



## All over Britain, workers -

# DEFEND PAY, SAVE JOBS



SINCE 8 December 1980 the 65 NUJ members sacked by BPC Publishing have been occupying the offices of Macdonald Phoebus in Central London. The sacked NUJ members work for the book publishers Macdonald Phoebus, Macdonald Futura and Caxton. They were sacked for taking industrial action against redundancies at Macdonald Futura.

The photo, taken by THE WORKER, shows supplies being hauled into the occupied offices by the BPC journalists when they were 'locked in' the building over Christmas.

Victory by the BPC chapel will have effects throughout the publishing industry and beyond. It will strengthen the confidence of Chapels and inhibit managements who wish to use the terror of recession and unemployment to bludgeon unions into submission. For our major interview with one of the journalists see Page 4.

## labour to control Labour?

THE LABOUR Party special conference called to decide the method of electing the party leader and deputy has produced a result indicative of the change in ideological strategy on the part of the working class.

Trade Unionists have decided that they must attempt to control the party founded by them to modify capitalism within the rules of bourgeois 'democracy'. It is significant that they have ignored these rules in the process.

The fact is that successive governments have attempted to tame the working class and failed: and that on occasion the working class has voluntarily submitted rather than carry through the logic of its refusal to be tamed and seize power for itself.

Neither strategy is available to either class any longer.

Thatcher has arrived, and the strategy is to smash not tame. There can therefore be no return to the old ways. It is us or them, never again us and them.

Thus those in our ranks who advocate the latter have to step aside - and didn't they just. Those in our ranks, whatever the size of their gang, who were always them and never us are already going and good riddance - they must now carry on Thatcher's work elsewhere.

### No return to old ways

Last week the Labour Party decided that organised labour must have 40 per cent. Next autumn the percentage may change. It doesn't matter. The working class is not going to have any more Mr 5 per cent.

Despite the fact that impor-

tant sections of our class have so far chosen to avoid the fight, those that have taken this Government on have, besides being all the braver, shown a singular clarity and determination.

All must now show these attributes because the old simple Tory/Labour choice on offer in the days of class confusion is to be transformed into a plethora of parliamentary 'choices' to assist Thatcher.

The conference's significance as an indicator of the developing determination of the working class to get rid of Thatcher and exert its own control, makes it much more likely, however, that we will be offered no choice at all.

It is therefore imperative that the class develop the bolshevik party it has already started to build - the CPBML.

Unemployment and inflation are not enough to cower the working class, as the pages of this paper show. The struggle for wages and jobs is fundamental in getting Thatcher out.

## Seamen break owners

CRACKS have appeared in the ranks of the General Council of British Shipping, which has been in a month long national pay dispute with the National Union of Seamen.

Canadian Pacific, with around 30 ships under the British flag, has broken the employers' ranks and settled with the seamen in an agreement worth between 16 and 17 per cent, as against the General Council's last offer of 12 per cent. Canadian Pacific has since been expelled from the General Council.

Over 140 British ships now lie, anchored and unmanned, around the world. In addition, crews, such as those on the Townsend Thoresen ferries, are undertaking selective action. The company has had two ferries strikebound at Southampton for several weeks and the ferry crew on the Felixstowe-Zebrugge run have been undertaking lightening 48 hour stoppages.

The support for the British seamen from British and foreign workers has grown. At home, the dockers are giving support by blacking deep sea foreign cargoes. Speakers from the NUS have been addressing union and trades council meetings.

In Liverpool, for example, the Trades Council was told how, in addition to the battle for better wages, seamen were endeavouring to get improved manning on ships. At present, it was often necessary for seamen to work large amounts of overtime so that the ship could function, and so that they could earn a living wage. The long hours worked are responsible for stress, violence, fatigue, depression and suicides which are often real problems on board. When asked for more hands the employers refused, yet there are an average 700 men a week going onto the dol queue in Liverpool.

## Water workers stand firm

THERE IS nothing like water workers threatening industrial action to concentrate the minds of their employers wonderfully. Within weeks of telling the manual workers that their 7.9 per cent will under 'no circumstances' be improved, the employers have now announced that they wish to meet the unions with an improved offer in mind.

Very definitely first score to the union members who have responded with overwhelming votes for industrial action in the face of the Thatcher inspired half inflation rate pay offer.

