



STAND AND FIGHT!

Two years of Thatcher and Thatcher voters as rare as jobs.

Everywhere in Britain 'Thatcher Out' is the slogan.

Neither she nor her henchmen can move without an army of protectors, as if in some banana dictatorship.

Two years too many our jobs, schools, hospitals have been bulldozed to clear the way for Thatcher's desert.

Oil rich Britain haven for the new sheiks.

THE POLITICAL CONTRADICTIONS in Britain have no better example than the support being generated by the apparently ill-conceived People's March for Jobs.

Sent off from Liverpool on May Day with the blessings of the Bishops, among its banners that one from Jarrow, and yet its message loud and clear - Jobs, Peace and Thatcher Out.

Throughout Britain, factory collections have raised large sums of money to support the march from Liverpool to London. Throughout the month of May the marchers will be supported by strikes and mass meetings. Each factory they pass by will become a focus for more serious thought to be paid to the question of unemployment in Britain. One of the slogans is "March for jobs, march with dignity, march for Britain." Very few of the marchers or their supporters see the march as achieving anything in itself.

Indeed it must raise the question what will the workers in Britain do about unemployment, about Thatcher's destruction? So they will march but will the struggle achieve a level suited to the task?

In the past year hundreds of thousands of jobs have been destroyed. Yet the response has not even been hundreds of thousands in struggle. Garners and BPC and Lee Jeans stand out. Workers in Britain know how to combat unemployment but they have proved unwilling to do the work required.

It must not be allowed that the "People's March for Jobs" becomes a token, a surrogate for doing battle with the Government. Those workers who have taken on the Government have proved again and again that the will to win is the key. 'Jarrow' was a terrible time for Britain: it took a generation of struggle to rebuild the strength of the working class after Jarrow. We have all the fruits of that strength and we must be prepared to use it. Let's have a People's March for Jobs, but let's agree that we need much more.

The success of the march is in a way an illustration of strength and organisation jeopardised by ill-conceived use. Better than jeopardised by no use at all. Workers in Britain must prepare to use that strength to overturn Thatcher and take command of Britain's future.

Industry is people and the survival of industry requires the destruction of the destroyers.



Photo: The WORKER

MAY DAY IN LONDON (page 3)

SUCH IS THE MIND of fascists that destruction of all must be the order of the day in the hope that they can build a slave system on its ruins, a system based on ignorance, poverty and aimlessness for our people with absolute political supremacy and power in the hands of the rulers. It is only in this light that we can understand and learn to combat the attacks on every section of our class and every part of our lives.

Remember Blair Peach. No one was held responsible for his death. The SPG are accepted thugs on the streets - the results of their work can be seen in Brixton, so are the National Front who are protected so carefully by thousands of police. Don't be fooled: these measures are meant to curtail workers taking control of their own destiny - nothing else.

But the battle against Thatcherism is not really to do with elections and parliament (there has been little or no opposition to her there). It is a battle for the mind of the British working class. The rise of Fascism is not a question of leaders. It is a question of acceptance in society as a whole of counter revolution - of going backwards of cuts, contraction, dictat, authoritarianism.

It is a battle for power in Britain. It is a battle between organised workers who represent everything decent, civilized and worthwhile in this country and a rotting capitalism now no longer in a state of chronic but very acute decline. It is a question of whose will is going to prevail in this country.

When we organise for decent pay, for better conditions, against closures and unemployment, we organise for revolution. It is the job of our party to take this truth to every corner of Britain, and into every fight, for until it is recognised and articulated there will be

those in our ranks who will be able to confuse and dismay, to renege and betray.

We must say to our class now: To the Steelmen - Thatcher can't make steel - you have the skill, keep those furnaces red for us for our future. To the workers in education - Carlisle can't even educate himself let alone tens of children at a time. You can, you have the skill, you are the ones to determine the future of education. To the health workers - Jenkin does not save life - children and adults are condemned to die who would live if only they had treatment in the hospitals he closes down. The medical schools are our centres of excellence not his - we need

no criteria to determine whether we are entitled to NHS treatment - it is our Health Service and it will be ours again. To the musicians - your fight was superb - you showed how to defend the arts truly. Our life, our skills are our culture.

