



# 'THIS IS A WAR ON HER IN DOWNING STREET'

This is how one of the steel pickets outside Hadfield's summed up the present situation.

THATCHER'S furious attack on the working class, sometimes as petty as it is vicious, increases in malignancy from week to week. As when she raised the wages of police and army while imposing cuts on all workers, so now when she is depriving hundreds of thousands of workers of jobs she hires a thousand snoopers to police social security payments, no doubt assisted by authorised telephone tapping on a mass scale. This is the prescription for a fascist state.

She is going to cut by half the social benefits paid to the family of a worker on strike on the assumption that he is receiving strike pay from his union - whether he is or not. Some of her measures are so meanly vindictive, like adding four or five pounds to family budgets by making children in rural areas pay full bus fares, that even members of her own party have revolted.

All this is in addition to the massive cut in wages represented by inflation at over 18 per cent - more than twice what it was when Thatcher moved into Number 10. Tougher measures to prevent picketing from being effective and to restrict trade union immunities in industrial action are being announced this week and will be incorporated in the anti-trade union legislation which is to conclude its committee stage by March. A Green Paper to be published in the summer will consider further ways of curbing and destroying unions.

The working class is gathering its strength to hit back. The first step is to recognise the main class contradiction and isolate the main enemy - Thatcher Out! Of all the battles workers are waging up and down the country the same thing can be said that the steel worker picketing Hadfield's said: "The pay claim is second now - this is a war on her in Downing Street."



The steel pickets who persuaded the workers at Hadfield's, Sheffield, to reverse their decision to go back to work and come out in support of the steel strike. Photo: Press Association

## Steel stays... Thatcher must go! BL workers prepare to fight

AS THE steel strike enters its seventh week the unity of the steelworkers is stronger still. The rejection of British Steel's 14 per cent offer to craftsmen and general workers took away the employer's last hope of divide and rule, and the closure of the private steelworks underlines that it is the whole steel industry in Britain that is at stake.

The eggs and tomatoes hurled at Joseph and Villiers are apt response to ministers and managers whose only credentials for running things are their ability to run them down.

Apparently Joseph's dream of a free market is one where nothing is produced. Likewise Villiers' concept of an efficient steel industry for Britain is one where all our steel is made overseas.

The support shown for steelworkers by the miners, lorry drivers and railway workers upsets the Government and employers precisely because it is class against

class. That's what this Government fears most of all. So they invent 'secondary' blacking, 'secondary' picketing, etc. Ten years ago it was 'sympathy' strikes.

The fact is that only the working class in Britain is responsible enough to save industry. That is why this strike for steel has to move on to be a notice served on the Government that a vote in a ballot cannot defend it from the wrath of the working class.

The employing class have said we have Thatcher and steel must go. We must now retort it is our steel anyway and Thatcher must go for starters.

### ● Steel managers voice their opposition to BSC's plans

MIDDLE managers in British steel have finally woken up to the fact that they have no confidence in the 'recovery' plan. They describe their opposition as 'not the sort that managers in this industry

take lightly'. Perhaps they will put their money where their mouth is and come out in support of the steelworkers instead of showing that traditional management 'responsibility' which in practice amounts quite simply to blacklegging.

### Welsh miners prepare for all-out strike to save industry

MINERS in South Wales are preparing for an all-out strike starting Monday February 25.

This decision came from a joint meeting between miners and steelworkers from the big plants threatened with closure - Llanwern and Port Talbot.

The Wales TUC is calling for widespread and national action from March 10 unless the Government and BSC agree to stop the closures.

THE AUEW is calling for strike action at the BL Longbridge plant over the wrongful dismissal of Derek Robinson. At a meeting of the Birmingham West district committee of the union the executive council's strike call is being considered and in all likelihood the withdrawal of labour by the 8000 engineers at Longbridge will be endorsed.

The issue is the simple, basic one that organised workers can never let employers sack one of their

members unfairly nor allow one of their own representatives to be victimised.

There is no doubt that layoffs of thousands of BL workers announced by Edwardes and the insistence that the offer already rejected by a majority of workers is final will strengthen the resolve of the engineers to make BL management re-instate Robinson.

Meanwhile a report produced by a firm called Eurofinance has shown that BL is now too small to survive as a full-range motor vehicle manufacturer and must merge with one or more foreign manufacturers.

