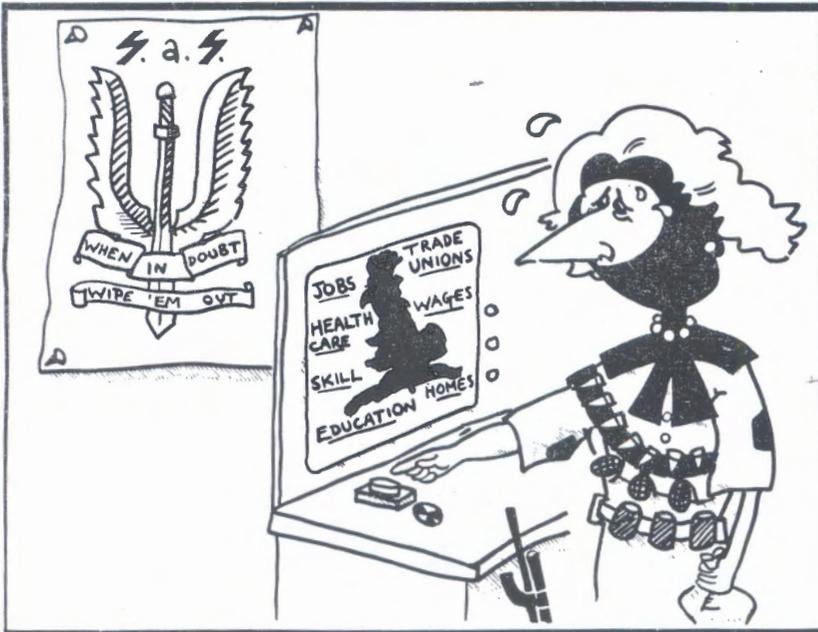




May 14

COUNTDOWN FOR THATCHER

- ITN black Grampian film of Thatcher
- NATSOPA ignore court injunction
- Express electricians vote to strike



Thatcher's warmongering policies have alienated her from the people here in Britain and abroad. At home opposition to Thatcher is being transformed to hatred. It is rare for a Prime Minister to achieve such an infamous reputation in so short a time.

A government intent on smashing the working class in this land must begin with the trade union movement. This is why the May 14th call to action is of such importance for our class at this time. The employing class with Thatcher at their helm is scared stiff of the Trade Union and the organised working class that they represent. May 14th was a call for those workers to show the strength of their feeling against her. Her many-pronged attack on our class at home and her disregard of a nuclear war cannot be hidden in a plethora of denial.

The English language has been twisted out of all recognition. Read 'attack' when they say 'defend'; read 'destruction' when they say 'productivity'; read 'success' when they say 'defeat'. The patronising tone the government and the CBI have taken over May 14th is a sure sign that they are frightened. We are 'silly', we are 'cutting our own throats'. What a cheek! Imagine the victims of a mugging being accused of beating the selves up.

It is soon to be unlawful for us to strike at all and a union leadership is accused of 'incitement' when they instruct their members to join a demonstration.

The media joins the hysteria and seeks out the most backward of our fellow workers in its support. Only the gutter press would call a scab a responsible person.

The talk of democracy is pathetic too. Since when was it in the interests of the people to become a party in their own destruction? If we vote for them it is freedom: if we walk out of work it is repression. What nonsense! This government must go. We have had enough of their vandalism and wanton disregard for our health, our education, our industry and our dignity.

The Thatcher governments' foreign policy is terrifying for the majority of people who prefer peace. So much so that even her so-called allies fear to follow her strident call for war. Thatcher speaks of restoring Britain's 'self-respect'. "You may be sure," she said, "that Britain's role (in containing the Soviet Union) as in world affairs generally, will be a leading one." Simply stated, Britain will lead the drive to a third world war. War fever, in some circles, has now reached such a pitch that the West German chancellor took time in one of his speeches to deny the parallel being drawn between today and 1914. "The world," he said, "is not waiting for a Sarajevo to happen." Presumably, too, Afghanistan is to be cast in the role of 'brave little Belgium'.

Western governments are being sucked into this collective madness in the wake of Thatcher and Carter, willingly at first but now with greater reluctance as they shrink back from the edge.