Our future, Socialism will not be a land flowing with milk and honey and all within it good - it is not a dream. It will be hard work - harder than we have ever known. But our children, our people will be healthy and literate, there will be employment for all with the working class benefitting from the wealth created by its own labour. Our industry will thrive, there will be no war or threat of war.

Civil Servants solid

MAYDAY WAS CELEBRATED in the Civil Service by the shutdown of Heathrow and general chaos at all major airports. Air traffic control staff at three key centres are showing their ability to close down UK air space at will.

Meanwhile, as Civil Servants (nine weeks in dispute with the Government) look forward to their union conferences, clear and careful thinking will be needed around the future of the pay campaign.

It is more and more apparent that the knife is not only in but is twisting and the Government are rattled by the effects of the strike. In Inland Revenue, frenetic managers have taken to "suspending" members of the public only present to pay their tax. We hear that the Department is unable to make large repayments due to lack of funds.

Thatcher's friends in the business community are feeling the pinch with exports disrupted, import cargo held up and bankruptcies in the offing. Action at Companies House has not only affected capital transactions but is severely impeding the passage of legislation aimed at lifting restrictions on companies, hence the recent crude attempt to strikebreak by scab labour.

Nonetheless, we know that Thatcher will pay whatever price is necessary to break the Civil Service Unions in her drive to smash the working class. The question is not one of pounds and pence but of who rules and we will need great maturity to find the right formula for the progress of the campaign in what is now an overtly political struggle.

The balance must be struck between the pressure for escalation and the inevitable dangers of an overlong dispute.

The clarity shown so far by Civil Servants in the single-minded prosecution of their strike strategy will surely be carried over into the issues of peace and the involvement of civil servants in the class in the question of Thatcher's economic and political policies.

The recent disruption of Thatcher's war machine shows clearly how easily the class can put into practice their economic and industrial policies for the protection of Britain, for peace and for the future.

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Lothian Regional Council has voted to concern itself no longer with civil defence or war preparation. It sees the best defence against nuclear fallout as the prevention of war. Those moving the motion said that the Thatcher government was convincing people into war mentality and kidding them that they could survive such a war. Over 60 local authorities have already voted against US Cruise missiles being stationed in their areas. But Lothian also refused to participate in the recent NATO war exercise Operation Square Leg. Lothian is not some parochial little council; it is the second largest local authority in Scotland.

We're often told how unproductive we are in this country. Productivity in investment-starved British industry where old machinery is becoming the rule rather than the exception is compared with capital intensive German and Japanese industry. But the Prince of Wales Colliery, in Pontefract, has broken all output records at the 110 year-old pit, following recent investment of £65 million. The 1,400 miners who work there now produce over 30,000 tonnes of coal every week, twice what they produced before the investment. The colliery was opened only 7 months ago by the Prince of Wales, after whom it is named. He must be very proud. It's obvious the miners are a good deal more productive than he is.

Former Liverpool football manager, Bill Shankly, once asked, "don't you treat football as a life and death affair?", replied, "no, it's more serious than that." Now Mr Shankly is to record a long playing record of the wisdom and philosophy which guided his football career. Can we expect a three-minute single of Cabinet philosophy from a band called Relegation Zone?

The infamous Nationality Bill, now passing speedily through the Commons on a guillotine which prevents proper debate, has its predictable offshoot. The Monday Club, extreme right wing Tory pressure group, has called for 50,000 'immigrants' to be 'repatriated' every year. This demand falls in behind the policy of openly fascist groups who call for much the same thing. As far as we know, the Monday Club has not objected to the tens of thousands of jobs exported every year as a result of government policy which encourages investment anywhere but Britain.

A result of rising unemployment is the forcing of more women and men in their 60s out of the labour force altogether. The latest Department of Employment Gazette notes this trend and several others. Half the 2.5 million registered unemployed in this country are under the age of 21, and clearly workers in their late 50's and early 60's are particularly badly hit. It seems that those between the ages of 25 and 45 years may have work to go to, and even then many are unemployed in this category. It's an indictment of capitalism under the Thatcher gang.

HOUSING conditions in the 19th century have been well documented. Engels in "The Condition of the Working Class in England in 1844" described horrifying scenes of workers living in insanitary, overcrowded hovels in the expanding industrial towns. It was common for families to live in a single room, perhaps a cellar.