While the employers have desperately investigated ways they can break a strike - they dare not be thought 'wets' when called to account - the problems facing them have built up.

Such is the complexity and variety of the water and sewerage network it has become clear that troops could well be more of a hindrance than a help. Many union branches have added tactical headcases for the employers, by saying that they would be willing to consider retaining services to hospitals and other special cases, but would immediately

withdraw such sympathetic action should one member of the armed forces interfere.

The position of NALGO - the union for supervision staff in the industry - has again narrowed the employers' room for manoeuvre. They have announced that members will not carry out anything but their normal duties and would not 'co-operate with, take instructions from, or supervise members of the armed forces, contractors or volunteers.

Faced with this situation - but carefully waiting, no doubt on Thatcher's order, for the local Government manual workers' unfortunate settlement for 7.9 per cent - it appears likely that instead of trying to put the nation's head at risk, the employers are going to produce more money.

The four unions, TGWU, NUPE, GMWU and NUAAW, met on Tuesday (Feb 3) to review the situation. Already it is clear that their willingness to stand and fight has been a major blow to Thatcher. Their demand so simple - just to be a free union able to negotiate with their employers.

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## Reckitt and Colman

WHEN 30 workers at one of Reckitt and Colman's Hull factories were suspended last week after refusing to install and operate packaging machinery which would result in job losses, 1800 fellow TGWU members immediately withdrew their labour and set up pickets on all three factories in the city.

Talks on the introduction of "New Technology" have been taking place between unions and management for over a year, with the management naturally claiming no job losses would result. But with no agreement laid down after all the talking the workforce are showing that action speaks louder than words in the fight for jobs.

## KTM

KEARNEY and Trecker Marwin Ltd, part of the Vickers empire, is one of the main engineering companies in Brighton. It is also part of Britain's declining machine tool industry.

But unlike most companies involved in that industry, KTM announced that last year was the best trading year in the company's history. So it came as some surprise when the AUEW Shop Steward negotiators were told that the company could only afford a 6.5 per cent pay rise, which was not open to negotiation.

Following the rejection of the company's offer, the workforce banned overtime and refused to handle outside contract work or filling in time cards. The company's reaction was to suspend a number of workers in an attempt to provoke a dispute.

The situation was such that the workforce struck in support and again the company eagerly reacted by sending all the workforce a letter which really attacked trade unionism itself by charging the AUEW with resorting to cheap forms of resistance. But those days are over anyway. The District Committee has already made the dispute official and is organising financial support from other factories within the district.

This dispute is no longer a question of 6.5 or 10 per cent (but of course workers need money to live) it is now a question of whether the trade union organisation will survive or not. In this struggle the workforce is united in its endeavour to succeed.

## Lambeth

MANUAL workers in the TGWU and Construction services in the London Borough of Lambeth have declared February 2 - 6 a week of action in response to the campaign of terror being waged against the Borough by the Thatcher government. On 4 February, local authority workers will be joined by college lecturers, teachers and others on a march leading from Clapham Common to Kennington where they will rally and hear speeches calling for the downfall of the Thatcher government.

Lambeth's week of action should be seen as a local initiative following on from the very successful day of action on May 14. It provides a focus of opposition to Thatcher's attempts to cripple local authorities who refuse to comply with her wishes. Demands in Lambeth for no rate rises and no cuts in services should be taken up nationally.

## HISTORIC NOTES

ON THE DAY of de-control, 31st March 1921, the Miners were locked out and the Triple Alliance was again invoked. After full discussion and repeated attempts to bring about a settlement the Alliance declared for a strike in all sections on April 12th. This call was on April 8th, the same day the government declared a "state of emergency".

Parks were requisitioned and filled with troops and used as supply depots, reservists were called up, and the Special Defence Force enrolled. The government offered to reopen negotiations and the Alliance accordingly put off its proposed action to the 15th. On the 14th negotiations broke down as the government continued to favour the break-up of the national wage bargaining system. Meeting informally with

# The Triple Alliance (3)

This is the final part of our history of what was called the Triple Alliance

MP's, Frank Hodges, Secretary of the MPGB proposed to his executive a temporary settlement, waiving the miners' main demands. This proposal was rejected. The Triple Alliance met and decided that as the miners had refused such a compromise they would call off their supportive action. The Miners were locked out for 5 months and defeated by the end of June. Friday the 15th April became known as 'Black Friday'.