Thatcher's policies amount to terrorism on a world scale. The violence of the ruling class at home and abroad. Thatcher likes to think of herself as "the leader of the pack" and that being the case "Cry Havoc and let slip the dogs of war:" may well be appropriate for the eighties.

Having completed the process of turning Britain into a launching pad for US missiles, of plundering education, health and manufacturing industry to swell the military budget, having ensured that armaments are the only growth sector of the economy, what then?

Let us not be a party to their war to save themselves. Where we say defend ourselves that's exactly what we mean not its opposite. We must make revolution to prevent war and turn defence into attack. Attack Thatcher and her government now!

Day of Judgement - Ours not theirs

IN HIS summing up the judge stated, "This case brought before me is insolently frivolous and wasting the valuable time of this court. I am going to make an example of the newspaper proprietors in this case because it is time they understood that the right to withdraw labour is fundamental to a free society."

Like the dream about the winner of the Derby the only problem on awaking is to remember that judge's name.

For as long as there have been strikes they have been called 'political' in Britain and attempts to define political as against mere wages and conditions have confounded all but those who work for wages. It is no more nor less political to defend reforms such as health and education and the rights of trade unions than to defend or improve wages.

As for the right of a union to instruct its members to

take action that is really a question only for the members themselves. Each union has its own rulebook which covers these matters and no ruling by a judge can be allowed to interfere unless we are to say that the members do not have the right to determine their own rules. In which case we are back with the Industrial Relations Act.

Judges are keen on deciding such matters and with the steel strike we saw the attempt to make the question of whether action was "in furtherance of a trade dispute" a question for the law to decide. Just as on that occasion the steel workers continued their action so in this latest case workers should dismiss the judgement against the print workers and carry out their own policy that had worked its way from member to branch to the executive councils and the

TUC, so that finally the voice of organised workers would be heard in opposition to Thatcher - the only opposition left in the land.

As for breaking "contracts of employment", that takes a bit of swallowing in the face of 2 million workers without employment - whose contracts have been broken for them in the orgy of destruction of Britain's industry. The contract we have to destroy is the mafia contract taken out on the life of the British working class.

For all their sneering what the press are really hysterical about is that May 14 really will be a day of action and it's only the beginning of the sort of action that tumbled Heath and Callaghan. Thatcher is seen by the employing class as their final stand against the British working class and the great defences built by generations of workers - the trade unions.

The Week

It was quietly announced that the United States will not now be organizing an 'International festival of sport' as an alternative to the Olympic Games this year. Remember all the hoo-ha just a few weeks ago. The difficulty it seems in organising such a 'festival' was the lack of organising talent. The would-be organisers aren't as good at putting things together as they are at pulling things apart.

The Olympic Games are on although the Cold War is under way. But Pakistan and Argentina will not be sending teams. In countries like these where trade unions and political parties are illegal, or as good as, it is very difficult to act like an independent National Olympic Committee. President of the Argentine NOC, Colonel Antonio Rodriguez, was sad to learn of the Government's recommendation but "the national interest comes before anything else and we accept what the Government has ordered." Argentina is governed by a military junta.

Peru will send a team to Moscow. New Zealand's NOC have voted to send a team also. And in the same week Portugal's NOC made it clear that it is "firmly committed to sending athletes to the Moscow Games". This will be in defiance of the Portuguese government's recommendation. Salazar and Caetano were respective dictators for 46 years. In 1974 the dictatorship was overthrown. Athletes in Pakistan and Argentina must be envious.

The Olympics were set up as a symbol of peaceful competition between sportmen and women. The modern Olympics were set firmly against militarism then developing in Europe in the 1890s. That still seems to be the choice. West German leaders are "shocked and alarmed" at the bloody anti-militarist riots in Bremen on the 25th anniversary of the founding of NATO. 1200 Bundeswehr recruits were being sworn in on the evening of May 6 before the President and Defence Minister. This was a provocation according to Bremen SPD officials. 8000 young people marched to the stadium where the ceremony was taking place. The gates were barred and police tried to stop the demonstration. Injuries and arrests were followed by a pitched battle. More than 250 policemen and soldiers were injured as a result of their initial over-reaction and the demonstrators' anti-militarist feelings.

