extensive testing of standards; that too little time is spent on basic skills such as writing and arithmetic. Even the headlines above the report in most newspapers were damning: "Schools indicted for narrow vision." The Inspectors report itself indicts the Government.

In most schools, 4th, and 5th Year pupils spent two-fifths of their time on compulsory subjects (English, maths, with PE and RE), so why the hue and cry about establishing a "common core"? It already exists.

Science subjects are normally "options" chosen by the pupils and their parents, on the teacher's advice, but 91 per cent of boys and 83 per cent of girls were studying at least one science. The Inspectors are keen to extend this so that pupils will have a wider scientific education up to school leaving age. How can this be achieved, when 40 per cent of the

schools were found to be short of laboratories and there are insufficient numbers of science and technology teachers being trained.

Discipline was a problem in only 27 out of the 384 visited. "In relation to problems which receive considerable publicity the overall picture is highly reassuring."

The greatest problem with examinations, apparently, is that the Inspectors thought that too many pupils were being entered for too many subjects!

Government demands that schools should be more sensitive to the immediate needs of employers were rebuffed. It would appear that teachers have been too sensitive to a bad press. The greatest problem in mathematics was not a neglect of basic arithmetic, but too much! The Inspectors found that all schools were giving a prominent place to basic arithmetical skills, but that recent pressure upon teachers was leading to a narrow concentration on "computational skill" in some schools. Liaison with local industry was in danger of producing courses "exclusively preoccupied with the practice of low-level skills", which would be counter-productive.

Contrary to government accusations, English lessons contain too much writing and too little reading and discussion. Problems of poor standards of literacy stem from inadequate remedial help to small groups in the early years of secondary school, and "virtual lack of help" in the fourth and fifth years. In other words, we need more teachers and smaller classes.

The report also condemned a lack of library facilities and of textbooks, discovering that in some schools only the most able pupils had maths books issued to them. The Inspectors said that teachers need more time to prepare lessons.

It is clear that this report will not safeguard our schools from this Government's fury, and that MP's will read the small print for a few juicy quotes to cane the teachers, whilst ignoring its central points which throw into sharp relief the Government's real aim; the claim that we need a national curriculum to "safeguard the common core" is an attempt to destroy the broad education practice in secondary schools, and reduce it to the narrow drilling of the 3 R's. The Government is trying to turn the clock back 100 years.

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ever clearer - nothing less than wholesale destruction and chaos would do. Cuts in public expenditure of £4000 million were announced. With the headline UNDER THREAT - 200 YEARS OF WORKING CLASS CIVILIZATION, we warned again that this was not merely more of the same, but a new kind of attack - not just to control but to annihilate.

The autumn saw the FUNDAMENTAL BATTLE JOINED BY ENGINEERS as the AUW national strikes and overtime ban broke the ranks of those toughest of employers the Engineering Employers' Federation, and struck a blow reminiscent of the nine-hour battle of almost a century ago. Now the fight was on - for hours, wages, and against the destruction of an industry. This assertion of the possibility of working class rule was the kind of which the exploiters are most afraid, for it speaks to them of revolution.

The Worker called for the engineers' victorious fight to be taken by all workers as an example of the level of struggle which must now be waged - ENGINEERS SPEARHEAD WORKERS' ADVANCE.

In October, the headline SAVE LEYLAND, SACK EDWARDS called on BL workers to reject the shameful ballot about which workers should be sacked, and to stand up for their skills and workmates. The alternative would be disintegration of a workforce and loss of a working class organisation. In the event, the Leyland workers decided annihilation was preferable to the huge battle which they would have to wage to save their industry.

Also in October our headline GOVERNMENT NUCLEAR DEATH THREAT marked ominous developments in NATO - thousands of millions to be spent on weaponry. 'NATO means war against workers everywhere!'

Thatcher's ECONOMICS OF DESTRUCTION continued unabated, as November saw a vast increase in Minimum Lending

Rate to 17 per cent - a decree that workers should have even less money in their wage packets in terms of real spending capacity.

The Worker ended 1979 with a clear message - THATCHER GOVERNMENT MUST GO, DICTATORSHIP THEIRS OR OURS?

use hoping for some big action by a militant and powerful section, other than our own. Every possible battalion of the class army will have to take part in this task, every fight must be made part of that overthrow.

