



Thatcher must go!

THATCHER STIRS IT AT HOME AND ABROAD

THATCHER, even before becoming prime minister, was the most outspoken proponent of belligerent confrontation with the Soviet Union stupidly glorying in her name 'the iron lady', which in its maiden form was a mediaeval torture device. It was Thatcher who, as part of her aggressive stance towards the Soviet Union, took the lead in making Western Europe and Britain the primary site for a nuclear war whenever a US president decides to push the button. Therefore on Thatcher falls the major responsibility for the present extremely dangerous world situation. It is our responsibility to make sure she goes.

The opening call for an end to so-called detente and a beginning of hostile relations with the Soviet Union came from Thatcher speaking in Washington - just as Churchill launched the Cold War at Fulton. It is Thatcher who is taking the lead in trying to humiliate the Soviet Union by removing the Olympic Games - Olympic Games from which Britain could well be barred anyway for the Government's pro-Apartheid attitude. It is Thatcher who has sent frigates and supply ships to join the US fleet in the Mediterranean

which is being assembled to threaten the people of the Middle East. The fact that she makes herself ridiculous in sending three frigates to aid the US armada should not blind us to the dangers of her line.

It does not matter to Thatcher that she is practising the most warlike gunboat diplomacy at a time when Britain, though perfectly capable of defending itself if attacked, is in no position, either morally or physically, to become involved in a war of unprovoked aggression.

Thatcher's is the most eager voice for nuclear war among all those raised in the International arena, while Britain is the most ill-prepared of all countries for any kind of civil defence.

None of the billions of pounds which Thatcher is robbing from school children, from the old and the sick, and from Britain's Industrial development, to spend on arms can be called 'defence expenditure'. It is being spent entirely on offence, with no regard for the consequences for the people of Britain. She is far and away the most offensive 'statesman' of our time. We owe it to ourselves, to get rid of Thatcher.

Govt policy of impoverishment - rationing through gas prices

THE THATCHER government policy of inflation in an attempt to impoverish the working class is nowhere more contemptuous than in the case of the price of gas. The government is insisting on an increase of 29 per cent this year and have devised a formula of "inflation plus 10 per cent" for following years. In spite of weak opposition in parliament, the government found it difficult to explain these rises except to say "the nation as a whole will have to be rationed by price" and "the worst way to help the poor is to hold down prices".

The notion that the government is concerned to save gas

for future generations somehow does not ring true, given their desire to get us all signed up for another war. In fact over 10 per cent of gas from the North Sea is flared off each year by oil companies in too much of a rush to bother about putting in equipment to draw off the gas. And Thatcher's government has recently relaxed restrictions on such waste. The only waste these 'economists' can see is that people burn gas to keep warm, in the case of pensioners, especially, to stay alive.

As for the profits of British Gas, they are enormous. Last year over £800 million, this

Aroint thee, witch!

year probably over £1000 million. The price increases will mean another £300 million profit. The government is using gas prices as a form of taxation. Even the £400 million compulsory loan to the government from British Gas will be paid for at 16 per cent interest by the taxpayer.

In the same week that all this was announced, manual workers in the gas industry were offered between £7 and £11 increase in this year's wage negotiations. This represents about half the current inflation rate, a wage cut, and has been rejected.

Another aspect of British Gas profits is the use in the past 2 years of new accountancy methods which make the profits vanish. Last year £500 million were hidden in this way - equivalent to £500

per employee in the industry.

No wonder then that as well as pushing for better pay, the gas workers are now considering a campaign to show their opposition to gas price rises. These are seen as an attempt to price gas out of the reach of most people in Britain.

Maybe it is true, as has been suggested in the financial pages, that the government would like to bypass Britain and pipe gas into France and West Germany where they would get double prices. Certainly such a policy would be consistent with the destruction of basic industries and services and fits in well with the crazy policies of Common Market mountains and lakes - maybe we will get to see a Common Market bubble for Britain's gas.