France is not in NATO (officially) but the army is none too popular there either. The Larzac sheep farmers have won their first court battle against army attempts to take their pastures to increase the size of a firing range from 7500 to 35,000 acres. 66 of the 70 compulsory purchase orders have been rejected on a legal technicality. The farmers' defence committee, set up in 1971, has attracted popular support for a just fight. The defence committee have gathered financial support and have bought the land in the name of the committee. Huge demonstrations on the Larzac plain have emphasised the strength of feeling. It is the fight of the individual against the power of the state. Mrs Thatcher would surely support that, wouldn't she?

Book Review 'Protest and Survive' by E.P. Thompson

THE GOVERNMENT'S pamphlet on civil defence in the event of nuclear war is entitled 'Protect and Survive'. It has been the object of much sarcasm and deservedly so. The Minister responsible for civil defence said in February that 15 million people would survive a nuclear war.

With the safeguards he suggested up to 30 million could survive. Only 25 million people in Britain need die.

Sarcasm is not enough in this matter of life and death. Strongly recommended is E.P. Thompson's more suitably titled pamphlet 'Protest and Survive'. Published

last month, it is already being reprinted.

Thompson argues not for 'better' shelters but for the removal of Cruise missiles from British soil which make this country a certain front-line target should war be started. The reluctance of other NATO members to take

these missiles (because of mass opposition) has Thatcher and Co. offering to take more than any other NATO country. This is a national disgrace in addition to being suicidal.

The writer concerns himself with the present Cold War mentality, the mentality of retired military strategists, the press and politicians who look at every international event and ask "Is it pro-Soviet or anti-Soviet?" The NATO decision, to station Cruise missiles on European soil, in December was matched by Soviet intervention in Afghanistan at the end of that month. Thompson calls it the classic tit-for-tat Cold War exercise.

The continued presence on our soil of US air bases (with their control over the weaponry anyway) is dealt with. As the writer says, Francis Pym doesn't know where exactly the Cruise missiles will be stationed because an American general hasn't told him yet.

This pamphlet is already a best-seller and reading it you can see why. If you love this country you don't want it to be an armed camp and now a certain target. To borrow a cliché, it is 'compulsory reading'.

Available from the Bellman Bookshop, price 45p + p&p.



E. P. Thompson addressing a rally against cruise missiles in Oxford last March. He has taken a leading role in the campaign to stop the deployment of U. S. missiles here. Photo: The Worker.

Workers' fight against wage cuts halts Sweden

OVER ARE the days when Sweden could be held up as the ideal state where capitalist and worker co-operated equably for the national good.

Nowhere, in no land, does the working class give up struggle absolutely, however protracted its quiescence may be from time to time.

Confidently relying on these years of "loyalty" from their workers, the Swedish employers represented by the government allowed the last general agreement between employees and employers to run out on November 1st 1979. They then offered renewal on the basis of a 0 per cent or 1/2 per cent wage increase at a time of double figure inflation.

Shaken by the Trade Union Confederation's outright rejection, a rash of strikes (particularly that of 26,000 public service workers), the employers on May 1st locked out 750,000 workers - a quarter

of the total workforce - and on May 5th prolonged the lockout.

The outcome for the employer: total impotence. The trade unions immediately called out a further 100,000 workers in key positions on a guerrilla basis.

If ever a reminder was needed of the immense, potentially ruling power workers can wield, Sweden shows it. Virtually all international transport links are closed. Nothing moves inside Sweden without the transport workers' permission. All planes are grounded and the King of Sweden had to beg to be allowed a plane to fly him to Tito's funeral. Even the banks cannot work, as cheques are no longer being printed. The government is unable to organize even food distribution...

Swedish harmony between employers and workers was never a paradise except for those who profited by it. Swedish workers have now rejected it. Doubtless the

form of centralised "sharing" between capital and labour embodied in the Saltsjoben agreement of 1938 will continue in existence. But it will be as a dead shell, discarded by Swedish workers who have rejected the government's offer of a price freeze, and the latest offer by (non-) independent arbitration of a 2 per cent wage rise. Whatever the percentage settlement reached, it will be a giant step forward for the Swedish working class, for there can never be a return to the situation as it was before.