Factory owners put up houses as fast as possible to house their workers. These were back-to-back houses, crowded together, with no proper ventilation or lighting, no drainage or sanitary facilities such as running water and w.c.'s. For these conditions maximum rents were extracted, often directly deducted from workers' wages.

This was the time of 'laissez-faire'; the heyday of free enterprise. State intervention in housing, either to set standards or provide subsidies, was viewed as anathema by the employing class interested in extracting the maximum rents from workers at the least possible expense to themselves.

Although conditions in the countryside were far from idyllic, it was the appalling conditions in the towns which arose during the Industrial Revolution that finally brought about government intervention in housing. This was because conditions in the towns came to represent a two-fold threat to the ruling class.

Threat of disease

Firstly, there was the immediate threat of disease: cholera did not recognise any class divisions, it spread from the insanitary conditions in the working class areas to the wealthier parts of town, and struck the bourgeoisie down in droves. The Sanitary Reform movement, headed by pioneers such as Edwin Chadwick and Dr Southwood Smith, worked to secure the provision of water and drainage, the cleansing and paving of streets, controls over construction and ventilation of dwellings through enforcement powers given to the then 'local authorities'. All the early legislation to improve housing

Miners hit U.S. exports

160,000 members of the United Mineworkers Union are hitting US coal production hard. Their month-old strike has axed the thriving US coal export market and will now threaten domestic supplies previously protected by stockpiling and scab pits.

The strike is over conditions for the renewal of a three year contract and comes at a time when US coal exporters were doing very well out of the gap in the international market created by the 'destabilization' of Poland.

Exports through the main port, Hampton Roads Virginia, have been virtually halted with many ships turned away empty. Inevitably the dealers are turning on one another in an attempt to save themselves at the expense of some other capitalist.

We salute the brave fight of the union on this May Day as our own miners prepare to defend their jobs again.

conditions was on grounds of public health.

The other part of the threat felt by the employing class was the fear that the insufferable housing conditions in which workers had to live would provoke a mass uprising against them. Disraeli later said: "The palace is not safe when the

luding that of housing. Social surveys at the turn of the century, such as those of Rowtree (1901) and Booth (1903) challenged social attitudes and further publicised the appalling conditions in working class areas.

It was not, however, until the 1st World War that council house building began to really make a



These appalling nineteenth-century housing conditions gave rise to demands for provision of a public housing service which would respond to those in greatest need.

cottage is not happy." Such sentiments were commonly held at the time.

By 1875, against a background of pioneering housing work by such industrial philanthropists as Robert Owen and Titus Salt, local authorities had been given powers to inspect properties, to close, demolish or improve unhealthy dwellings and to provide new accommodation as a public service.

However it was not until 1890 that public money was made available to subsidise housing built by local authorities. During this period the growing trade union movement was beginning to articulate economic demands that effectively forced the government to make much-needed social reforms in various fields, in-

cluding that of housing. Social surveys at the turn of the century, such as those of Rowtree (1901) and Booth (1903) challenged social attitudes and further publicised the appalling conditions in working class areas.

It was not, however, until the 1st World War that council house building began to really make a significant contribution to the provision of better quality housing in Britain. Up until then local authorities had been slow to use their powers under the housing acts, which were merely enabling and not mandatory.

The 1st World War changed all that. The late 19th century had seen a rapid growth in the membership of trade unions and increasing collective confidence and militancy. The early part of the 20th century was a time of ferment of political ideas - communism, socialism, women's emancipation were all being discussed. And after 1917 there was the shining example of the Russian Revolution.

Workers returning from the horrors of the trenches were not prepared to accept the status quo

NUPE'S national conference - 'Stand and Fight' the call.

IF A BRIEF report could be written about the year since the last NUPE Conference, it would probably say, "Could have done better!" 1980 saw the union trying to keep its organisation intact by battering down the hatches and avoiding any risky confrontation. This was highlighted in the early pay claim for local government manual workers, when the union's membership accepted a 7 1/2 per cent offer under duress from the employers.

