



CIVIL SERVANTS' STRIKE

CARRYING THE FIGHT TO THATCHER'S DOOR

Government finances hit

CIVIL SERVANTS are making Britain a very unsafe place for Thatcher. We have seen an impressive display of unity from customs officers to ministerial advisors in Whitehall. In the Inland Revenue some very senior controllers have frustrated plans to undermine selective action by refusing to issue the instructions. The unifying factor behind all this - a thorough-going hatred of Thatcher.

The cabinet office plots and schemes to regain the initiative but is met by workers determined to win. Proposals flood in to the Council of Civil Service organising committees for fresh guerrilla action. A new political understanding of the relationship with the employer and the power of an organised response will outlast Thatcher.

The Civil Service action points to the weakness of this Government. Revenue is sapped, statistics are not gathered so they cannot gauge spending; neither can they rely on army or police as MOD and Home Office staff have shown they will not just obey orders. The strikes at Shipley and Cumberland PAYE computers highlight Thatcher's isolation. Her creatures like the new Chairman of British Telecom might pay the money voluntarily, but most of the industrialists she loves to call her friends are revelling in this chance to save some interest. In just the same way they will be happy to see her go rather than risk going with her. Direct payments into banks to bypass the computers have been used to try and thwart the action, but an approach to the Banking and Finance Union looks like plugging this leak. What an illustration of the diverse power of our class.

This will not be an easy battle to win. All the clarity and understanding gained in the 1979 pay dispute and in the current fight will be needed to win through. The strongest element is an absolute determination to beat Thatcher.



If Reagan has trouble in his own backyard, Thatcher has it at the front door! Photo: Nick Oakes (IFL)

Engineers stand or fall with their industry

THE DESTRUCTION of the engineering industry in Britain is gathering pace. The latest study from the Engineering Employers Federation predicts a further 180,000 jobs disappearing by the end of 1981. If this is allowed to occur it would mean that engineering employment would have shrunk by a third in just three years.

Britain's engineering firms are planning to invest 16 per cent less this year than last year, egged on by a Government which is ensuring that demand for engineering products from public authorities is severely reduced.

At the same time apprenticeships have become a major target for the Government's deindustrialisation programme.

The Engineering Industrial Training Board has estimated that last year's recruitment of apprentices was 3000 short of that needed for the future of engineering. The 1980 intake was nearly 20 per cent below that of 1979 and the lowest figure since 1973.

Destruction

The destruction of industry and training seems to have a peculiar parallel in the engineering union itself. Duffy who welcomes Nissan and Datsun to Britain also has a yearning for Government money for ballots. He is preparing to make a mockery of the AUEW policy of opposition to the so-called Employment Act by accepting one of its provisions. It seems that the present Executive Council will get much more excited about the problems of amalgamation than the fact that the members' livelihood is disappearing. Engineers as much as any other section have seen their industry being dismembered piece by piece. Only engineers have the power to stop that process.

ALL back at work at BPC Publishing - and the fight for jobs continues

THE UNITY and determination of the journalists at BPC publishing against 16 weeks of lockout has been rewarded.

On Friday, March 13th, they victoriously released their 3 month old occupation of their sixth floor offices in the City and re-entered the various BPC publishing premises from which they were sacked and locked out on November 21st 1980.

Included in the return to work are not only all the members of the NUJ chapel originally sacked, but also those whose redundancy was being disputed by the chapel, and over whom industrial action was initially taken.

In returning to work, the fight for jobs continues. It takes place against a background of massive job cuts throughout the giant printing organisation which had a £12 million loss last year. A 25 per cent job loss in the 10,600 strong print workforce has already been

agreed by the print unions as Robert Maxwell, recently appointed Chief Executive, drives his survival plan through against a March 28th deadline. By this date the banks will foreclose on the corporation if there are not the required reductions in the £40 million debt.

The BPC journalists re-entering their companies on March 13th immediately embarked on consultations with Maxwell on the future of the publishing division. They presented him with a detailed survival plan based on restructuring and the retention of jobs which they believe can be achieved within the required financial target. Talks continue night and day against an internal deadline of March 24th.