There are those in our own trade union ranks in Britain who cavil at the call of May 14th for an all-out strike against the government. Yet the total paralysis of the Swedish state by this giant strike is plain for all to see. Why cannot we do the same to overthrow, not just a government but a government dictat on wages, but the government itself?

Opposition to EEC mounts

THE LABOUR Party lap-dogs to Thatcher applauded her "staunch stand" against the EEC and joined hands with the Tory benches. Oh! the awful Germans and vile France. Even a TUC document supported her stand to "reduce" British EEC contributions.

How asinine. In the meantime, Thatcher had the SAS blow up the Iranian Embassy, joined hands with the self-same German and French "enemies" to apply sanctions against Iran to facilitate the inept American aggression, and have now, again in concert with Schmidt and Giscard, dropped them. The world waits with bated breath as the German government tries to bully its athletes away from Moscow Thatcher-style. And the EEC countries draw up joint contingency plans for greater self-reliance in the war-games against the Soviet Union. They openly prepare for the time when US troops are deployed against Iran.

Yet in Germany 7000 people demonstrated against and virtually

destroyed a celebration in Bremen of the 25th anniversary of West Germany's NATO membership. In France, the sheep farmers of the Larzac region have prevented the military taking over their land. Their plans to extend their battle training ground from 7500 acres to 35000 have been thwarted by a campaign of civil disruption. And in Britain?

We should hang our heads in shame that in our country where the overwhelming majority are against the EEC, that anyone should take Thatcher's "negotiations" seriously. She was to have eliminated Britain's £1000 million annual net contribution. She has achieved nothing except that the matter will not be further discussed at Summit level.

And yet, Thatcher's rejection of every "concession" offered her - we were now to pay only £300 odd million a year instead of 3 times as much - only underlines the irrelevance of the whole negotiation. Offer, revised offer and rejection succeed each other

to no apparent effect. Or is the explanation that Thatcher has no interest in Britain's contribution to the EEC, or in anything which is not Cruise missiles, NATO or war against the Soviet Union?

If the EEC has turned economics on its head by making non-consumption, and better, non-production its *raison d'être*, it seems to have achieved non-negotiation. Britain refuses to allow a 5 per cent farm price increase. France floats the idea of a lamb mountain with intervention buying of 100,000 tons of sheep-meat at inflated prices. So what, when inflation is in double figures everywhere, and food mountains unquantifiable?

All is no more than a smoke-screen to mask the real destructive work of the EEC, whether it be to destroy steel or hatch plans of war against the USSR, in which all governments co-operate as best they may, as all contribute to NATO. Yet France does not belong, officially at least. Is that why Thatcher is so anti-gallic?

Govt. sanctions State terrorism

NOTHING much is known about the SAS, the army's "secretive elite" except that they smash through embassy windows and into the headlines at the same time. Their menacing presence lurked in the shadows during the train siege in the Netherlands in 1977, and two detachments travelled to Mogadishu in the same year to bail out the West German government. They were not too far away from Balcombe Street during the IRA siege and their continued presence in Northern Ireland only adds to the number of criminals running around administering summary justice to a beleaguered population.

Yet, this headline grabbing is not the stuff of the SAS. Paraded every now and then just to let the working class know that they are still around, the SAS concentrate on what they themselves call "counter-revolutionary warfare" designed not to combat an external enemy but to ensure that the "enemy within", the organised working class, know capitalism is not just fooling around.

Complimentary to the SAS in the legal sphere is the Prevention of Terrorism Act, again not designed to prevent terrorism but to act as a careful monitor of working class activity. The Act enables the police to pick up a wide range of people, hold them for periods in excess of 48 hours, photograph and fingerprint them and then to retain these photographs and fingerprints even though no charges are preferred. In evidence of this of the 3782 detained under the Act up to February 1979, the vast majority (most of whom, hardly surprisingly, were active trade unionists) were not charged with any offence whatsoever.