The collapse of the Alliance in April, 1921, has often been regarded as a mere betrayal of

the miners by their allies. It was a defeat not a betrayal. The trouble aggravated by personalities on both sides really arose out of the ambiguous nature of the Alliance itself. The Triple Alliance, built such that all three sections should fight as one but each on its own programme had no satisfactory means of dealing with sympathetic action in support of one section only.

J. H. Thomas stated "that if the miners thought their allies should strike when bidden that they must in return take their advice." J. H. Thomas and his

colleagues claimed the right to command the miners' acceptance of a Triple Alliance decision. A similar argument split the General Council of the TUC in the General Strike and really should have been foreseen and provided for in advance.

As it was, the lack of unity amongst the membership of the Triple Alliance and the failure to secure a durable level of common identity of interests meant that not only did 'Black Friday' mean the demise of the Triple Alliance, it also led to a great drop in the number of unionised workers and was the signal for employers across industry to go on the offensive leading directly to the engineering lock-out of 1922 and the defeat in 1926.

## INTERNATIONAL NEWS

# Professional killers SA terrorist raids

FOLLOWING the Old Bailey court case concerning the siege of the Iranian embassy we have been told again how "professional" were the Special Air Service (SAS), what up-to-date armaments and techniques they used etc. Similarly, all the advertising for the regular army calls one to join "The Professionals".

How telling that in the business of saving life professional expertise can be jettisoned.

Addressing the annual conference of the Women's Royal Voluntary Service, Mrs Thatcher concluded that statutory services were supportive only, underpinning where necessary the work of voluntary groups. "They are vital in sorting out the logistics but the army in the field is overwhelmingly made up of volunteers."

Thus we are to understand that the orthopaedic surgeon decides on which leg to operate and Tom, Dick or Harry does the rest. Contrast Mrs Thatcher's real army in the field with her metaphorical one.

Can we conclude, at least, that in sickness or need there will be someone - although without training, skills or practice - who will lend a kind word? As Mrs Thatcher said, "understanding care comes most naturally from those who choose to give it voluntarily".

Unfortunately we cannot conclude this.

This government abuses volunteers. Consider the most well known and respected volunteers in the health service - blood donors. The British system of blood donation is unique in the world; it is supported by a fully trained and experienced staff. A case of infected or mismatched blood transfusion is still thankfully rare in this country. Yet under Thatcher the system is under threat because finance is not available to repair, maintain and staff British blood banks. Recently Britain has been obliged to import blood and thus we are no longer able to guarantee the British standards of rigorous screening for blood diseases such as syphilis and hepatitis.

We are to pay higher taxes, higher national insurance and rates for decimated services. You may further impoverish yourself by contributing to private health insurance schemes but if you are chronically sick, elderly or disabled the companies are not interested in your custom. It was once said that Thatcher's policy was "you can have anything if you pay for it". The practical reality is that you can pay for it as many times as you like, you still won't get it. There is only one practical step Get Thatcher.

SOUTH AFRICAN terrorists have obviously taken Reagan's latest statements as evidence of support for their operation.

The raid on three African National Congress buildings in Maputo, the Mozambique capital, by the so-called South African Defence Force was designed to help Botha win the elections and to test the attitude of the Reagan Administration to South African attacks on its neighbours.

The African National Congress was formed in 1912 to fight for black dignity and racial equality. It was finally banned and exiled by South Africa in 1960. It has proved itself to be extremely

efficient in its struggle against the terrorists who run South Africa.

Whether Reagan can explicitly support South African terrorism remains to be seen but it is surely no coincidence that in the same week Reagan, Botha and Thatcher have declared their belief in a "Russian Conspiracy" to take over the world.

South African terrorism may help Botha win the next rigged election but the people of South Africa are becoming even better organised as the reforms that even that most reactionary government has had forced upon it show.

# China degenerates

FOR LOYALLY supporting the revolutionary ideas of the great Chinese leader, Mao Tsetung, for faithfully carrying out, during the Cultural Revolution, the instructions of the Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party, Chiang Ching has been sentenced to death by the kangaroo court rigged up in Peking.