The impact of the BPC journalists' success in gaining a withdrawal of sackings by industrial action and a return to talks on job levels, is already causing gigantic ripples throughout the ind-

ustry. Messages of congratulations flood in, of which one reads "If you had lost, the hopes of thousands would have died with you. As you have won we will ourselves by trying to do the same."

Already some chapels arguing against job loss have found their counter-proposals are being looked at more seriously than ever before by management afraid of facing a BPC struggle themselves. At Evans Bros, 15 out of 16 redundancies were withdrawn after negotiations.

In its press release the BPC chapel pays tribute to the magnificent financial support received from trade unionists throughout Britain. "Because of this, the chapel has always been able to make its decisions with an eye firstly to the necessary progress of the dispute and only secondly to financial hardship. Everyone who has contributed to us in any way has made an unquestionable practical contribution to our success."

The Week

Stornoway's "Keep NATO Out" campaign smells a rat. After Ministry of Defence notices on Lewis in 1977 to build a "modest runway extension", plans to the tune of £40 million have been proposed to transform Stornoway into a full NATO base. Not a million miles away, in Iceland to be precise, the US navy have a surveillance aircraft base and would dearly like to move it to Stornoway. Lewis islanders however do not feel danger from "the growing Soviet threat", only danger from NATO. They have promised civil disobedience should NATO persist in turning their island into yet another US aircraft carrier.

The extent of "red hysteria" in the Reagan administration is shown by the remarks of the Polish-born Harvard Professor, Richard Pipes, who is on the National Security Council. "Detente is dead. The Soviet Union will have to choose between peacefully changing its system in the direction followed by the West - or going to war." This was put a bit too openly for the White House and the Professor was asked to pipe down.

Perhaps the most insidious publicity stunt of the week was the sight of Chancellor Howe presenting the "Queen Bee" trophy to Britain's most thrifty housewife. The event was organised by the CBI and Family Circle magazine, but the point of it remains obscure. Perhaps to bring home to us the idea that Britain is Thatcher's corner shop and housewives will have to be thrifty indeed to cope with soaring prices. The winner of the contest turned the tables on Howe by attacking him for cuts in such luxury items as employment and education.

The big news items of the week for our capitalist press were whether train-rober Biggs has been kidnapped or was staging a publicity stunt and whether a paedophile once high up in the diplomatic corps should have been named or not. With The Observer being taken over by 'the unacceptable face of capitalism' and The Times by a bus-inessman on whose vulgarity The Sun never sets, we realise that capitalism is no longer capable of running a quality paper. The journalists and printers will have to do the job themselves.

The best tax haven for the giant multinational companies is not some small island somewhere off the beaten track but Britain. In Britain they pay practically no taxes and the lifting by Thatcher of all restrictions on the export of capital means they can ship their huge profits anywhere they like without let or hindrance.

The naked face of capitalism peeps out from the latest proposals on what to do about youth unemployment. Train them as infantrymen and send them off to join the garrison regiments on the Continent. The first batch of 1000 youths aged 17 to 19, who have been on the unemployment register for more than six weeks, are being recruited by the Ministry of Defence.

Recognise Albania Disinterested Observer?

At its own funeral?

ONLY a week ago a letter appeared in the Times, signed by some MPs, mainly Labour but including one Tory, pressing for the recognition of Albania by the British Government. They feel that Britain's stubborn refusal to recognise Albania is hindering British trade with that country. Albania usually pays cash for what she buys and with her economy developing she needs to buy more from the West. It is France and not Britain, that is supplying these needs and the MPs feel that with its own economy in the doldrums Britain must come to some agreement with Albania.

35 years ago the then Labour Foreign Secretary, Bevin, stated that no useful purpose could be served by opening diplomatic relations with Albania, a country that steadfastly refused to be bullied by British imperialist manoeuvres. In the near four decades since the British Government refused to hand over gold belonging to Albania, now worth almost twelve million pounds, because of the unjust charge of Albanian responsibility for the sinking of two battleships, a great many changes have taken place in both countries. Social-

ism in Albania has prospered and its economy is growing from a backward feudalism to flourishing industrial development. Capitalism in Britain has declined and hence the need for every bit of help in trade and the possible expansion of exports. It is of no account now to hold on to Albania's gold. Albanian chrome is of greater value to Britain as the MPs are reported to have told the Foreign Office.