There can be no doubt that the SAS and the terrorism act are not designed to eliminate terrorism in Britain. Nor can there be any doubt that both exist in order to ensure that terrorism remains the sole preserve of the Thatcher government.

Editorial

HOW CAN A union like the AUEW, which fought and won such a principled industrial action as the strike for a shorter working week, betray such a lack of economic and political understanding as to vote in their National Committee to go on backing Edwardes in destroying Leyland - even when it leads to crossing a brother union's picket lines!

Or on an even larger scale, how could the British labour movement which was so right about the necessity of smashing government wage-fixing and restoring collective bargaining, bringing down Callaghan in the process, then allow a Thatcher to step in and declare an even more primitive war against the working class?

These are similar to the questions raised on the international front of the world working class movement. Where in Iran today is the voice of reason and communism as hordes of mullah-led religious bigots rush into the gap left by the overthrow of the vicious puppet Shah who brutally ran the country in the interests of western imperialists?

Or where now are any of the voices raised in Tien An Men Square for revolution in the hearts and minds of the Chinese people, as China throws open its doors to the big capitalist corporations and urges the US and even Japan to increase their armed might which can only be used against working people?

These are all ideological problems. In struggle the British working class, the Iranian anti-imperialists and the Chinese Liberation Army have shown themselves to have the courage and organization to defeat the class enemy. What has been lacking is the ideological clarity and assurance among the people themselves to build on the ground they have won on the field.

None of us who call ourselves communists can be complacent about this situation. All of us have to ask ourselves whether we are measuring up to the task of enabling our class to develop the ideological conviction which can make and defend revolutions.

Has not one mistake on all our parts been the effort to achieve ideological unity, behind the backs of the people as it were before going to them with a 'hammered-out', 'theoretically correct' Marxist-Leninist line? In this effort, detached from the people's actual struggles, have we not seen those who differed with us theoretically as class enemies - to such an extent that we sometimes allowed the class enemy himself to escape in dust raised by our very ideological disputes over ideological clarity.

Ideological clarity, for those of us who call ourselves communists and for the rest of our working class, can only be achieved to the extent that we are completely with them and of them in the day-to-day struggle. Belittling that day-to-day struggle because it is "not revolutionary enough" is belittling them - the only force which can make revolution.

In genuine struggle, shoulder to shoulder with our fellow workers we will discover who else has the quality of leadership - that is, of being able imaginatively to see the revolutionary strategic possibility in every tactical battle waged day by day and of being able to make workmates see that possibility too.

We may be surprised at some of those who turn out to have this quality of proletarian leadership and in the heat of the battle find courageous allies we never expected to be at hand.

Not so free capitalist radio

A NEW CRUSADE to cleanse the goddess communists in the Soviet Union is about to be launched by Mrs Thatcher in her strenuous efforts to outdo her American admirers. In a radio interview the previous Sunday she said that since even she could not contemplate using modern weapons of war over the issue of Afghanistan the capitalist world should concentrate on methods short of war. To influence the people of the Soviet Union she is suggesting that the latest technology be utilised to beam an incessant stream of what passes as "free world" thinking but which is really old-fashioned anti-communism.

The BBC, ever ready for another hand-out to carry out their part in the cold war - and they have been going full tilt since 1945 - said that what was needed was another two or three million pounds to modernise transmitters for their External Services. With their savage destruction of five orchestras, schools broadcasting and other cultural benefits for the British public, who after all are the ones who have to pay for it, one would have supposed that a more powerful transmitter to relay diatribes against socialism was scarcely the first priority.

The propaganda against the

Soviet Union has never really ceased ever since the October Revolution. The language and method of presentation may have varied though; when one remembers that infamous number of Collier's magazine some 30 years ago, when the luminaries of the English-speaking world, gloated over their fantasies of a Soviet Union destroyed by a western nuclear holocaust, Mrs Thatcher's rankings and the recent hysteria of the Times are not all that new.

The magnificence of the Soviet people when they defeated the Nazis in the second world war at the cost of 20 million dead and when they rebuilt the first socialist state to such a pinnacle that they were the first to leap into space will also make them overthrow revisionists in power today. But that is their job. Those who were the first to establish socialism will also be the first to overthrow revisionism.