In spite of years of imprisonment and all the pressure brought to bear on her, Chiang Ching never wavered in her defence of the line of the Cultural Revolution as set forth by Mao Tsetung and the Chinese Party leadership, a line that inspired the workers of China

to take their country along the progressive road of economic advance and socialist justice. It is no wonder Teng Hsiao-ping and his henchmen hate the Cultural Revolution since it held them up to popular scorn as capitalist-roaders - a charge they have proved against themselves by everything they have done since insinuating themselves into positions of power.

No better example of the degeneration of China's foreign policy could be mentioned than their giving arms and aid to the discredited mass-murderer Pol Pot so that he can, with the support of Thailand and its master the US, go on making trouble for the Vietnamese - the Vietnamese whom Mao regarded as China's closest allies in the world struggle against US imperialism and for whom he declared that "all China was to be a huge rear area" in their liberation war which finally humbled the US in defeat.

But such was the fear of the influence Mao's teachings still have with the Chinese people that these miserable epigones who have voted themselves into office did not dare carry out the sentence of death on Chiang Ching. They have suspended it for two years, hoping that she can be quietly shuffled off the scene. But we warn them that the great ideals of revolutionary change and socialist advance cannot be condemned by a phoney trial and safely buried. They will continue to haunt the usurpers in every false step they take in courting favour with the imperialist countries at the expense of the Chinese people.



Chang Chun-chiao - like Chiang Ching refused to be intimidated by the trial and was also sentenced to death - talking here to Reg Birch in 1975 - Photo Hsinhua.

## Editorial

Is Thatcher mad? The amount being paid out now in relief to the unemployed far exceeds the revenue of North Sea Oil. Three million workers out of jobs could be at work yielding surplus value to their employers. Among the firms closing down are major manufacturing and engineering works which are the industrial core of Britain.

But the very week that the officially admitted unemployment figure at two and a half million was the highest since the thirties, the number of strikes for the last year fell to the lowest since 1941. So Thatcher could say with glee: See, massive unemployment is the answer to industrial unrest. Wait till we top the three million level.

And as for losses in surplus value which could have been extracted from those out of work, think of the huge increase in the rate of exploitation over the whole economy of wage settlements at half the rate of inflation. Some industrialists and business men are no doubt suffering losses and closures, but the City, the banks, the insurance and investment companies, the multi-national appropriators of natural resources are embarrassed by the amount of profits rolling in.

To Thatcher's capitalist critics complaining of the damage she is doing to the economy she can retort that, in spite of temporary difficulties, all capitalists in the long run will benefit if the will to resist of the working class can be permanently broken by punitive unemployment. Meanwhile, those who are feeling the pinch could shift their capital into commodity dealing or send it abroad.

No, Thatcher is not mad. We are mad if we let her get away with it. As long as she can think that unemployment will make us accept lower wages without industrial protest, unemployment will continue to increase. The loss of jobs has only been halted where workers, like those at Gardner's diesel engine factory in Manchester or at the BPC Publishing division in London, have occupied their plants or offices and refused to allow their work mates to be sacked, where the dockers threatened to tie up the country in a national dock strike if redundancies were imposed, where it was made clear, as at Llanwern and Port Talbot, that whole towns would be taken over if the steel mills in them were closed down.

On the other hand where workers have failed to organise resistance to redundancy, as at Leyland, there has been decimation after decimation and such demoralisation that they even allowed their conveyor to be victimised for trying to encourage them to resist. Unless the workers there can still rally themselves to make a stand in defence of their jobs, Britain will soon have no motor industry of its own at all.

As unemployment figures continue to soar, as British manufacturing continues to suffer, more and more commentators wonder if Thatcher will not after all, if not actually describe a U turn, at least swerve a bit from so disastrous a course. It is not a disastrous course for the capitalism she is serving. It is a disastrous course for us. She won't turn. We will have to turn her - out! We will do it by fighting tooth and nail over every job she tries to take away from us.

## IDYP - Humbug and hypocrisy

SO 1981 is the year of the disabled! Last week Thatcher held a reception to launch this sorry crusade; various 'Royals' had also been trotted out to promote the cause.

The United Nations Declaration of the Rights of Disabled Persons states that: "Disabled persons have the right to economic and social security and to a decent level of living. They have the right according to their capabilities to secure and retain employment or to engage in a useful, creative, productive and remunerative occupation and to join trade unions."

In response to this declaration, Thatcher has cut disabled invalidity benefits by 5 per cent in real terms. Britain's three million disabled people can expect a severe drop in their economic and social security. This explains why several disabled people have decided to boycott the whole 'Year'. They are fed up with the hypocrisy of it all.