This shows exactly what the Edwardes 'recovery plan' has been all along - cutting down BL on the grounds of improving efficiency until it is too small to exist on its own and then handing over what is left to private companies or foreign firms like Honda. The same planned destruction as is being imposed on the steel industry.

## Thatcher out!



Put her in the dustbin of history

As this government with its Employment Bill treads the path of anti-Union legislation, the WORKER looks back at its predecessors' attempts to shackle the Trade Union movement - each of which ended in ignominious failure. The first in this series deals with Labour Party proposals of 1969, so clearly opposed by the Trade Unions, that they were dropped.

SINCE 1945 governments have always sought to limit the rights of unions to obtain better conditions for their members, by wage freeze and other devices (George Brown's Wage Pause among others). Working class opposition was variable, now submitting, now opposing. Overall, the attempt by governments Labour and Tory to limit union power failed, and the imposition of each wage freeze was, sooner or later, followed by its rejection by the labour movement.

Hence, towards the end of the '60's, the voice was raised for a "new" approach - the "reform" of the Trade Union movement.

This was nothing but a return to the oldest stance known to capitalism (penal law against unions as with the Combination Acts). The cloaking of it with windy jargon testified to the fear inspired in the capitalist parties, Labour and Tory, by the organised labour

movement, stronger after two hundred years of struggle.

Public opinion was prepared - as they say - by the Donovan Report. Hundreds of pages of analysis of trade unions as the vehicle for proposed restrictions of their freedom. It fell to the Labour Cabinet in January 1969 to adopt (not without dissent) Barbara Castle's proposals contained in the White Paper "In Place of Strife".

However it was the voice of the trade union movement within the Labour Party (that misbegotten and woeful creation of our working class), which secured the defeat of the proposals.

Such was opposition, that special meetings of the trade union group of MPs and the entire Parliamentary Party were organised. 53 Labour MPs voted against the proposals on March 3rd. On March 28th, the National Union of Mineworkers success-

fully moved in the Labour Party Executive that the Executive could not accept "legislation based on all the proposals of In Place of Strife." By early summer, the Trade Union movement had imposed its will on the Labour Party. On June 18th, by agreement between the TUC and No 10, the proposals were dropped.

The battle illustrates the strengths and weaknesses of the opposing sides. Neither side was willing to press for all-out war against the other, and particularly so the working class. How times have changed with Thatcher!

On the capitalist side then, within the Labour Governments, the vote for immediate penal legislation against the trade unions was a minority. It was opposed by Castle with her more shamefaced and apologetic approach, which was itself opposed by those whose stance willynilly reflected trade union opposition.

It is interesting that the Callaghan faction which opposed legislation in 1969, once in power after the defeat of the Heath anti-union laws in 1974, imposed the bitterest of any curtailment of trade union power until then, through wage restraint, and all under the banner of "no legislation against the unions" so opportunistically raised in 1969.

On the side of the working class, opposition to In Place of Strife was never as wholehearted as it could have been. This hesitation in response gave hopes to Heath and Callaghan that they might yet succeed where Castle failed.

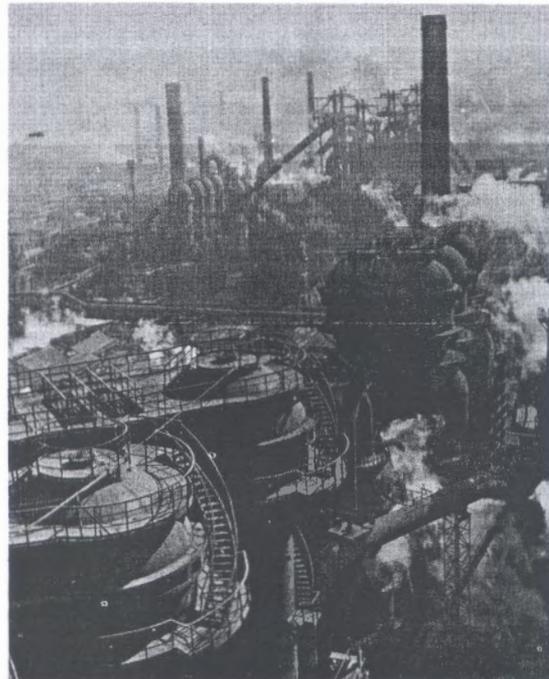
The consequence of mitigated opposition to Castle in 1969 was the misery of life under Heath and Callaghan, overthrown though they have been. But the consequences of mitigated opposition to Castle's successor Thatcher are unthinkable.