Our job is to stop the anti-Soviet hysteria which is once more reaching lunatic proportions because it is a prelude to anti-communist war-mongering. If 45 million Russians do in fact listen to the broadcasts regularly - let them listen to Shakespeare and Shelley and perhaps even the rumblings of the British working class.

Who killed Blair Peach?

IT WAS REVEALED last week, at the Coroner's Inquest that the wound which caused Blair Peach's death could have been caused by a police radio. The instrument would have to have been smooth and hard, said a pathologist, and that a hand held radio as used by the police was the most likely object.

The SPG have had a week of very adverse publicity, not entirely masked by the cartoon strip

antics of their military counterparts. The jury at the Inquest has been told that it was quite usual for police officers to carry offensive weapons when in pursuit of "criminals", jemmies, crowbars, pick axe handles and such momentos of the Empire as rhino whips.

We are all delighted to know that none of these objects are a normal part of the SPG's uniform but there are apparently two dif-

ferent laws, one covering policemen, another everyone else. Only last week at Brighton, thousands of young people were stopped and searched. Many had their boot laces confiscated because they were judged to be 'offensive weapons'. But coachloads of SPG out on a jamboree to the nearest demo are left alone to carry their varied and obscene weapons. Where is the justice in this land?



Pupils at Highbury Hill School in Islington who took an active part in the campaign to save the provision of secondary education in the London borough. The Thatcher Government has just taken an outrageous decision: that the proposed Highbury Hill amalgamation with Shelburne School should go ahead, but Highbury Grove, pervasively associated with Education Minister Rhodes Boyson, should remain unscathed. Despite falling rolls in the area the Government has decided the numbers at Highbury Gove should not be reduced, and the proposed partner in the amalgamation of the boys' schools, Sir Philip Magnus, should be closed. Much anger has been aroused by the decision, and the Fight has been raised to a new level.

Photo: Hackney Gazette

Stop the Bill Impose a workers' guillotine

THE EMPLOYMENT Bill is now in front of the House of Lords, and proposed changes in the law which will undermine the established rights of workers to picket in the course of disputes; interfere with union membership agreements; dismantle individual rights on unfair dismissal, and maternity; repeal the statutory recognition procedure; and out down on guarantee pay - the compensation available to workers who are temporarily laid off.

Peaceful Picketing for a trade dispute has been lawful since the Trades Dispute Act of 1906. We are now being presented with a new definition of "lawful" picketing by which workers would only be allowed to picket at their own place of work, and existing legal immunities would be removed so that any other kind of picketing could result in pickets facing legal actions for injunctions and damages.

The Bill proposes to widen exemptions to unfair dismissal over the closed shop, and introduces a new procedure to make unions pay any compensation awarded to those "unfairly" dismissed.

Since 1971 unfair dismissal legislation has been used by workers attempting to halt unjust and arbitrary sackings. The Tories have already eroded this by increasing from 26 weeks to 52 weeks the period of continuous service necessary to qualify for an unfair dismissal claim.

They now propose to reduce employers' legal responsibilities and weaken workers' unfair dismissal rights even further, so that employers will no longer be required to prove that they "acted reasonably" (!) when dismissing.

They will also be able to offer short fixed term contracts to escape the dismissal legislation altogether, and workers in "new small" firms will be prevented from claiming unfair dismissal for the first two years of the firms existence.

In the case of maternity rights, another clause weakens the "job-back" rights of all women by allowing employers to offer workers returning "suitable" alternative employment.

In a television interview of January 6th, Thatcher described the then Employment Bill as

"inadequate" and said that "it might be necessary to introduce another bill which would revoke legal immunities from trade unions

This legal attack on Trade union immunities has two elements. First, new legal tests are being proposed for any industrial action so that any action which failed to meet "specified criterion" would be illegal. The "specified criteria" will hinge on a judges interpretation of what constitutes "furtherance of a trade dispute."

What a criterion for justice! The second prong of the attack on immunities is designed to prevent unions from taking sympathetic industrial action so that action against employers who are not directly involved in a dispute, would be illegal. Again it is for judges to decide whether unions are acting legally or illegally.