That we have the strength is



These are the calls which must now carry the working class to a higher level of struggle in 1980.

A massive and sustained death blow must now be aimed at this regime, with no room for any diversions or relenting whatsoever. Shock troops will not be enough, so it will be no

beyond question. What we have now to determine is whether we will dissipate that strength or use it for construction, for revolution. Either we decide what the future holds for our children, or we must leave the decision to Thatcher. Let's make 1980 the Year of the Destruction of Thatcher.

Thatcher out call - Lambeth meeting

THE PEOPLE facing the people of Britain is how to deal with Thatcher. Local fights against the cuts are part of the whole move to prevent destruction of Britain. These were the main themes of a meeting held by the CPB (ML) in Lambeth on 7th December.

The meeting heard that the local struggle had been going on for several months. Trade unions had opposed the implementation of the cuts at first. Now the council has reserved its policy in the main and the health authority also is standing out. The movement has broadened, drawing in more unions and residents of the borough. The demonstration on November 7th was a high

point. Now is a time for thought. The demands of those fighting in the area cannot be seen in isolation from the rest of the class. The answers to their problems lie there too.

The second speaker said that the cuts so far amounted to destruction of the country. Through its many forms the fight back begins and grows. It is important that these are fought and won. The attempt to eliminate services must be seen against the backdrop of the destruction of manufacturing industry in the last 15 years. Lies are still told about what is "necessary" for the country. Ford imports 80 per cent of its steel, British Steel importing coal. All experience shows us that the

issues cannot be understood in isolation.

The organised working class must unite or be picked off bit by bit. We have indulged ourselves by selling jobs for redundancy money. We must now assert our dignity and say no sackings. The Government attempts to protect the wealth and privilege of its class, even if it means destroying Britain. We say that the workers of Britain have all the skill and experience necessary to create and maintain a socialist Britain.

This will not be without struggle and sacrifice. Our first aim is to destroy Thatcher before she destroys us. Things are not as they were, the choice is them or us.

Government suppresses juggernaut report

AN OFFICIAL REPORT on the damage that juggernaut lorries do to Britain's roads has been suppressed by the Department of Transport. The report shows that if freight goes on increasing at the rate forecast by the Department, the bill will be frightening.

The Department is, of course, very anxious to suppress such information since they are hoping to increase the present 32-ton maximum weight for lorries to 40-44 tons.

With a report such as this more than 3000 copies are usually printed. But with this report only a few copies were printed for senior department officials. This suppression no doubt follows Thatcher's instructions last June that ministers should "take the initiative in publishing information". This seems to mean publishing only those reports that support Government policies.

The report, entitled "Commercial Traffic: Its Estimated Damaging Effect, 1945-2005" is of great public importance. It estimated the pounding roads will have to take if top-weight lorries go on increasing in the next 25 years at the rate forecast (and encouraged) by the Department of Transport.

It is intended that 120,000 lorries over 28 tons will be doing 60 per cent more mileage on Britain's roads in the next ten years. Britain already has more lorries by far than any other continental country. Knowledge of their current impact on roads is obtained from 30 automatic weighing devices which record every axle load that goes past.

The report presumably gives the latest figures and reveals why some stretches of motorway less than 10 years old are being rebuilt. It probably indicates the

vast bills British taxpayers will face in future.

The official figure just for motorway and trunk road maintenance this year is over £100 million while for roads it is about £520 million. "Maintenance" includes such items as sweeping, lighting and footpaths, but spending on these is being squeezed and a growing proportion of the total is going to repairs.

But all motorists know that this spending isn't even keeping pace with the damage. It is estimated that many deaths are caused to motorcyclists and cyclists by badly repaired roads. The President of the Institute of Highway Engineers has said: "The real problem now is not so much maintenance as reconstruction, and not only for the motorways. The whole network is creaking."

In Kent, for example, the A2 designed to last 20 years, may need renewal in as little as 8 years.

Many minor roads are not being repaired or rebuilt because so much money is needed to keep roads usable. In the West Midlands alone, £16 million is being spent this year on motorway and trunk road repairs - chiefly rebuilding of motorways to a much greater depth. In London, heavy traffic on roads may further exacerbate damage to the old sewage works which run under the roads.