This lack of self-confidence on the part of the union was so out of character, NUPE being one of the main unions to defeat the Labour Government over the issue of collective bargaining. It is inexcusable after other groups such as the Seamen and the Civil Servants have shown us how to fight Thatcher. Although the union's

Water Workers' membership showed that they were prepared to stand and fight, the Health Service membership is in danger of being the first in the public sector to accept the Government's 6 per cent (albeit in 15 month deals bringing a common pay date to most groups). - See 'On the Industrial Front', page 4.

It is no good blaming others or pretending that unemployment and Thatcher have made cowards of us all. This year's national conference in Bourne-mouth, May 10-12, must take heed of the calls in resolutions for no wage restraint in any form from any government and to rid Britain of the Thatcher Government. Failure to do so will mean further cuts in living standards, more job loss, destruction of our trade unions and Britain's industrial base.

NUPE's leading role in the

of the pre-war years. The phrase "Homes fit for heroes" became the slogan of the day.

It was by then reluctantly recognised that private enterprise could not supply houses of the quantity and quality now demanded by the working class at rents that they could afford. The government was forced to intervene. The result was the passing of the Housing Act of 1919 which, for the first time, placed a duty on local authorities to survey housing needs in their areas and to build houses to meet those needs. This Act further established the principle of the permanent local authority ownership of houses for rent. Earlier Acts had required authorities to sell their properties normally after 10 years.

Rent Act victory

The government still expected private enterprise to resume the main role as the provider of housing for rent after the early post-war years. But statutory controls related to public health and rent levels were already preventing the private landlord from realising his best interests, ie minimal improvement to his stock with the freedom to realise maximum profits through charging high rents. It is worth noting that the decline of the private rented sector stems from the introduction of rent control and security of tenure in 1915. This first Rent Act was forced onto the statute books during the 1st World War by armament workers on Clydeside who staged rent strikes and threatened stoppages of production in protest against exorbitant increases in rent and profiteering by landlords. Although controls on rent and security from eviction were supposed to be removed at the end of the war, they have been with us ever since in one form or another ever since as necessary controls on the excesses of private landlordism.

The local authority housing service, as it has developed over the years, is far from perfect. Its progress has been impeded by successive governments' stop and go policies on housing. In particular, it has been continually attacked by the Tory party which is forever seeking to return housing into the hands of the entrepreneur and speculator at the expense of working people.

It is fitting that we should reflect on the early part of the history of the local authority housing service that we may better rise to its defence at a time when public housing, and housing conditions generally, have never been under more severe attack.

public services has been taken over by the Council of Civil Service Unions. We must support them and learn from them. We have nowhere to run to and no alternative but to stand and fight. Let the call from Nupe's national conference be one of anger at Thatcher but, more important, one of confidence in our ability to fight with the rest of the working class to remove this Government. Dare to struggle. Dare to win.

BRITAIN, PEACE, MAY DAY 1981 AND SOCIALISM

Out of Ireland

IN 1969, under the cover of peacekeeping, British troops attacked with renewed force the people of Northern Ireland, in a direct response to a struggle which had so shaken the local representatives of the capitalist class as to make them impotent.

At first our party was alone in this country in condemning British Imperialism and in predicting the attacks which were about to be made. Now 12 years later the role of those troops is clear to all: yes they are peace-keepers - but only on capitalism's terms. Where those terms are rejected they are about as peaceful as wild animals lashing out when injured - which is of course what they are.

Confusions and sectarianism remain but above it all remains the demand of the Irish people for unification and independence, reflected in the bye election vote for Bobby Sands which has so infuriated British parliamentarians of all political colours. Did those that vote for him have a faith that the election could spirit away the British Army? Of course not, it was a statement of intent by the people that they would not be conned, and it is that which has resulted in all the disarray in Westminster.

Throughout the 800 years of the exploitation of Ireland by Britain there has always been resistance: now on May Day 1981 let workers in Britain state our intent to do our part in destroying the Imperialist presence in Ireland.

"IF WE THINK of that poor, sad, dying man, Bobby Sands, who believes that Ireland is one nation, that British troops should be evicted - out with the aggressor. What does the Prime Minister say? 'There is no such thing as a political prisoner.' As if British Imperialism has anything to teach on political prisoners! Of course he is a political prisoner. She says with delicacy and grace: 'A criminal is a criminal is a criminal.' And let us not think that it is only about an Irishman, an Irish patriot, that she says, 'a criminal is a criminal is a criminal'. She says this in the name of Capitalism, on behalf of the working class of Britain. We are criminals to capitalism."