A new element, not mentioned in the wrangles of the intervening years, is a sudden bid by the USA to claim part of the gold as its own. For a country which at one time tried to hand over the whole of southern Albania to Greece the USA hasn't got a single claim to anything belonging to Albania. No matter how much Thatcher ingratiate herself with Reagan and supports his warmongering with her own bellicose utterances about British gunboats going to the Persian Gulf, there can be no US meddling with Britain's recognition of Albania. It is good that MP's are bringing the issue back into the limelight. The Labour Movement must back it. It is good for Britain and Albania.

"TINY" Rowland's Lornho, which wanted 80 per cent of the shares in The Observer, has moved with characteristic deftness to avoid a Monopolies Commission inquiry, and has settled for 50 per cent instead. The effect is the same - control.

Lornho, with extensive interests in gold, copper and sugar, quite apart from holdings in telecommunications and oil, thus acquires Britain's oldest Sunday newspaper (founded over 190 years ago). To say that Observer journalists are concerned about its quality and integrity is sheer understatement. The takeover has been variously described as a 'coup d'etat', 'shocking' and being sold 'like a can of beans'.

For John Biffen, at the Department of Trade, to toy with the idea of an inquiry by the Monopolies Commission is laughable after the debacle at Times Newspapers, where Rupert Murdoch was given the green light. Journalists at Times Newspapers were given assurances to Murdoch that their quality product would not be threatened, although swift redundancies with more to come seems

to have been a condition of the takeover.

Murdock's other Fleet Street titles come into the category 'newspaper' although several act more as journals for the meat trade than as anything else. In the case of Rowland and the Observer, journalists are alarmed that his African interests will prevent proper coverage of that continent for fear of upsetting the proprietor or his friends. It was Lornho's sanction-busting in Rhodesia which brought attention to itself in 1973. The payment of a large sum to Duncan Sandys, the Conservative politician, through the Cayman Islands, a tax-haven, earned a rebuke from Edward Heath, Prime Minister then: 'the unpleasant and unacceptable face of capitalism'. It will take years to live that down.

This objection applies to the situation of all newspapers owned by press barons or multinational companies with all kinds of 'special interests'. The question for all staff working on quality newspapers must be 'for how long can the quality be retained without our taking over?'

Reagan gives support to South African terrorism

THE SOUTH WEST Africa People's Organization "is the sole and authentic representative of the Namibian people". This was the result of a recent five-day debate in the United Nations with the General Assembly voting 114-0 in favour of SWAPO, with 22 abstentions. The Security Council has been called on to "convene urgently to impose comprehensive mandatory sanctions against South Africa."

But the USA, Britain, Canada,

France and West Germany have refused such sanctions.

This disagreement comes in the wake of Reagan's call to oppose national liberation movements as 'terrorist organizations'. Reagan sees South Africa as a bulwark in the defence of the 'Free World', a curious line of reasoning.

Who's free in South Africa? It is curious reasoning because South Africa is engaged in violent attacks on members and sup-

porters of the African National Congress inside and outside its borders and on SWAPO in Namibia. In August 1975 it sent armoured brigades to invade Angola, in support of the anti-communist group UNITA. Then, MPLA forces beat off this invasion after several weeks of fierce fighting and forced UNITA to retreat to areas neighbouring the South African border. The CIA has since supplied money and arms to UNITA, while Reagan's

officials have announced further support.

So aggressive is South African foreign policy that special detachments of mercenaries have been formed to operate in neighbouring countries. Samora Machel, President of the FRELIMO government in Mozambique, has frequently denounced these military incursions into his country. Recently, a number of South African refugees, whom the Botha government in Pretoria labelled 'terrorists', lost their lives after such mercenaries invaded and created havoc.