And worse is yet to come. Thatcher has indicated that the Tories would consider legislation to make unions pay for strike damage from their funds. Last Thursday it was announced that plans are afoot to enforce an American style contract system which would be legally binding.

British diplomacy shows its true face

ALL THAT was missing from the press conference held by Whitelaw and McNeer, Commissioner of the Metropolitan Police, were the corpses of those killed - and the whole truth.

All family TV programmes interrupted on all three channels, so many columns of newsprint blackened, so many hours of press conferences and statements - all for the glorification of the killing of first five, then mysteriously, seven men. They even admitted that they could not tell gunmen from hostages. Those that escaped alive from the SAS raid were lucky indeed. The welfare and safety of the hostages hardly featured in the Whitelaw and Thatcher glorification of SAS violence.

What really went on? We saw nothing but bombs, burning, gunflashes. On the number of hostages, gunmen, let alone number killed, who or

what they were, or what they did - on all this nothing but evasions and contradictions.

Even the hostages on their 'liberation' seem to have been held under tighter surveillance than by the gunmen. Now that the official story has been constructed we shall never know what happened. The blackened shell of the burnt out building in Prince's Gate tells no tales on the SAS takeover, as dead men tell no lies.

But it does speak the truth more than any press release. Right from the start of the siege, the government had no intention of ending it peacefully, and had decided to use it as a training and propaganda exercise for the SAS. Carter fails to invade Iran, but Thatcher shows them how. The gunmen's demands for mediation by Arab ambassadors were denied them although five hostages were released over a period of

three days as a good-will gesture. The SAS would have stormed the building earlier had they been ready.

One thing is clear. Terrorist and criminal acts, whether they be those of fools or agents provocateurs, serve only one side, namely the ruling class. The IRA bombing of pubs and shopping places in British cities led to the Terrorist Act, dubbed as anti-terrorist, which years later remains law.

The siege of the Iranian Embassy gives the opportunity to portray the SAS as saviours with an extensive TV and press coverage to produce hero worship among school-children. The use of guns was a novelty only a few years ago. It now seems that machine guns, grenades and storm troops are to hold a common place in the life of the capital.

to 'deal with the unions'.

The first crack appeared in the printing industry. After only a few days of 'national lockout' it was soon becoming clear that well under half those who should have been sacked were in fact outside their gates. The rest had already signed agreements on the NGA's terms, or else the employers, wary of Thatcher-style industrial relations, had refused to lock out while negotiations were in progress. These included the President of BPIF, who complained that as his competitors were working he would do the same.

The final straw came just a week after the lockout decision, when Odham's, who print Woman's Realm, Woman's Own and Woman's Weekly as well as many other magazines, reached an interim deal on the NGA's terms - and Odham's is owned by IPC.

Farm workers meet to make policy on future of agriculture

THE 1980 Biennial Conference of the National Union of Agricultural and Allied Workers at Cromer in Norfolk, will be a crucial one for rural trade unionists. Two issues dominate the list of motions to be dealt with by delegates: wages and a possible merger.

In view of Thatcher's policy of attacking unions she considers weak, conference must emerge with a wages campaign strong enough to defend farm worker's living standards. More emphasis should be placed on action to back up vigorous negotiations, rather than just raising the size of the claim every year by £20.

The possibility of NUAAW merging with a larger Union has been raised as a solution to present financial problems. A host of other topics are to be debated by conference, all showing concern for the quality

of rural life. There is universal condemnation of the cuts in public expenditure that hit rural services so hard, while a call is made for withdrawal from the EEC to protect our agriculture from further attack. From a branch in Norfolk there is a motion demanding the withdrawal of all American missiles from British soil.

It is hoped that conference will realise the urgency of the present situation and will emerge with positive policies in answer to the Thatcher government's attacks. Delegates will gain valuable experience when conference adjourns on May 14th to join with local unions in the TUC Day of Action. The 1980 Biennial Conference should prove to be a turning point for the NUAAW and the future of the organised working class in rural Britain depends on the decisions made at Cromer.

Print employers in disarray

A NATIONAL lockout began on Monday April 28th of members of the National Graphical Association (NGA) in general printing and provincial newspapers.