DE-STABILISATION of governments is a proudly proclaimed tactic of the American CIA - tut-tutted over after the event by countless self-professed liberals the world over, but somehow totally unrecognised when actually taking place in front of our very eyes.

We are supposed suddenly to develop a tremendous affection for the Afghan tribesmen and their quaint feudal ways in their fight against the Government which had at last introduced literacy programmes, health care, water supplies, electrification and industrial production in that country, so long the victim of Imperialist, and particularly British Imperialist, adventures.

AND NOW Europe can be proud of two good Polish sons of toil. The one the product of an election and smokescreens rising above the Vatican, whose infallible views on contraception, abortion and the organisation of the working class have endeared him to us all.

The other - his protege - champion of free trade unions back home, welcome visitor to the Holy Father, and an inspiration to the Daily Telegraph, Sunday Express, Conservative trade unionists and others. Here at last is a responsible trade unionist.

THE TENDENCY when faced with the inevitable destruction of our nation and people in the event of a war has been to adopt moral or pacifistic approaches. The Peace Movement, involving increasing numbers today, particularly amongst the young, must develop a strategic approach if it is to have any real impact - or even survive - and only we communists can provide that strategy.

Any numbers of pamphlets, petitions and marches, any amount of civil disobedience can have only limited effect. We have to recognise that we as a class are already at war. Our existence is threatened by capitalism and it will never be otherwise. To demand peace is to demand an end to capitalism, an end to the system which seeks to subjugate nations and establish empire - we cannot avoid that truth.

What then is our international duty? Thatcher recruits the capitalists and governments of other countries for her military adventures against socialism and turns Britain into a NATO aircraft carrier and missile base. Our international tasks lie in the destruction of capitalism here in Britain.

We have unlimited funds to fight a third world war to morrow morning if necessary. Against whom? The ultimate battle - against Bolshevism in all its forms. A war on workers throughout the world.

Thatcher refers to the £1,000 millions spent on Stingray missiles as '1,000 million pieces of good news'. The young are to be bulldozed into the army if not by the mere fact of the desolation of unemployment, then by opening up the armed forces as sponsors of the Youth Opportunities Programme - the ultimate in sick jokes. A joint US-British Special Force is under discussion to defend 'our' interests - ie 'their' interests. The civil servants in action to defend their service by securing a wage above Government guidelines are accused of putting personal interests above national defence - as though they are not defending the nation and Thatcher is!

MAY DAY HAS always been a festival day. On May Day we are entitled to celebrate but we also have to examine the balance sheet of progress and reaction.

What we have witnessed in the last twelve months is the unfolding of the most concentrated attack by the ruling class in this country on the gains which the British labour movement has made in thirty years or more of struggle. What we have seen is the experiment of what the political columnists call 'the radical right' - an experiment watched eagerly by capitalist governments throughout the world. What they want to see is whether it is possible, at a stroke, to crush the resistance of this, the oldest, the most stubborn, the best organised working class.

For a moment consider some of the following facts: - The Government cut its investment in the economy last year by 15 per cent with the aim of effecting a cut of a further 20 per cent by the end of the year - principally in the nationalised industries - physically the backbone of the economy.

During 1979 and 1980: - Total manufacturing production down 14 per cent; - chemicals coal and petroleum products down 15 per cent; - metal manufacture down 30 per cent; - textiles and clothing down 20 per cent; - Meanwhile capital flowing out of Britain has increased to a record level and in 1979 more capital flowed out of the country than was invested in Britain.

The true facts about 'the battle against inflation' are these: - within months of coming to power VAT up from 8 per cent to 15 per cent, retail prices up 16 per cent; - Gas and rents up 23 per cent; - Fares up 25 per cent; - Coal up 25 per cent; - Rates up 27 per cent; - Electricity up 32 per cent; - Post and telephone charges up 39 per cent; - Mortgages up 48 per cent.

The only items to receive more Government money? - defence (or more accurately offence) and the apparatus of the police and the courts - the apparatus of force and repression and of course, unemployment.

During the time Thatcher has been in office, an average of 2500 workers a day have joined the register of the unemployed. Unemployment now costs the equivalent of the Government's total revenue from North Sea Oil.