The Mozambican government has now decided to activate the Friendship Treaty signed with the Soviet Union in March 1978, and as a result 'early warning' defence systems are to be installed. Further invasions will be met with violent resistance. Four US diplomats have recently been expelled from the capital Maputo for operating a CIA spy-network, a charge not denied by the Americans. Two other Americans and a Briton have been detained on similar charges.

The sovereign governments of Mozambique, Angola and Zimbabwe are furious with South Africa. The people of South Africa continue their fight for freedom.

Nigerian Presidential visit to Britain

NIGERIAN President, Shehu Shagari, must have got a rude shock when he met Mrs Thatcher last week. He'd probably heard the rumours but meeting it in the flesh was quite an experience.

Thatcher's view of Africa threatened by Russia didn't quite square with the Africa he knows. Asked about the 'threat from Russia and Cuba' he said 'I disagree entirely with this concept.' He condemned further US support for UNITA in Angola, calling it an 'atrocious decision.' He thought the Reagan administration generally 'very ignorant of Africa.'

He had tried to convince the

Thatcher government of "the futility of backing South Africa and her nefarious activities" and said he "will back freedom fighters in their armed struggle."

Shagari sees South Africa as the main threat on the continent, a view underlined by the South African raid into Angola directed at SWAPO members fighting for freedom in Namibia. On the same day, March 17, the Mozambique government reported a 6 hour battle, inside its border, with 200 South Africans and its own frontier guard.

On March 20, Shagari's comments on Reagan's ignorance gained credence with Reagan's

invitation to PW Botha, South African prime minister, and Jonas Savimbi of the discredited UNITA to come and meet him in Washington. It will be a meeting to discuss war on freedom fighters, days after a South African military delegation was sent packing from the US State Department who "did not know the South Africans were in the USA". That happened after journalists drew attention to it.

Shagari's advice will almost certainly be lost on Thatcher, for she listens to no-one. Shagari is also a poet and an historian, but dare we say, that was lost on Thatcher too.

China threatened by flood, famine

FOR THE FIRST time since the Communist victory of 1949, the Chinese government has been forced to ask for food-aid from other countries. Crops have been damaged by severe drought and heavy floods in the provinces of Hebei and Hubei. Estimates vary, but 40 million to 120 million people are reported as suffering from malnutrition and near-famine.

This kind of tragedy has occurred, with all the suffering involved, throughout China's history. If floods ruined the crops they often drowned thousands of peasants. It was the social organisation to overcome and even

avoid such tragedies which Communist victory promised. Heavy rainfall in one part of the country was carried, and regulated, by the building of dams, to those parts threatened with drought. Food was always held in reserve, in large quantities, to alleviate short-term difficulties.

In this respect, Communist victory in China was a turning point. Chinese never featured in any Oxfam poster. The most prejudiced critic would begin 'I admit the Communists have fed and clothed all their people but...'

China then had no internal or external debt. It was as self-reliant as it could be. There had

been no inflation since 1952, prices dropped. Capitalists were out of place and time.

Unfortunately, that is China as it was. There have been fundamental changes since the mid-1970s in the running of agriculture, which now takes a back seat to heavy industry financed by foreign capital. The present suffering, with millions starving, would surely never have been allowed to reach the stage it has when socialisation was dominant in government planning.

But inflation has returned along with unemployment. We learn that 'public expenditure is being cut' to solve economic problems.

Editorials in the British and American financial press have welcomed the more 'sensible and moderate' policies of the government faction around Teng Hsiao Ping. They can afford to welcome them. They're not the ones who are starving.

The EEC has turned down requests for food-aid on the scale required. Cut-price food sales have left nothing in reserve. The USA has not yet been asked for help. Japanese ministers are angered by the Chinese government's postponement of orders for expensive technology and will help only at a price. 'Fair weather friends' the lot of them.

Editorial

Thatcher makes the absurd statement that "I do not flinch from paying for higher spending", as some sort of reply to the charge that she is increasing inflation. She does not flinch nor does she pay. Neither does she flinch from our unemployment or our reduced health service or education. We pay more and get less, so why should she flinch?

Nor would she flinch from feeding us to the cannon in her preparation for war. Thatcher talks of morality in economics just as Hitler did. If inflation is immoral, then let us see who benefits. The Government - the refusal to raise tax thresholds in the budget means an extra £2500 million for Thatcher. The same budget means an extra 300,000 jobs destroyed, and that is what we must contend with.