This was the retaliation by the two employers' organisations, the Newspaper Society (NS) and the British Printing Industries Federation (BPIF), in response to a highly effective month long campaign of guerrilla sanctions over pay which had bitten deep into schedules and profits.

Almost simultaneously - it was at noon on Friday April 25 - dismissal notices were issued to around 1500 journalists employed by the world's largest magazine publishing business, the International Publishing Corporation (IPC)

Following a one day strike

by the journalists, who are in dispute over a 17 per cent pay offer, IPC had demanded the withdrawal of all sanctions, including the refusal to work overtime or do freelance work.

What links the two disputes is that IPC, as well as employing journalists, is also Britain's major printing employer, owning the presses which produce magazines with a combined circulation of over 8 million a week.

What makes the lockouts and dismissals even more sinister is the fact that the Chairman of Reed International - the company which owns IPC - is also Chairman of a committee of the Confederation of British Industry entitled The Balance of Power Committee, and is a prime adviser to Thatcher on how

At the other end of the production line IPC's journalists were quite unbowed by the issuing of dismissal notices. They refused to accept the sack, and continued to turn up for work.

Soon after, worried by the disintegration of their printing lockout, IPC sent round rumours of a 'new offer' - only to be told flatly by the journalists at a mass meeting in London's Central Hall that they now had conditions before they would talk: full reinstatement with pay for the time since notices were issued. IPC now finds itself in the strange situation that its journalists are producing material for publication, and the printers are ready to print it. But because it does not recognise that it is employing those journalists, it will not have the material processed.

As for the BPIF and the NS, their joint action against the NGA has already disintegrated into mutual recrimination, for the moment behind closed doors. While the lockout is still holding in the provincial newspapers field (though by no means as well as was expected), in general

printing the situation for the BPIF is so bad that at the end of last week they offered reinstatement to the NGA while talks were going on. The NGA's response was decisive: In a masterpiece of understatement an official indicated that he thought the tide was beginning to turn. Accordingly, the NGA would not return to work until their demands had been met.

All this must be very galling for Reed International - the very people telling other employers to stand firm and teach their unions a lesson, are finding the classroom roles reversed. They have had to stand by and see national newspapers stopped in solidarity by NGA members, and watch how their lockout has turned into a strike. And all this in 1980, which should have been the Year of the Employers. The NGA won't come back to work, the NUJ refuse to leave it. The employers' attempt to impose a British Leyland type of settlement to smash the unions is set to end in failure. Obviously the only people who learned any lessons from last year's dispute at Times Newspapers were the workers.

Ford bleed Britain dry - Foundry closure?

FOUNDRY WORKERS at Ford Dagenham have been told by management that there are three futures for the foundry there: to stay as it is, a 20 per cent reduction, or closure.

The Dagenham foundry is now 22 years old and requires £50 million investment to bring it up to modern standards of production and to comply with the Health and Safety at Work Act. 4000 work in the foundry at present and there are already lines which are not in use.

The management are also attempting to sell a double day shift to replace the present shift system and slow down production. This scheme is the Ford reply to the demand for a shorter working week. The kind of shortness Ford means does not impress the foundry workers. They see in the double day shift the possible loss of one third of the jobs.

Ford are complaining that the pound is too expensive for investment in Britain to be worthwhile (not that anyone can remember a different story when the pound was cheap). Like all monopolies Ford simply plays the market

and switches production accordingly - except that it is always away from Britain. Even the much vaunted engine factory in Wales, paid for by the British taxpayer, simply means that the 2500 new jobs there will result in 2500 fewer jobs at Dagenham.



The fate of the foundry is also linked with the introduction of the aluminium engine head in September. Instead of making this head themselves Ford have decided to buy it from Fiat.

Ford workers will have to decide for themselves what

happens to the Dagenham foundry - after all it wasn't so long ago that Mr Ford himself said he would take Ford from Britain and put it on the continent. The Ford workers replied, "you'll have to carry it on your own back then," and the threat evapo-

rated. The foundry is not just one section of the company: it is part and parcel and if it is allowed to die, it only means another part will be next. This is no time to forget the record profits which are being used to bail out the US Ford company.

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