Wales TUC mobilises to defend steel

THE WALES TUC has decided to mobilise reserves in defence of the 11-15,000 steelworkers who will lose their jobs at the Port Talbot and Llanwern works under BSC's proposals destined ultimately to end all iron and steel making in Britain. The decision represents a qualitative change in the trade union movement and demands from workers throughout Britain that they take up the baton.

Nor since Red Friday in 1921 and the 1926 General Strike have workers demonstrated such a willingness to commit themselves wholeheartedly to the cause of their comrades. Nor is it any less than is needed, if the calamitous effects of such BSC proposals on the jobs of every South Wales worker are to be avoided.

There are predictions of 15-19 per cent unemployment as the shock wave moves through the railways, road haulage, docks, engineering, local authorities; and not least the area coalfield. Already the NCB's area director, P. Weekes, has earmarked 8000 pit jobs as being affected. Hence the need for a united determined response - the fight for steel is no longer just within the sphere of the steelworker.

The original plan to involve miners and steelworkers in indefinite strike from January 21st, with support action from all transport workers, has, on the advice of the TUC nationally, been held back to enable the fullest involvement of all workers in Britain on March 10th. There will be in its place a one day stoppage on January 28th to which the workers involved in the ori-



The Week

PRESIDENT Carter is eminently qualified to pronounce on the Olympics. We remember a well knackered Carter dropping out of an 8 mile race, last September, after a mile-and-a-half. We remember it well because it was symbolic and because the dollar dropped 50 cents as a result. Can running for the US Presidency be any easier? How can Carter claim to lead when everyone knows he finished 4369th.

THATCHER has got the needle because the IOC won't accept fox-hunting as an Olympic sport. (Nor witchhunting either come to think of it.) Thatcher's "torch of freedom" is not quite the Olympic model. Hers is more a sort of flamethrower. She can't understand why athletes compete for the honour of winning a Gold rather than for the six grammes of fine gold that winners' medals contain. Now the race to Hatton Garden is an event that the Thatcher lot would call "exercising free will and individual initiative!"

IN ALL fairness to Thatcher she is being pressured by her backbench MPs annoyed at having their their proposals for new sports to be included in the Olympic programme rudely turned down by the IOC. They had made proposals for Hunt the Bear, Roulette, Christians and Lions, Monopoly, the Eton Wall Game and Pocket Billiards. Ironic really, when you think they're all for the High Jump.



While THE OBSERVER joins the warmongering chorus of assuming an invasion of Yugoslavia by the Soviet Union, it prints a map showing Yugoslavia as having swallowed up both Albania and northern Greece.

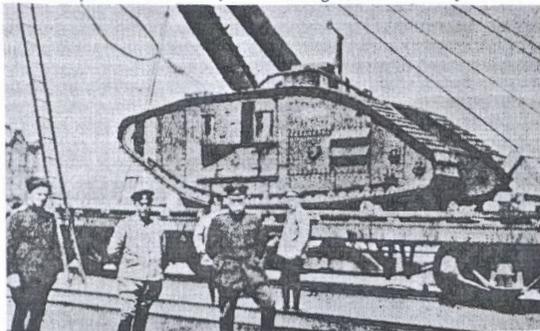
EVEN MORE ironic is the predicament of the European Parliament. Apparently it's looking for a home. Not only is it homeless but the latest "Europol" shows a clear majority are oblivious to its existence. In Britain a clear majority favour withdrawal from the EEC altogether. People are funny like that. They show no interest in some Thatcher-selected Mount Olympus, while the real Olympics will be watched by hundreds of millions all over the world.

"THE FIRST duty of government is defence to make life possible". So said Rhodes Boyson at a recent University Sector Conference of the NUS. This "theory" was put forward to explain why there were cuts in the NHS and education but increased spending on the armed forces and "Law and Order". He assured the students that he was motivated by a strong desire not to be come "part of the Russian Colonial Empire". Hasn't Dr. Boyson heard of making life possible by providing jobs, education and a health service.

Historic Notes

"WE ARE not now engaged in the Eastern Question but in the battle of civilization against barbarism for the independence of Europe" appeared in The Times in 1854. Except for a small group of Manchester School Radicals, apostles of peace and free trade who called the Crimean War a crime and who, for their pains, were burnt in effigy by crowds in Manchester, most British people welcomed it.