Keith Joseph, as late as 1979 admitted that Britain spends less on disabled people than other countries and less than a country should spend to deserve being called civilised. A hollow pledge, an election pledge, was made to spend more on the disabled.

Since Thatcher came to power a single person has been £2.50 a week worse off, a married couple with two children £7.30 worse off. Benefit rates have been deliberately raised less

than the rate of inflation.

Rehabilitation for employment centres have been closed and home help charges will no longer be met under the revised supplementary benefits scheme. Material assistance has been replaced by a notion called 'self-help'. Does this mean that the disabled are to organise their own jumble sales? Or perhaps engage in poppy making activities like World War 1 veterans? Such humiliating endeavours to retain life and dignity are not civilised.

That the strong care for the weak and the healthy for the sick should be an assumption of any civilised society. This government is not civilised, it is as cold as charity.

## Bookshops

**Bellman Bookshop** 155 Fortess 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

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Before their present action, seamen had to fight Cunard, whose 'super patriotic' owners wanted to sail under cheap labour 'flags of convenience'. Seamen resisted, shortly before their current nationwide strike began. Photo shows NUS leaders addressing a strike meeting in Dover in November (Photo: Andrew Ward/Report).

## AID FOR NISSAN, MORE CUTS ON BL

THE GOVERNMENT has given British Leyland £990m over the next two years to implement Edwards' plan which includes the sacking of another 10,000 workers at least. This is the reward for his having already got rid of 52,000 workers in the time he has been there and for having just recently got a settlement with the workforce amounting to the very reduction in wages Thatcher asked for. This 'aid' is made conditional on there being "no major strike which damaged or appeared certain to damage any substantial sector of the business."

Does this not go against the Government's avowed policy of not using public money to fund 'lame duck' industries? But BL is not being given the money because it is an ailing British industry which with enough investment is capable of expanding production and providing more jobs for British workers. It is being funded as an enormous disciplining centre where, under constant threat of the sack, British workers can be demoralised into meekly submitting to management decisions and can play the part of Judas goats leading other workers to the slaughter house of low wage settlements.

What is wrong with BL is that instead of being used simply to produce good British cars it is to be an industrial concentration camp for turning workers into submissive helots. That the Government is not really interested in producing British motor cars to satisfy the needs of British people is shown by the decision to provide some £100m in the form of regional development grants, to Nissan, the Japanese manufacturer of Datsun cars, to set up a plant in Britain.

This deal is being sold to British workers on the grounds that it will mean some 5000 jobs - about a tenth of those already lost at BL. But the real reason for the siting of a Japanese plant in this country is to outflank any move by British motorcar workers to impose controls on the import of foreign cars and to introduce Japanese techniques for reducing manning levels to bring about even more unemployment in BL. Duffy, the AUEW president, has shown his usual genius for being completely out of step with the real interests of his members by hailing the setting up of the Datsun factory as a 'real morale booster for industry'.

A further example of the way BL is used as a corrective institution for workers is a leaked secret document on special powers for management in dealing with alleged theft of company property. These powers include the right to make spot searches of employees, to dismiss workers on 'the balance of probabilities' that they are guilty without waiting for the results of prosecution and to exclude police from theft cases till

company investigations are complete. As a TGWU official says: "Management have set themselves up as prosecutor, judge, jury and executioner."

What can Leyland workers do to liberate themselves from this industrial borstal and use their skills to make motor cars for the people of Britain? As we workers generally have to sack Thatcher, Leyland workers have to boot out Edwards. As we have to take proper steps ourselves to save British industry from destruction, Leyland workers have to make their own counter-Edwards plan for the preservation of the British motor industry and use their industrial muscle to put it into operation.

## Firemen united!

BRITAIN'S firemen began their fight to save jobs by passing policy at Annual Conference to convene a national conference in the event of any fireman being given a redundancy notice.

This policy is being built on now by organizing demonstrations wherever a Council meets to authorise cuts in fire service manning levels. On 21 January 1500 firemen gathered in Gloucester to show their opposition to Gloucestershire County Council's proposals for Stroud.