But there is no point in trying to find an economic logic in unemployment. Unemployment has nothing to do with economics and everything to do with politics - anti-working class politics. Put quite simply it is a policy of terrorism against organised workers on a massive scale. By threatening every person who goes to work and by passing much more repressive laws against trade unions, what Thatcher says is, 'if you so much as dare challenge my orders, I will take another

hundred thousand or so hostages from every town and village in the country (at least 10 per cent of them school leavers) and write them off as workers and as people. It is the politics of crude intimidation - a gangster philosophy - the philosophy of the war criminal.

Britain is a great tapestry of labour - each worker a filament in the thread - each thread a trade or a community. Yet although there are many threads which go to make up the whole picture, it is those associated with manufacturing which bind the tapestry together, which give it form and life - and it is these which have been allowed to rot and that are now being torn out in fits and starts by the Thatcher Government.

El Salvador

IN CENTRAL America, El Salvador provides the US with a new arena in which to practice its savage skills. US Corporations own 70 per cent of all Salvadoran industry. US "aid" - 50 million dollars in the last year - is used to manipulate the fall of governments and the rise of more repression. Since the 1979 coup, the US has provided 5½ million dollars in military equipment on top of 200,000 dollars worth of riot control equipment donated to the new Junta as a housewarming present. A former US Ambassador has said: "There are more US personnel in the air force mission than El Salvador has either pilots or planes."

Since 1979, 20,000 people have been killed at the hands of the Junta and its shadowy paramilitary organisations, and many thousands more have disappeared. The leaders of the trade union movement have been arrested and killed and Robert White, US Ambassador, says "The US will give full support to the present process of democratisation of the country."

A spokesman for the people has said: "We, the people of El Salvador, wish to live in peace, to raise our families, educate our young ones, grow our crops, work our factories, and build a better future for our children. But there is no peace whilst the few who rule us have all the wealth of the country, whilst our children die for lack of food, where our brothers, our sisters, our parents and our children are gunned down by armed troops because they ask for land to grow their bread. We will fight until we have a peace which lets us live. And when the US marines come in the night, we shall bury them at dawn."

A step back in China

The Chinese people have been faced with the restoration of the warlords. The state in China has been seized by those who were so roundly condemned and debunked in the Cultural Revolution, and for the first time in China's history since the founding of Socialism, they threaten and attack neighbouring countries, enter into deals with European and American capitalism, and the Japanese, for the exploitation of their people, and so, of course, clamour to support the military arm of that system - NATO. Internally they prove themselves incapable of providing jobs and deny the Chinese people the right to feed themselves, and once again pick up the begging bowl. But let us not believe the fight for socialism there is over. The courage and tenacity of the people found magnificent expression in the person of Chiang Ching, who brought before that kangaroo court turned it into a trial of her accusers. We remain confident that the Chinese people will once again destroy the traitorous at the head of state and fight to rebuild their socialist state.

IN THE FORE of battle against Thatcher we must mention the struggle to keep jobs at BPC. The Workers Involved in this dispute, so strong in their resolve so united in their stand have sacrificed personal gain for a dignified, principled struggle against Thatcherism - and they won!

Gardners is another example of jobs being saved, a glimpse of light amidst the destruction of engineering skills in this country.

But more recently the South Wales miners who led the NUM in their defiant stand against

pit closures. In the face of such unity Thatcher gave way - she is not ready yet to take on an organised working class.

Such is her madness, such is her resolve to smash us she is still determined those pits will close. A redundancy and pensions bill is being rushed through Parliament with undignified haste which gives massive redundancy payments to miners and new criteria for higher pensions as never offered before to workers in basic industries.

South Wales miners will have to lead again and repeat even louder that beautiful sentence so

Extracts from speeches at the May Day Meeting Conway Hall London

Worker Interview

150 MICROFICHE OPERATORS at Companies' House in London have been manning a picket to disrupt company searches. The picket has been there now for eight weeks, ten hours a day, organised on a rota basis. A selective strike, part of the national campaign, it is causing untold damage to the business community at the very heart of the city. Last Wednesday, The WORKER interviewed one of the operators, who said. "The Government has not only refused 7 per cent or more than 7 per cent but they won't even open negotiations for arbitration for next year and the year after. They're just saying, "Well, you accept that number."