As in the Afghan and Boer Wars, war-fever burned in Britain from Conservatives to Radicals. The three wars had many things in common: they were all technical victories for the British but, in reality, all defeats. They all showed up the gross inefficiency as well as greed of the ruling class, and, in the end, the British people came to understand the squalor, the oppression not only of the troops but of civilians, and



INTERVENTION 1919 British tanks in Russia as part of the counter-revolutionary front.

the twin lies of patriotism and religion that were used to cloak the hellish truth.

Once again the war fever, like the tunic plague, attacked the British people. In 1914 trench warfare ended all that. There was no war fever in 1939 and today British workers laugh at the bleating old ewe Thatcher.

No two historians will agree on why the Crimean War started, perhaps something to do with the safety of Constantinople at risk because of the weakness of Turkey or the guarding of Jerusalem itself! It is often claimed that it grew out of a squabble between Roman Catholics and Greek Orthodox monks for the control of the holy places in Jerusalem.

Napoleon III of France was protector of the Catholics; Czar Nicholas demanded that the Turks recognise his authority over the

monks and all Greek Orthodox Christians in the Turkish Empire, which included large parts of Europe. He marched into the Danubian provinces to ensure acceptance.

The Turks refused and declared war on Russia in 1853. When the Russians defeated a Turkish squadron at Sinope on the Black Sea, the French and British ordered their fleets into the Black Sea, and in 1854 a British frigate appeared before the walls of Sebastopol.

The war lasted until the Treaty of Paris in 1856 which admitted Turkey into the "Concert of Europe", declared the Black Sea a neutral zone and ordered that the Dardanelles and Bosphorus be closed to all warships except Turkish ones. Everyone knows of the greatness of Florence Nightingale and the incredible silliness (or bravery according to the point of view) of the Charge of the Light Brigade; the names of Sebastopol, Balaclava, Inkerman were known to all from the famous Times correspondent Russell.

Slower were they to learn of the usual story of British armies in the reign of Victoria: scurvy, cholera, hunger, bad communications, incompetent generals and a government administration that could only be described as lunatic. Only one third of the casualties resulted from battle, the rest from disease: journalists wrote and the people back home read of the criminal negligence and stupidity of the government.

The bravery of the British forces was never in doubt though the French claimed that they had more intelligent commanders. The fighting prowess of the Russians, their grey uniforms almost invisible in the snow, was again demonstrated. For Russians, in spite of the despotic Czar, fought and died with the indomitable heroism that they showed later against the Nazis.

The war had many results large and small. The newspaper correspondents became important people (today some of them think that they make events not just report them). The War Office was swept cleaner; even by the end of the war soldiers were being reasonably fed and clothed and, thanks to the genius of Nightingale and her War Office friend Herbert, the wounded were being treated humanely.

The recurring scandals of maladministration led to the lessening of patronage; from then on examinations were instituted for all grades of the civil service. But one change did not occur. The fear and hatred of Russia, its immense size, the indomitable character of its people caused terror in the leaders of the Great Powers.

Russia, whether led by a Czar, a Communist or a Revisionist, was regarded as the enemy of all. The American General who is reported as having said during the Second World War, "All along we have been fighting the wrong guys" spoke for every capitalist in Europe and America and now in China.

'Holy War' against USSR opposed at UN

AMERICAN action against the Soviet Union in the United Nations was hailed by the Americans themselves as "the strongest action against the Soviet Union for 25 years". The procedure adopted of bypassing the Soviet veto in the Security Council is all too reminiscent of the way the US sprang the invasion of Korea under US auspices.

Thatcher and Carter, however, cannot claim to lead a united world into what they hoped would be a vicious pogrom against the Soviet Union. Opposition from the unlikely quarters even within their 'own' camp has seriously undermined their unity. Accordingly their rhetoric has become even more strident, as they stumble into idiocies such as planning to withdraw from the Moscow Olympics - to the publicly expressed disgust of British athletes. The BBC, obediently reflecting their warmongering, cancels a series of programmes about the Soviet Union and flogs the utterly false analogy of comparing the USSR and Nazi Germany.