The Council's eventual decision to go ahead and reduce Stroud from a 2 pump wholletime to a 1 pump station (in a County that only has 6 wholletime pumps now) means we will be returning in the near future. The Council's message to all firemen and other workers throughout the country is clear - they aim to dictate exactly what services we will or will not enjoy. This is shown by the fact that, apart from the contentious issue of Stroud, Gloucester FBU will be recording dispute with 9 other budget proposals for 1981/82.

At the demonstration, the President of the FBU, Bill Deal, set the right tone for the future referring to the union's policy on redundancy: 'You don't call a conference to wish a bloke goodbye'.

## BL Seneffe to fight

BELGHAN workers at the BL assembly plant at Seneffe, which is slated for closure at the end of March, are blocking the distribution of BL cars ready for delivery. They condemn Edwards' bad faith and demand that Belgian money put up to finance the plant be refunded. They also want higher redundancy pay for themselves. Incidentally, to show how far BL has been able to push down wages in Britain, the Belgian workers get significantly higher wages for equivalent work.

# Worker Interview The fight for jobs at BPC

**Q** It is now 10 weeks since you were all sacked, and you've been in occupation at Holywell House for 8 weeks. How have you managed to sustain the struggle with such unity for so long?

**A** We've been aware of the looming prospect of redundancies for some time in the book industry for 2 years now. Quite a few members of the chapel have been in companies where redundancies or closure have taken place in the past; we all knew the kind of depression and fatalism that can take hold; we've been thinking about how to cope with this; we've been thinking about the kind of tactics that can be used; generally we've been aware that a real defence of jobs takes place - is prepared - long before the axe falls.

For example, the chapel's been discussing the question of job loss as a whole on and off some time - overtime, the replacement of vacancies - and so on. We've been wrestling with these problems amongst ourselves for some time and in January of 1980 we actually banned overtime. This represented a formal statement by the chapel of a 'no-cover' approach for extra work, and that it was preparing to exert continual pressure for replacement of vacancies and expansion into new jobs as they became necessary.

Another example is that throughout our annual claim in Spring 1980 there was a dialogue with the chapel on the 'jobs-versus-money' theme. There was a fear amongst some people that to put up a fight about money would hasten redundancies. There was the counter opinion that the best defence of jobs was to put up a tenacious fight on everything

On November 21 all the members of the National Union of Journalists at the publishing division of the British Printing Corporation were sacked. The reason: they were taking industrial action against redundancies. On December 8, after working in for two weeks, the journalists found themselves barred by hired security guards from entry to their offices - a lockout. They found one floor of offices unprotected and have been in occupation ever since. Workers in the publishing industry - and an ever-increasing number outside - are coming to see the struggle as a kind of Stalingrad: enough is enough, we stand and fight.

This week THE WORKER publishes a major interview with one of the sacked journalists. It explains the how and the why of the struggle, and we reproduce it here in full.

and anything - so that job loss became option number 50 instead of option number 1. In time this became the majority opinion - and the chapel conducted a very successful 16-week campaign of disruption (lightening stoppages). Throughout this, management threatened us with impending redundancies, and the chapel had the same discussion over and over again - each time affirming its original position and emerging with stronger conviction.

Over the whole period the chapel developed a strong moral commitment to the idea that it is wrong to participate in the absorption of jobs or to aid it in any way (overtime etc) and a sense that it is a duty to do whatever is in one's power to defend jobs - that they don't belong to the individual incumbent who may want to leave the company - they belong to the industry.

The chapel doesn't like the notion of 'voluntary' redundancy. If the job is there, they want to defend it; this defence may be limited because of strength - but the mood is basically that it will have a damn good try. The jobs are there; they're essential to the survival of the company. And we want them back. We entered the battle on a unan-

imous vote

**Q** You've talked about the tactics used against you. How have you withstood them?

**A** Well, I'm talking about the sackings/intimidation stick and carrot approach. The intimidation. The chapel very quickly worked out that if we allowed it to work this time, then goodbye the Agreement and goodbye the Union in BPC. If it worked once, then every time we lifted a finger in the future, they'd threaten to sack us. What price job security then? We knew it was designed to deflect us from the issue of redundancies. Their plan was: declare redundancies; chapel opposes this; issue names of redundees so they all get depressed and want to leave; chapel takes industrial action to get names withdrawn; threaten to sack them (and if necessary do so); chapel panics and asks for reinstatement and the depressed named individuals opt for 'voluntary' redundancy.

They miscalculated totally - mainly because we saw it all before it happened.