"The main reason we are picketing is to stop company searches, which we have succeeded in doing and are still doing. These are used by banks, and for big deals going through. It involves millions of pounds. It really has hit them hard. Members' support has been marvellous. Absolutely marvellous."



"On Saturday, two officials came from Victoria Street, one of them with two outside contractors. They had authorisation to be let into the building across the picket line. They went in but they couldn't find a key to open the messengers' room where all the post was being kept at the time and at half past four they had a phone call saying permission was given to break the door down. They broke the lock, broke the door and the post went in and out. Nothing has been touched by the action. It did them no good. The determination since what happened on Saturday has made the ladies here on the picket-line more determined. The main object was to stop company searches and that is still being done. So Saturday was just a minor setback - although it was hurtful, and it was a dirty, dirty trick."

"Is Thatcher trying to place blame on the civil service unions for the country's ills? She certainly is. She should look to herself before she starts putting the blame on anyone else. We don't see ourselves apart from the rest of what is happening. We're all one now."

1
CONFERENCE
REVIEW

Playful

LAST YEAR the AUEW National Committee voted for "a substantial increase" in pay rates rather than any set figure - and engineers settled for 8.4 per cent, about half the inflation rate. There was no struggle for wages and 200,000 jobs were destroyed. This year's National Committee faces the threat of a further 200,000 jobs being destroyed with a further vote for "a substantial increase" rather than any set figure.

Worse than that, the National Committee voted against a motion calling for "opposition to any incomes policy", just as the notion of social contract rears its head again in the form of the Wales TUC and the Labour Party.

It remains to be seen whether this National Committee will erode its own policy-making function in favour of rubber-stamping Executive Council's treachery. One issue is the question of government money for ballots in the so-called Employment Act. Executive Council is all for the money. The real issue is not the money but the Employment Act. Acceptance of the money is encouragement for Thatcher, and an attack on the TUC.

2
CONFERENCE
REVIEW

Serious

THE 1981 Conference of the Union of Shop Distributive and Allied Workers had been the hope of labour movement right-wingers - until the Conference met and took its decisions. Despite its decision at the Labour Party special conference, whereby USDAW moved the successful motion that produced an electoral college of trade unions, constituencies and MPs in ratio 40:30:30, this was considered an aberration for USDAW.

But right wing hopes of a claw-back, with the aid of USDAW, were dashed when the Conference voted overwhelmingly to keep the present formula. More important, a motion in favour of withdrawal from the EEC was carried with a thumping majority. Shopworkers can see the effect of the EEC on prices and British goods sold in their shops.

In the last year USDAW members have been prominent in TUC activity. The London demonstration of March 14 last year had over 1000 USDAW members and the 12,000 strong Liverpool demonstration on the May 14 TUC Day of Action was noteworthy for the hundreds of shopworkers who marched in organised fashion to the assembly point.

For education

THIS WEEK Trade Unionists in all of Britain's colleges of Further Education, Polytechnics and Universities will show their readiness to stand and fight for higher education. TUC affiliated Unions have called for the development of an Education Alliance whereby all Unions represented in the colleges may draw closer together to fight Thatcher more effectively. The National Union of Students has called for two days of action when libraries will be taken over by the friends of education, meetings will take place and students will debate their future tactics.

The Government's plans are clear: they want to close more colleges and steal a few of our Universities for good measure. They want to sack lecturers, they want to rob students of their Union and reduce their income to less than half of the minimum supplementary benefit level. Unconcerned with productive progress Thatcher wants to do an unconditional demolition job. Her Government has proved itself to be misological in its hatred of education, scientific inquiry, invention and productive ingenuity and in its total refusal to listen to reason and discuss its policies. As the source of the destruction it stands condemned and must be removed immediately.

Workers in higher education, teachers, pupils, porters, engineers and cooks are faced alike with absolute decline. The only answer to this week's actions should trigger a protracted, highly determined battle.

Coal or 'gold'?

"Oh it's in the evening after dark, The blackleg miners gan to work."