Total disregard for the truth was expressed by the US delegate at the UN, commenting on the 104 to 19 votes for withdrawal of troops from Afghanistan, when he said that the vote represented the "practical unanimity of the Third World countries".

Hardly. African countries above all refused to be associated with the US-British drive for war. Ethiopia, Mozambique, Angola voted against, while abstaining were Algeria, Benin, Guinea, Burundi, Guinea-Bissau, Congo, Uganda, Madagascar, Malia, Zambia, Equatorial Guinea, Chad, the Central African Republic, Libya and Sudan did not bother to vote at all.

The number of African countries refusing to be drawn into

a war with the USSR is a measure of their hostility to Anglo-US imperialism, and explains the barrage of propaganda for some years now, vilifying their desire to be free of Western colonialism as "pro-Sovietism".

You can only be truly "non-aligned", a bona fide member of "the third world", if you align yourself utterly under the domination of the US-British-NATO axis, and their new found friend, China. In effect this means nearly all of Central and South America (with the exception of Nicaragua and Cuba who voted against), and the Middle and Far East, where Vietnam and Laos were the two exceptions, carrying on the proud struggle against US plans for world domination.

African countries refuse to join Anglo-American crusade

So long as such a stand for peace is taken, the Carter-Thatcher encirclement of the USSR cannot be achieved, and war is prevented.

Frustrated, they turn to lying propaganda. What dishonesty in calling for the withdrawal of all foreign troops from Afghanistan, when they would never contemplate withdrawing US troops from Europe, British troops from Ireland, and now Africa. Carter openly states that he will use whatever force necessary to protect American interests abroad, and is recruiting a new army to do so!

Yet another lie is the USSR's alleged drive to Middle East oil, as if it were not the US which is propping up some of the most reactionary Islamic regimes in the world, simply to extract the oil abroad. The simple fact is

that it is the USSR's oil and mineral resources and its largely successful capitalist exploitation of them which are the envy of NATO imperialism. The thrust is not from the USSR into the Middle East, but from the Middle East into the USSR and the oil-rich Caucasus. US and British capitalism in decline can tolerate no rivals. It is like the ganging up of imperialist powers before the First World War.

But even in the Middle East, where Cyprus, Syria and the Yemen did not vote with the US, the war-mongers cannot count on totally subservient allies. And then, for all the paranoia about the Russian fleet in the Indian Ocean, came the defection of India, once again under a Gandhi dictatorship, objecting to the US and British fomenting war on her borders. The reactionaries of the world will never be totally united.

Within Europe itself, the massive demonstrations against the new US nuclear missiles in every major capital except London, have borne their valuable fruit. The US and British delegates to the NATO meeting were isolated in their proposals for practical sanctions against the USSR, which were not adopted. In the words of the NATO Secretary General, there "was no agreement on any one step to be taken", as the French and German governments in particular refuse to fall in with Thatcher's crazy strategy. Both nations have fought the Russians with disastrous consequences to themselves, and are for the present wiser for it. Willy Brandt, the former darling of liberal reaction, is practically held to be a communist because of his view that "Afghanistan shows the need for more detente not less".

ZIMBABWE

Ceasefire threatened by British violations

IN A LETTER to Thatcher, Robert Mugabe has threatened to break off the ceasefire in Zimbabwe (Rhodesia) if the British Governor Soames does not stop violating the terms of the Lancaster House Agreement. He has, for instance, just extended the State of Emergency for another six months, which means that press censorship and detention without trial will continue.

South African military units are still permitted to remain in the country; General Walls has been deploying his forces in places left by Patriotic Front Forces, and ~~not~~ has been done to control the so-called auxiliaries, who were set up as a private army by Muzorewa. ZANU and ZAPU officials have been subjected to armed attacks as part of a campaign of intimidation aimed at Patriotic Front supporters; and white-owned printing companies have also refused to print posters and literature for their election campaign.