**Q** How have you approached the problem which defeats many - that the company is in genuine financial difficulties?

**A** Actually the union predicted greater losses than the company admitted to us in the course of consultations - and we have subsequently been proved right. The particular company is projected to make a £1 million loss. But we also knew the loss of jobs would make the situation worse, not better - i.e. make it quite impossible to achieve the publishing programme and project the

company into a spiral of downturn - bringing further redundancies in their wake.

So we said no - and we put forward alternative ideas - structural, organisational and some financial. Management said our ideas were 'constructive' - but we were challenging their right to manage - to make decisions even if they turned out to be wrong ones. This kind of answer was no surprise to us. There had been tremendous anger building up in the local chapel about the wanton destruction of the companies because of accountancy logic run wild - the attention to short term 'profit/loss' worries and ignoring that the company was bleeding to death because it was not sort-

ing out whether it could produce books - without which there wasn't any accountancy problem anyway. I don't think you can separate the union defence of the jobs at BPC from the enormous professional commitment to our skills and our industry which the members have. We feel the only effective defence of the companies lies within our ranks.

Every day we're all on one of the 5 picket lines which we're maintaining as well as the occupation, and every member of the chapel is having to argue our case with members of the different boards of directors within the publishing division. The kind of dialogue they've had has only intensified this belief.

So we've kept our focus throughout. We've now had 5 offers of re-instatement and gone through about 6 final deadlines - all subject to accepting the redundancies. The chapel is still saying no, the required jobs must be given back, and they won't budge on this. So we soldier on. The occupation and picketing continues and we're now looking for increased pressure on BPC from other unions.



## Chemicals: battle is joined

A CONCERTED campaign to save jobs in the chemical industry is being planned by the General and Municipal Workers Union.

The main thrust will consist of a curb on systematic overtime which, in an industry based on continuous production often involving dangerous processes, is commonplace. This is reckoned to be the most effective form of action to combat the companies which have been ignoring manning level agreements by declaring redundancies and closures.

At a recent union delegate conference representing 100 000 of the 170 000 manual workers, a resolution declaring that overtime was "an unfeeling insult to the huge numbers of unemployed"

was passed overwhelmingly. Now national officials and shop stewards are drawing up a blacklist of offending employers, against whom action will be taken.

The union has already given official approval for industrial action by workers at ICI, where a further 10,000 redundancies are now planned on top of 4000 from last year. While at Fisons, strike action has already begun to stop four plant closures and the sacking of 1100 workers.

Parallel with the overtime ban, the union also plans to use the campaign to try to encourage the creation of new jobs in special teams to cover shift change-overs, thereby almost completely eliminating overtime, a practice common in the rest of Europe.

## The defence of Newcastle Polytechnic

"NOW IS the time to stand and fight for what is ours. If we don't, what will we tell our kids," was how the President of the Students' Union ended a mass meeting of 700 students at Newcastle Polytechnic on January 28. The meeting was a successful end to a highly successful lecture boycott.

The lecture boycott was the first step in "a campaign of guerrilla action designed to prevent the implementation of cuts", combined with a huge publicity campaign to enlist the support of the people of Tyneside. On February 3 a mass meeting will be held to discuss specific forms of action to be taken. Already management have agreed to the Left: part of the mass meeting on January 28. Photo: Newcastle Chronicle & Journal Ltd.

closure of two halls of residence and two of the Polytechnic's four sites, and action must be directed towards their retention.

However, the threat of total closure has receded. From its original decision to withdraw entirely its contribution to the Polytechnic, the City Council now has agreed to contribute at least £800,000 to offset the government-imposed cut. This in itself is a victory, and it is recognised by management that this has only been achieved because of the firm stand taken by students in particular, and other Poly workers.

Further gains must be won, and pressure is increasing on the City Council to concede. The Rent Strike of students continues to escalate, putting direct financial pressure on the authority.

## Public Meetings

### LONDON

Fri. 6 February Ireland One Nation  
Fri. 20 February 100 per cent Against 6 per cent  
Fri. 6 March Where are the Engineers?  
Film and discussion.  
Fri. 20 March Make War on Warmongers  
All meetings held at Bellman Bookshop at 7.30 pm.

### BRISTOL

Thurs. 5 February 'Wage War on Thatcher'  
Swan Hotel, Stokes Croft. 7.30 pm.