THE OPENING LINES of the 'Blackleg Miners', North East classic of class-war in the coalfields, epitomises Thatcher's change in tactics in her attack on the mining industry. After being sent scampering when trying to attack the miners head-on in February, now she comes sneaking round in the 'grey areas', trying to buy jobs with grossly inflated redundancy sums.

The NUM, having seen this trick before, let alone being able to count, have cut through the media hysteria of miners' gold, payments of £42,000 plus in redundancy, showing quite clearly that the real figures behind the glitter are between £300-£8000, a trifle.

From Thatcher's climbdown in February when she was forced to admit the need for a mining industry, to late March when she was flexing her muscles again, re-stating the need for the closure of more mines. Admittedly she was saying this very quietly. Commenting on Thatcher's new attack, the Vice-President of the Yorkshire NUM said, "As Thatcher's comments make perfectly clear, she's still intent on closing pits but, this time, rather than tackle us head on, she's trying to buy us off. We really are dealing with a bunch of rogues and liars. . . . But the main point, which we must never forget, is that no man has the right to sell off the jobs of the future generations for a pot of fool's gold."



AMBULANCEMEN AND WOMEN

700,000 workers involved, with a view to industrial action if the offer is not drastically improved. Employers hope that the depressed state of the industry, with about 300,000 unemployed, will prevent militancy. Meetings of the workers involved will show whether that calculation is justified.

have overwhelmingly rejected a 'final' offer of 7.3 per cent from their employers. This paltry offer would cover a period of 15 months. 17,000 ambulance workers are involved in the pay claim. 10,000 of them are members of the National Union of Public Employees and have thrown out the offer. Those who belong to the Confederation of Health Service Employees have just rejected the offer by a majority of more than 4 - 1, according to COHSE officials. Negotiations with employers are to continue. The employers are again exploiting the humanitarian inclinations of ambulance workers, whose self-effacing and skilled work is legendary. Should they have to fight for a living wage, all workers should give maximum support.

Union leaders in the construction industry have rejected a pay offer of 4.7 per cent on minimum rates as derisory. Officials of the Union of Construction and Allied Trades and Technicians, the Transport and General Workers Union, and the Furniture Timber and Allied Trades Union are to hold meetings of the

Industrial training at risk

WITHIN the space of 12 months the government aims to escape any responsibility for the training of young workers. The Industrial Training Boards (ITB's) are responsible for most of our craft skills and technicians. Now under Prior's Employment and Training Bill most of the 24 boards will lose their statutory status and by becoming 'voluntary' they will become extinct. Hundreds of Industrial Training Officers will lose their jobs and the effect on industries such as construction already suffering a shortage of time-served craftsmen, will be catastrophic. All this because Prior cut £52 million last year in Thatcher's public expenditure review which set back civilization by decades.

At the same time the Manpower Services Commission is to suffer an £80 million cut between now and 1984 which means job losses of at least

1,700. Proposals are afoot to cut staffing levels at Job Centres, sack ancillary workers in skill centres and close a number of Employment offices. The MSC have said that these cuts will mean "a seriously reduced capacity to aid the operation of the labour market and assist unemployed people". The MSC are asked to investigate ways of taking up the problems created by the break up of the Industry Training Boards!

Then we are told that to break up the Industry Training Boards need not necessarily unduly affect the availability of apprenticeships in industry. Leave it up to the employers. Aside from the fact that employers cut their number of apprentices by 10 per cent in 1980, it was their cutting of the availability of apprentices that was the very reason for setting up the ITB's in the first place!

Public Meetings

OUR LIVES AT RISK - STOP THATCHER'S WAR PLANS
1 Thorpe Close (under Westway) Ladbroke Grove, W 10.
Friday 15 May, 7.30 pm.

STAND AND FIGHT FOR BRITAIN FOR PEACE
Brighton Workers Bookshop, 37 Gloucester Road, Brighton.
Tuesday 19 May, 8.00 pm.

CENTRAL AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT WORKERS - NO SERVANTS FOR THATCHER
Bellman Bookshop, 155 Fortress Road, Tufnell Park, NW5
Friday 29 May, 7.30 pm.

WHERE IS THE OPPOSITION?
Bellman Bookshop, 155 Fortress Road, Tufnell Park, NW5
Friday 12 June, 7.30 pm.

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 Market Place
Hull Bookstall Old Town Market, Saturdays

The Worker

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