So serious are the provocations and violations, which now include the murder of seven guerrillas by Rhodesian security forces, that the President of Tanzania has called for a meeting of other African leaders to consider British infringements of the agreement. But the simple truth is that no agreement will bring peace to Zimbabwe while British troops remain.

Editorial

WE OFTEN talk about the dictatorship of the proletariat as the political form under which socialism can replace capitalism under which a system based on the profit of the few can be turned into a system serving the needs of the whole working people.

What becomes of 'democracy' when the working class establishes a proletarian dictatorship? To answer that question let us see where democracy is today.

'Democracy' comes from the Greek: demos, the people and Kratos, rule or authority - the rule of the people. The idea of ruling, of actually running things, is an essential part of the concept. In a democracy the people, the ordinary working people who make up the vast majority of the population, are sovereign. As Hobbes teaches, sovereignty cannot be divided, delegated or merely represented. It is a simple "we-they" situation. Either we, the working class, rule them, the owners of capital and the coupon clippers; or they rule us. It is as simple as the economic expression of the same fundamental truth: either we, the working class, are exploited or we put an end to exploitation; and if we put an end to exploitation, we must have the authority to see that it doesn't come sneaking back.

Can it be pretended that the working class rules Britain today? If so, why are they cutting our wages and lowering our standard of living and putting us out of work in the interest of their profits? Why are they cutting back the education of our children and slashing our own health service? Why are they destroying Britain's industrial base when the country's future depends on its growth and development? Why, when our country is so rich in material resources and human skills, would they encourage stagnation, contraction, poverty and decay? And why most important of all why, in capitalism's interest, would they put at risk our very survival by permitting a foreign power to establish nuclear weapons on our soil, pointed at the heart of a third nuclear power?

Britain is supposed to be a democracy because we are allowed every so often to vote for one or other party to form a government. But the choice is among parties which are all capitalist. What we are not allowed to vote on is whether we shall go on being exploited or not, and beside that, every other question for us pales into insignificance. Ending our exploitation cannot come by voting in a Parliamentary election - only by the extra-Parliamentary means of revolution.

Bourgeois democracy is a contradiction in terms. Literally it must mean rule of the people exercised on their behalf by those who happen to be their exploiters. That is not to say that bourgeois democracy has no social content at all. It does recognise certain rights and civil liberties the people have been strong enough to win for themselves. But it is an unstable concept and in crisis tends rapidly toward fascism which is naked bourgeois rule with no pretense of being on anybody's behalf but the bourgeoisie.

Self-conscious movement of the immense majority

Real democracy can only be the dictatorship of the proletariat - the rule of the working class. It is democratic because the working class, those who live by the sale of their mental and manual labour power as opposed to those who own and control the means of production, make up over 90 per cent of the population. There is no movement in history as democratic as the revolution which establishes the dictatorship of the proletariat - the "self-conscious, independent movement of the immense majority, in the interest of the immense majority". That it is, politically speaking, "a self-conscious movement of the majority" rules out any pretence of advancing the cause of workers by plots, conspiracies or putsches. Nothing could be so utterly alien to such a movement as the infiltration behind the backs of the working class of a bourgeois party - the Labour Party - by so-called leftists who think or pretend to think they can thus change it into a revolutionary party.

Any time we, the party of the working class, dare say that we are acting on behalf of the working class, instead of with and through the working class of which we are an inseparable part, we will have ceased to be democratic and should be repudiated by the working class. The dictatorship of the proletariat can only be won and maintained by the working class itself. And at this juncture in history the only alternative is to be the victims of the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie. There are still many workers who have not yet grasped this fundamental political truth; but there cannot be many who have not already taken in its most immediate expression: Thatcher out!

Government scroungers of our benefits

WHILE severe cuts are being made in the Civil Service, the Government has felt able to appoint 1050 additional staff for the detection of fraud.

During 1977/78, 435 special investigating officers were employed by DHSS. The less than £3m found to have been fraudulently claimed represented 0.1 per cent of the £4.5 billion paid out in benefits.