The cost of all this damage is not nearly covered by the tax lorry owners pay. Even on the present calculations they are underpaying this year by £47 million.

Why should we have not only to put up with the adverse environmental effects but also the damage to our roads when most of the freight could be carried by rail? And why should we have to foot the bill while a few owners and companies make vast profits?

Workers say no to Airfix management in fight to keep Meccano factory open

AT A MEETING in their factory in Liverpool, before the holiday, Meccano workers voted to continue their fight for jobs.

Support is growing and morale is good.

Meanwhile, stewards at the works reveal a now familiar tale of lack of investment in their plant. Since Airfix took over from Lyon's Bros, their approach has been to sit back and expect it to bear fruit without any cash input. (Even the naive capitalist knows that he cannot exploit us as well without setting some of his surplus aside for wear and tear.) Airfix have either let Meccano run down deliberately, or they are

more naive than we imagine. The manner in which they have set about closing down Meccano suggests a bungling management, and workers are quick to point out that there have been manufacturing problems which a more capable management would have resolved. However, we cannot lay the blame for the crises of capital on bad management. From an Airfix point of view, obtaining grants (£708,000 worth) from the

Department of Industry, which the workforce have yet to see spent, could have been a very good piece of management expropriation. Now the gaff has been blown this Government cash (paid for by our taxes) can only be kept by Airfix if the factory stays open.

The disclosure that Airfix still intends to make "Meccano", albeit not in Liverpool, has strengthened the workers' resolve to win.

Council health and education cuts set Trafford on the march

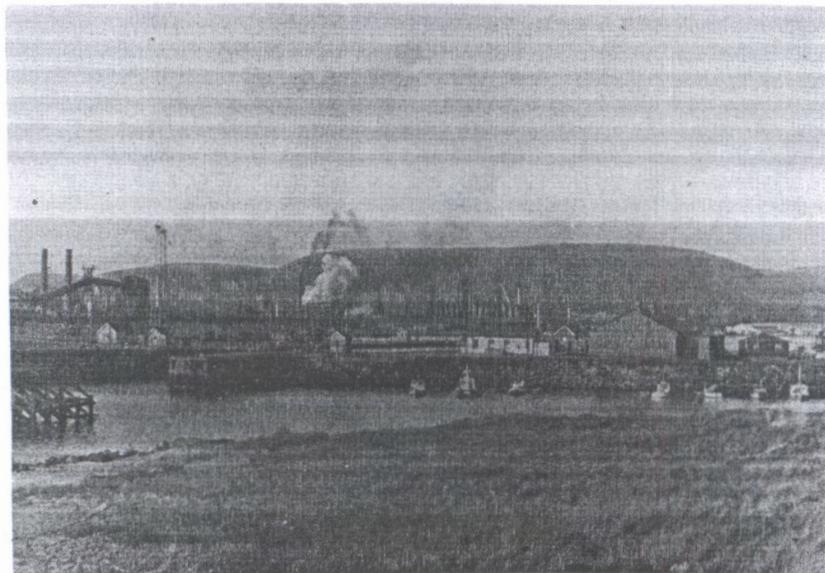
NEARLY 3000 demonstrated in Trafford against the Council's proposed cuts in education and social services. Many housewives attended the demonstration alongside workers from the public sector unions. The Highways and Maintenance Departments stopped work for the day and there were delegations from the main factories in Trafford Park and Broadheath.

Already children are being asked to bring scrap paper to school because the schools have none. It has even been proposed that the children go without a

glass of water with their dinner because of the additional washing up. But Trafford workers have had their successes. The first cut was to be in the maintenance section. Over 50 per cent of the painters faced redundancy. The men refused to accept this position and money has now been reallocated to the section.

However, this is only the start of the campaign. The National Union of Teachers in Trafford are about to take industrial action against the cuts. So the teachers will join with the manual workers to do battle.

It is with great sadness that we have learned of the death in a car crash of Comrade Keith Miles in his native Jamaica last month. Comrade Miles had been associated with the early years of our Party when he was working in this country. He went back to start the Youth Forces for National Liberation in Jamaica and to propagate Marxism without which there can be no genuine liberation - national, racial or any other kind.



Port Talbot. Back to the middle ages for steel towns like this?

Photo: The Worker.

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