We are faced with the fact that whole areas of industry will never recover in a capitalist Britain. Whole towns destined for destruction until Britain is socialist.

If capitalism means the scrapheap for workers, revolution is the retort that consigns capitalism to the scrapheap instead.

Thatcher is the deliberate choice of a desperate ruling class. It was a great mistake that so many workers voted her in, and we are all paying the price now. No doubt those same workers will welcome any chance - particularly in the forthcoming local elections - to vote anti-Thatcher now.

Yet, for all that, a vote is not a seizure of power, nor is it possible to halt the destruction of Britain by constitutional means. Revolution is not something that can be voted for, because it is the assertion that only the workers can have a say. To solve the problems of building Britain anew requires the wresting of power from the ruling class and the determination to monopolise that power by the working class.

The reduced working week

AFTER ONE year of the TUC Campaign for Reduced Working Time, 5 million full-time manual workers have won a basic working week of less than 40 hours.

The TUC began its campaign late in 1979, and the break through the 40 hour week was made initially by the agreement won by the Engineering Union strike.

Since then, advance has been made principally by those who have already gained a relatively short week. The proportion of those working a higher than 40-hour week has remained the same. The change has occurred for those on a 40-hour week, to less.

In April 1980, 15 per cent of male manual workers had a basic week of 39 hours or less. By April 1980 this had risen to 20 per cent, with many agreements for a shorter week agreed but not yet implemented, among these the engineers!

Among many firms reducing basic hours are Pilkingtons, Kodak, Heinz, Bryant and May, Curry's and Westland Helicopters.

Increased holiday entitlement has also been won in many industries.

The TUC document on working hours, from which these figures are taken, stresses, however, that the situation remains quite unsatisfactory.

Excessively long hours are, on average, worked in transport and communications, as well as in food, drink and tobacco (48 hours), in bricks, pottery, glass, cement, shipbuilding and marine engineering it is 47 hours.

Although average overtime hours have dropped this has been caused by fewer people working overtime, and redundancy. Those working overtime still work the same hours - an average of 10 hours per worker!

Britain remains virtually the only country in Europe to have no general legal limits on working time (apart from certain sectors such as women, children or certain occupations), and is of all EEC countries the one where the longest hours are worked by

manual workers.

Average weekly hours of manual workers in the EEC(all industries):

UK	42.2
Germany	41.9
France	41.1
Netherlands	41.0
Luxembourg	40.3
Italy	38.9
Belgium	37.1

Typical of the disregard for truth shown in Thatcherite Britain has been the Engineering Employers' Federation assertion that the hours of manual workers in British engineering are 'in line with those of the rest of Europe'. To arrive at this calculation they disregarded overtime and average absences from work. The Swedish Engineering Employers' Federation produced a more detailed report showing the average actual hours per year of manual workers in engineering to be in Britain 1902, longer than all other west European countries, including Germany (1762 hours) France (1708) and Italy (1678).



Photo shows Wandsworth's victory meeting celebrating the Government's retreat from the attempt to destroy the Inner London Education Authority. Now teachers all over the country are organising for the rejection of Thatcher's 7.5 per cent. Photo: The Worker

UMIST Conference on War and Peace

TRADE UNIONISTS from all over Britain are attending a conference on 28 March organised by the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament at the University of Manchester Institute of Science and Technology. Its aim is to promote the cause of peace throughout the labour movement, at a time when spending on war is being boosted in all areas.

An important part of this work is to counter the veil of government secrecy over anything to do with the military, by facilitating the dissemination of information, and bringing the whole question into open debate. Very often policy is decided and work begun before anything is announced publicly.

Every major decision regarding Britain's acquisition, development and use of its nuclear forces has been taken in secret, usually by a small committee of Senior Cabinet Ministers.

Major decisions in the history of the British nuclear force, such as the original decision taken under Atlee in the late 1940s to develop a British bomb; the decision to develop a new British warhead to upgrade the Polaris missile taken under Heath in 1973; and the decision to purchase the Trident missile system as taken under Thatcher last year, were all removed from even the pretence of public debate.