During the same period, £345m of supplementary benefits were unclaimed by those entitled to them. Most were pensioners, terrified by such well-known denunciations as "abusing the system" or "scrounging off the welfare state" or, more likely, simply unable through age or ill-health to comply with the conditions required. The Government has taken little interest in these

Tories return to attack on unions

AMIDST the deepening confrontation between steelmen and government, and the growing determination of the workers to halt all movement of steel, a timely reminder of the government's proposals on picketing and industrial relations in general occurred at the East Midlands Regional Council of the TUC in Nottingham on Jan 12. A call to mobilise trade unionists against this 'reactionary and dangerous backlash' was made by Bill Keys, General Secretary of SOGAT.

Remembering their last ill-fated excursion into trade union legislation, the Tories this time claim no instant solutions, but merely propose their measures as being a "fair and balanced framework" for industrial relations. Low-key presentation should blind no one to the facts.

Picketing

Recently James Prior, a 'moderate' man, graciously recognising workers have a right to join trade unions, focussed on three major areas of the Employment Bill. The first, naturally, was so-called "secondary picketing", that emotive phrase beloved of politicians, leader writers and lawyers but unknown to the labour movement.

The Bill aims to restrict rights of picketing to workers at their

own place of work, with the exception of those who work in more than one place of work or where picketing their own workplace is "impracticable". All other types of picket can be sued by an employer, or customers or suppliers. Where fellow workers join a picket line in support of a strike, the entire picket is open to prosecution. The aim is to make effective picketing impossible and ban solidarity action and flying pickets.

Only a government which has learned nothing and forgotten nothing could really believe that workers as determined as the steel workers would restrict themselves to their own plant, that the ingenuity of the miners' flying pickets of 1972 and 1974 and the solidarity of Saltley depot would be cowed by law. The answer of the labour movement is given by the steel workers. They recognise no primary, secondary or tertiary picketing, merely the best tactics to bring employers and government to their knees.

Closed shop

As a champion of industrial rights, Prior and his colleagues wish to change the arrangements on closed shops giving scabs and eccentrics greater freedom to opt out of unions thus laying the unions open to constant investigation by the courts and

finers. The aim is to weaken trade unions and prevent organisation even becoming established.

Employment protection

Finally, the most ignoble and revealing aspects of the Bill are contained in the proposals to repeal large sections of the Employment Protection Act. Such rights as exist against unfair dismissal and maternity leave must be eliminated to stimulate business. Prior has actually stated that these rights "stifle initiative", perhaps the first time an economic theory has been propounded that regards pregnant women as a major hindrance to Britain's economic survival.

These "modest" proposals are but the first stage. The government has made plans for further restrictions on trade unions as amendments to the Employment Bill or in a separate bill later in the year.

Clearly, the labour movement must be mobilised not only around the TUC Day of Action on May 14 but in every struggle against the government, to demonstrate that, like the steelmen, it is organised labour which makes its own rules in industrial action and that legal restrictions are utterly irrelevant in the fight to save Britain.



Thatcher is repeating the error of Heath whose Industrial Relations Act was smashed by workers.
Photo: The Worker

Thatcher squanders on war production

THIS THATCHER Government, in its thirst for war, stated in November last year that it intended to increase military expenditure, with an additional £4000m to be spent on Trident missiles, to replace Polaris. Military expenditure is to be increased by over 3 per cent to £8000m a year, with similar reductions in the money spent on health, education and public housing.

Thatcher has often said that we (they?) spend too little on

armaments and as such are letting down the side, NATO. The truth is different, however, with Britain spending more as a proportion of Gross National Product than any other country in Europe, or NATO, excluding the USA, and we are less than one per cent behind them. If Thatcher is to consolidate her position as the new captain of NATO, we all have to dig a little bit deeper in our pockets to pay for it all (and keep our heads down).

The Government says it does not believe in 'lame ducks' or in 'overmanned' industries. Yet it has found one, the war industry, pumps money into it and ignores the overmanning. Thatcher wants to 'shed' workers in the steel industry because at 28 per cent of total costs, labour costs are too high. In the armed forces, however, labour costs (military and civilian) amount to just under 40 per cent (excluding pensions); how about shedding some of your soldier boys then, Maggie?

Military expenditure in 1978 accounted for 38 per cent of all

central government expenditure, and that does not take account of civil defence or military expenditure masked in other statistical categories, such as External Relations!

The frightening size of military expenditure in Britain is difficult to comprehend, but a few comparisons may be illustrative. The Multi-Role Combat Aircraft projects costs are in excess of the entire cost of Britain's health and personal social services for 1976/77. The price of one new frigate would provide for a new 500 bed hospital. And the building of the submarine Superb was more expensive than building 4000 new homes.

The money to be made for big business in Britain by supplying the armed forces is equally huge, as several bribery scandals have shown. Contracts for armament worth in excess of £100 million were awarded in 1976/77, which was about 10 per cent of the total equipment budget; 63 per cent went to 38 companies.

Newcastle Poly

AT THE END of last year, Newcastle Polytechnic was threatened with a catastrophic £610,000 cut from its budget of £15.9 million. Nationally, polytechnics are financed from the Advanced Further Education Pool and the Government has now taken a decision to cut this pool by almost 10 per cent. This will have disastrous effects on the entire higher education system.

At the Polytechnic in Newcastle, the cut has been increased from £610,000 to £2 million - almost 13 per cent! The Director has said that this could only be achieved by sacking around 200 lecturers out of a staff of 731 - almost 1 in 3. This would mean closing scores of courses and even whole Faculties - until now unthinkable.

This would be the beginning of the end of the Polytechnic, as the loss of up to 1000 students would mean a massive loss in revenue, and a downward spiral to closure. If this savage cut is, as seems certain, to be repeated throughout Britain's 31 polytechnics, it would destroy a large slice of higher education. Workers throughout education are beginning to

realise that the policy of this Government is not designed to save money, but to destroy education.

At Newcastle, the Joint Unions Committee, representing all campus workers, from lecturers to cleaners to students, has pledged complete opposition to any cuts in financing, and has shown a willingness to fight to defend what is ours - education. As the staggering nature of this attack wears off, the workers are realising that this will be a protracted and increasingly bitter fight, one which will have full support locally, and which will have to be fought throughout higher education. The struggle must also be taken outside the colleges, and must be supported actively by all workers, as it is a direct attack on us all. This has already begun in Newcastle with the decision of the Trades Council to throw its weight behind any action undertaken by the Polytechnic workforce.

The fight begins in earnest on January 23, with the first-ever mass meeting of all staff and students at the Polytechnic, organised by the Joint Unions Committee.

Teachers must control the curriculum

EVER SINCE Callaghan's launching of the 'great' debate on education, modern advocates of a centrally imposed curriculum in our schools have gained ground. This has culminated in the Thatcher government's first step towards central control of the curriculum with the publication of a report by the education ministers for England and Wales entitled "A Framework for the School Curriculum".

The danger of the report is not so much in what it says but in that it says anything at all on this subject. The curriculum is at the moment in the hands of the teaching profession. Thatcher now wishes to

take control, the great advocate of less government interference!

This is not to say that the proposals are not insidious and can be ignored. There is a proposal insulting in its implication that all pupils should devote not less than 10 per cent of school time to mathematics and not less than 10 per cent to English - as though this is not already the case! That this is so is borne out by HMI reports.

The proposals would clearly not guarantee education for any pupil but would certainly curtail it. For example, for a pupil taking two science subjects at GCE ordinary level, the government's limit

of 20 per cent of school time devoted to science would jeopardise chances of success and rule out possibility of taking three science subjects.

The National Union of Teachers has denounced the report. The NUT President said the report's appearance offered a frightening glimpse of preparation for a dictatorship.

Predictably the report could not resist stating "Pupils need to acquire an understanding of the economic basis of society and how wealth is created". Presumably teachers should aim for an understanding as perfect as the government's!