Secret Planning

The jargon of 'official secrecy', notably the spectre of a 'threat to national security', has been used to justify the exclusion of all but a select grouping of political appointees, military officers and career civil servants. Behind the scene, the more permanent Whitehall bureaucracy of top civil servants (headed by the Permanent Under Secretary for each Ministry), the Chiefs of Defence Staff, and the weapons designers themselves exert a powerful influence on the outcome of official decisions.

The 1972-73 Defence Budget showed a considerable increase in expenditure marked up as

'Other Research and Development' - it more than doubled. The item 'special materials' (which included materials for nuclear warheads) ceases to appear separately. This 'adjustment' of categories coincided with some heavy investment in the work already being carried out at the Atomic Weapons Research Establishment at Aldermaston.

A project formally known as 'Antelope 1' which in essence was centred on an early design study of the American Poseidon system was in progress at this time. This project has now become known by the more familiar British code-name - Chevaline. Original costs for this work were estimated at between £100m and £150m. The official 1977 figures reveal that funds in excess of £800m had been spent on this particular warhead.

The Chevaline programme has now effectively succeeded by what was during the late 1970s a parallel programme for Aldermaston research. Nuclear test explosions in April and November 1978 and also in August 1979 and December 1980 were likely to have been of the Trident-compatible warhead which Thatcher has supposedly only recently considered sponsoring. The Ministry of Defence announced in August 1980, in time for the 5 year review of the Non-Proliferation Treaty that such tests were 'an intelligent anticipation of government policy'.

This is why our class must also undertake a similar anticipation of policy, especially with regard to the deployment of Cruise missiles and the squandering of billions on the Trident programme - and plan a; appropriate preventative action. We have just two years to stop Cruise; while work will soon begin in earnest on Trident.

The civil servants have shown how workers in vital defence establishments, including Aldermaston, are prepared to strike. This must give us heart in the fight to remove Thatcher, and stop her strategy of war against the working class at home and abroad.

Contrasting approaches to rate rises

IN HACKNEY we have a Council which claims to be leading the fight against Government policies. On Wednesday of this week that same Council will be meeting to ratify a proposed rate increase of 55 per cent and a package of cuts amounting to £2 million. These proposals have been in the pipeline for some time now and firm action by the local government officers' union NALGO supported by other local union branches, tenants associations and other community groups has led to final decisions being deferred on a number of occasions.

On Wednesday there will be a full day strike by NALGO and a lobby at the Town Hall of the Council meeting. The union has taken the initiative of inviting local ratepayers to support the lobby thus giving the lie to the distinction made between local authority workers and recipients of services. It is hoped that with this sort of opposition to Thatcher's policies of draining

the life blood out of already run down and depressed inner city areas, Hackney Council will find the political integrity to represent the true interests of the area by throwing out the proposals.

Neighbouring Islington, though so similar in many respects, provides some contrasts of approach to the same problems of confronting Thatcher's policies. The rates rise there has been set at 'only 22 per cent' and the so-called left has attacked this as too low and taken a number of opportunities to present ratepayers as 'the opposition'. This has had the not surprising effect of encouraging a violently anti-union ratepayers association.

Two weeks ago, in response to attempts to overcrowd one of the children's homes and crude threats to discipline the supervisor if she refused to take a placement, residential workers walked out. Their action, quickly made official by NALGO, spread to 13 homes and involved 74

workers. Pickets were supported by a rota of field social workers and the strikers were also helped by a branch levy.

The level of organisation and the clarity of the issue rapidly gathered support both locally and from other areas. Management, with active encouragement from certain councillors, which had taken every opportunity to confront and undermine the union, ended up (in one case literally) with egg all over their faces. They were forced to accept the residential workers' terms for negotiation and what many thought would be a long drawn out affair ended after 10 days.

The crucial thing that emerges from these various experiences is that the issues are really very simple if we take the trouble to think them through. Thatcher has created a climate in which the most reactionary elements within Councils and managements can flourish: but only if we allow them to do so.