Photo: The Worker

Save Steel - Save Britain

A Leaflet produced by the Iron and Steel Trades Confederation contains the following statement:

Not content with making the lowest offer of the pay round, BSC now plans to destroy 53,000 jobs, adding famous steelmaking towns like Consett and Llanwern to the same scrap heap as Hartlepool, Bilston, Glegarnock, East Moors and Shotton. Twenty-six thousand jobs have already gone since the start of 1978.

One steelworker in three will be sacked. The Tories and BSC say this is the way to put British Steel right. We say: British Steel will never recover from this body blow. The closures now proposed will lead to massive redundancies on the railways, on the docks and in the pits.

We make the steel to make your cars, bikes, cans, buildings and washing machines. In fact everything is either made from steel or by machinery made from steel.

Destroy British Steel and you destroy British industry.

Engineers Support Steel Workers Resolution

This Number 25 Divisional Committee of the AUEW declares its full support to all trade unionists on strike within the steel industry, and calls upon all convenors, shop stewards and members in the Division to demonstrate their solidarity by taking all measures possible in their respective establishments to back the steel workers including a positive refusal to accept lay-offs.

The intolerable conditions offered to the ISTC in accord with Government policy is aimed at reducing the living standards of working people and we congratulate the members in steel on their action to defeat such policies.

Their victory will be a victory for all trade unionists. Their fight is our fight.

For the Urgent Attention of the Industry Secretary

Joseph says it is not reasonable to expect taxpayers to put up more money to give steel workers better wages. Let him ask us what we taxpayers think about it. We would say in no uncertain terms that it is a damned sight more reasonable to pay steel workers a living wage to make steel than it is to pay very high salaries to Joseph and his ilk to destroy Britain's steel industry.

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Wales TUC

mobilises to defend steel ginal plan are already committed, and which other unions are being asked to join.

It is on such opposition that capitalism will founder. As the core of advanced industrial society on which all wealth-creating manufacture rests, iron and steel making is a microcosm of Britain in enforced decline.

Since 1972, BSC have, in collaboration with successive governments, pursued a deliberate policy of starving plants such as Ebbw Vale, East Moors, Shotton, and Corby, of all investment, all of which are closed or are almost closed, supposedly in favour of concentration at the five integrated works at Ravenscraig, Teeside, Scunthorpe, Llanwern, and Port Talbot.

Now, with the attack on the three latter, their wilful design of laying waste our industrial capacity approaches the final stages. Imported basic steel alone is needed to sustain the new BSC Holdings Ltd, which has taken control of all finishing steel processes, such as tinplate, special, organic and electrical steels. Britain in microcosm from workshop to assembly shop of the world, from a highly skilled to unskilled working class, from industry to desert. We can't eat steel, but we can't eat without it.

Bookshops

- Bellman Bookshop** 155 Fortress Road, London NW5
- Brighton Workers Bookshop** 37 Gloucester Road, Brighton
- Clarion Books** 5 The Precinct, Stanford-le-Hope, Essex
- Main Trend Books** 17 Midland Road, St. Philips, Bristol
- Northern Star Bookshop** 18A Leighton Street, Leeds
- Basildon Bookstall** Tues, Fri, Sat Marketplace
- Hull Bookstall** Old Town Market, Saturdays
- Liverpool Bookstall** every Thursday Liverpool University

Public Meetings

- BRIGHTON MEETING**
Friday 25th January, Trade Unions - The Future of Britain. 7.30 pm, Brighton Workers Bookshop, 37, Gloucester Road, Brighton
- LONDON MEETINGS**
To be held every other Friday at 7.30 pm at the Bellman Bookshop, 155 Fortress Road, Tufnell Park, London NW5.
- Friday, February 1st Unite all against Thatcher: Get her before she gets us.
 - Friday, February 15th Hitler, Thatcher: guns, not butter.
 - Friday, February 29th Our trade unions or their law?
 - Friday, March 14th The economics of destruction.
 - Friday, March 28th The future betrayed? Our children's inheritance is not for sale.

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P. 1: Laurie Sparham (IFL).
P. 4: Press Association.