The sacked BPC journalists are now all back at work. Picture shows them demonstrating in January with fellow union members outside BPC's headquarters in London. Meanwhile in Oxford another part of the Maxwell "empire", Pergamon Press, is under fire as NUJ members there strike. Photo: The Worker.

Thatcher puts carpet industry in peril

IN A recent statement on the carpet industry in Britain, the Northern Carpet Trades' Union graphically highlighted how Thatcherite policies would be the death-knell of this 200 year old British industry.

Since coming to office in May 1979, Thatcher's economic policies have resulted in the loss of 8000 jobs in carpet production - nearly 25 per cent of the workforce. Figures show that the demand for carpets has not dropped, but that the dumping of cheap imports from the USA and Belgium, unrestricted by the Government is constricting the industry. Imports are 49 per cent up on 1980 and between 1977-79 there was an increase of 335 per cent in dumped imports.

The British Carpet Manufacturers Association, in their 1980 report, admitted: "Investment is virtually at a standstill, a situation which, if it continues, will further weaken our long-term competitive position and have further adverse consequences for employment. Traditionally the industry has a loyal and skilled workforce, many of whom come from families that have been engaged in carpet manufacture for generations. At the present rate of closures, these skills will be lost forever to this country."

The dire threat to the industry is the end result of Thatcher's attack. Textile workers have only themselves to look to in saving their industry. The time is ripe to dispense once and for all with the voices of defeatism, with those who talk of the inevitability of closure, the impossibility of resistance. Such cowardly must be set aside. The need is for positive, worker-inspired resistance. The national textile demonstration, organised by the TTC in Bradford for April, must be the occasion for the mills and valleys of the woolen and textile industry to throw off decades of subservience and clearly state: the West Yorkshire textile industry has a future, the capitalists do not!

Nurses: now's the time to follow civil servants

IT IS no coincidence that just as Nurses' representatives are negotiating their 1981 pay claim at the Whitley Council, Howe reminds us in his Budget that the "1.4 per cent growth" promised in NHS expenditure depends on pay agreements within the 6 per cent cash limit.

If nurses swallow that, and drop their claim for a rise equal to inflation, they

should listen to Howe's second-in-command, Brittain. He hinted a day later that 'a further round of spending cuts is likely in the autumn, with the NHS as a prime target. In addition, a cut (they call it a "saving") of £35 million has yet to be made out of the current Reorganisation. In other words, there is no real choice being offered - take a cut in pay first, and then we'll cut the service anyway."

NHS computers

THE INDUSTRIAL action engaged in by NHS Computer Staff in pursuit of re-grading and pay claims is being felt by the employers. Since mid-January, computer staff have been blacking payments, banning overtime and working to rule, in addition to other industrial tactics. In the West Midlands Regional Health Authority over £1.2 million in unpaid bills has piled up. In the North West Regional Health Authority, attempts by management to seize £9 million in cheques, printed and stockpiled by computer staff, has resulted in extended strike action by operators, programmers and analysts. Attempted distribution of the cheques was blocked by other clerical staff. Nationwide strike action is now on the cards as NALGO steps up the tempo of the campaign.

There are motions to the forthcoming Royal College of Nursing and Confederation of Health Service Employees conferences referring to last year's promise by Vaughan to find ways of stopping the relative decline in nurses' pay. Have nurses not noticed the Civil Servants' current (and magnificent) pay battle precisely over the government's refusal to stick to the agreed pay comparability scheme?

Nurses should instead be instructing their Executive or Council to reject the predictable 5-6 per cent offer and to consider necessary action to raise it. Another "public health" group, the water workers, have shown the way to beat the government's pay dictates (without a day's official action - note well). Let the Nurses join the Civil Servants and all other public sector workers in breaking the back of this Government.

LLANELLI STANDS UP

FIRE! by the South Wales Miners' success in turning the tide of redundancies, 800 steelworkers at Duport's Llanelli have mounted a 24-hour picket on the works to prevent the removal of £30m worth of newly installed electric arc furnaces.

The works, which still employs 300 men producing billets from steel already produced, will close completely on March 28, 1981, as part of the Duport Group's moves to offset 1980-81 half-

With unemployment in Llanelli already at 15 per cent, the loss of 1100 jobs will push the figure to 20 per cent - which means that "the name of the game" (for Llanelli Steel, as workers have renamed the works), "is survival not redundancy." The workforce is 100 per cent committed to maintaining Llanelli Steel. Year losses of £4.5m, by shedding its steel. Plants in the Midlands and Sheffield have been bought by BSC.

Stewards meet to discuss Aerospace fightback

DELEGATES of the Joint Aerospace Shop Stewards Combine Committee meet in Birmingham in April to discuss two specific examples of Thatcherite policy in the industry. One is the threatened closure of Short's, Belfast, which is on the verge of bankruptcy for the want of a mere £80m investment. The other is the proposed rundown, reducing the workforce by one third, at the Rolls Royce plant at Anstey, Birmingham.

The Anstey works produce marine and generating engines, and it is evident that contraction in this sector, which inevitably brings closure one step nearer, is both a consequence and a further cause of the wholesale destruction of British shipbuilding and British manufacturing industry generally.

Central to the decline of aerospace is the deliberate policy of successive governments and the twin destructive agencies of US/NATO and the EEC.

NATO projects

NATO projects have led the way in establishing and developing the framework for international divide-and-rule in aerospace production. And whilst the weaponry produced goes to support Thatcher-like regimes in Saudi Arabia or Chile, and threatens to make Britain the launching pad for a Third World War, the introduction of wage-banding to abolish differentials and the planned 500 redundancies at Rolls Royce, Filton, for example, (a factory almost entirely geared to military work) shows that there are no safe jobs in making arms either.

On the commercial side, the European consortium Airbus Industrie has now virtually completed its stranglehold over British airframe manufacture, and doles out fragments of work on wings and bits of fuselage to workers who only a few years ago were making complete airframes for the most sophisticated product ever to emerge from an aircraft hanger - Concorde. With the de-nationalisation of BAC now an established fact, inc-

creasingly short-term considerations dominate the industry even more, and BAC workers say they can see nothing beyond the next two years.

Starved of central government investment, Rolls Royce has turned to the Japanese for joint funding of a new compact aero-engine designed to cut fuel costs - the RJ500. With the example of the BI Mini Metro - soon to be built in Japan - fresh in our minds, who can doubt a similar fate for this latest project?

As a last resort, it is argued that bread-and-butter work on RB211 engines will be sufficient to see Rolls Royce workers safely through the 1980s. The only question is, where will they be made, and by whom? Rolls Royce management have been second to none in exporting technology, and the American firm, Pratt and Whitney - who recently took away a contract the British company had secured with Boeing - are busy recruiting our engineers as fast as management dispenses with them!

The task before delegates to the April conference is clearly to unite aerospace workers to fight for the future of their industry here in Britain. The anger now being shown in piecemeal battles against local attacks must be directed to keep Shorts and Anstey open with no loss of jobs. United resistance on this issue is now the only defence any of us has against the even greater destruction this government has planned for us.

POLICE BAN

ONCE AGAIN the Home Secretary and the police are using the National Front as a pretext to ban all marches.

London, Leicester, now Wolverhampton and Leeds. This time a major target is the Trans-Pennine Anti War march at Easter, which with its slogan "Jobs not Bombs" is attracting enormous support. This march was due to start from the centre of Leeds with a large demonstration and the organisers will have to find some way through the ban.

Bookshops

Bellman Bookshop 155 Fortress Road, London NW5
Brighton Workers Bookshop 37 Gloucester Road, Brighton
Clarion Books 5 The Precinct, Stanford-le-Hope, Essex
Northern Star Bookshop 18A Leighton Street, Leeds
Basildon Bookstall Tues. Fri, Sat. Marketplace
Hull Bookstall Old Town Market, Saturdays

Public Meeting

LONDON
 Fri April 3rd Unemployment - 3 million reasons to sack Thatcher! 7.30pm Bellman Bookshop

The Worker

Take out a regular subscription:
 155 Fortress Road, London NW5.
 6 months £3.75
 1 year £7.50
 including postage