**Capitalism and its chaos comes to what was socialist China**

SUCCESSIVE reports from China have confirmed that they have abandoned socialism, and the consequences of that defection are becoming increasingly clear. Recently it was stated in Peking that in the latter part of 1979 gross output in light and textile industries increased by 15 per cent on the same period in the previous year and 10 per cent in heavy industry. This was linked to a growth in the sale of consumer goods, which also increased by 15 per cent during 1979. But 'growth' in capitalist terms has nothing in common with growth in a planned economy

Along with these reports of Chinese 'growth' we hear that 330 new projects have been postponed or cancelled and 2000 factories have been either closed or turned over to the manufacture of other projects - a picture very familiar to British workers. It is difficult to believe that all enterprises were devoted to useless ends, and therefore our only conclusion can be that they were scrapped in favour of more profitable ones. This means that China has moved from a socialist economy which is planned in accordance with the overall good of its working class to a capitalist economy which is unplanned and neglects many fundamental needs in favour of realising profit.

An inevitable symptom of this change is that China now suffers from a western disease which was totally unknown during its adherence to Marxist-Leninist economic policy: inflation. Basic foodstuffs in China are becoming more and more expensive. We hear now that China faces high unemployment. This is a waste of the productive labour which could be keeping the price of basic goods down. It is of course no coincidence that these new developments have been accompanied by the rehabilitation of the old bourgeoisie and landlords



The Anshan Iron and steel complex, China's largest, forged ahead under socialism. One of the aims of the time was to overtake Britain in steel production. Capitalist Britain has helped China achieve this by cutting its own production back to something like 15 million tonnes a year. Now that China has abandoned socialism and joined the capitalist world, British steel managers including Villiers have been invited to China - presumably to help China overtake Britain in the destruction of the steel industry. Photo: Hsinhua

A further symptom of change has been that China's imports increased by 33 per cent in 1979. Much of this has been in the shape of western technology. These have so far been paid for by overseas loans, which amount to promises to import even more. Speaking of China's "economic adjustment" Li Qiang, the Foreign Trade Minister said that China is gearing itself up to produce more "export commodities" as "the major and most reliable approach to raise China's ability to pay for advanced technology and other imports is to increase exports." In other words, "self reliance" in China has been corrupted to mean dependence on world capitalism. China is on the same path as Britain where, whilst we have

the skills and resources to vastly improve all that is worthwhile, public services and industries are being destroyed so that capitalists can exploit the latest profitable trend at the expense of the working class.

In keeping with its new economic position, China has to please its new trading partners; it attacked socialist Vietnam to show its adherence to the US line, illustrating again that international capitalism's dependence on other markets and the resources of other nations led inevitably to rivalry and war. Not only has China rejected a Vietnamese proposal for a lunar new year truce on the border, the Chinese Foreign Minister has said he was "too busy" to discuss peace with a Vietnamese delegation.

**BRITAIN - OUT OF ZIMBABWE**

THATCHER'S envoy Soames is quite openly against ZANU(PF), banning several of their candidates from campaigning, and the party from holding meetings in the south-east of the country. As ZANU and their supporters have been forced to organise and work underground throughout the years of their liberation struggle, such a ban will not prevent them from playing their rightful role in the elections.

But Soames has another trick up his sleeve if this restriction does not work: the disenfranchisement of whole constituencies of black voters. In other words, the elections will be 'fair and free' if it looks as if the electorate will not vote for Mugabe and ZANU(PF). If they do, then a few stooges will be produced to say they were intimidated and the electorate will have their vote taken away. Voters will also be prohibited from busting to an alternative polling station.

In the previous elections last year, white farmers coerced their black workers by transporting them wholesale to the polling stations and indicating who they should vote for. And still the intimidation goes on:

● Mugabe has suffered two attempts on his life, and other ZANU officials have been injured or killed in similar attacks.

● Soames has asked for 90 armoured vehicles from South Africa for use during the elections, and an extra 500 police have been flown in from Britain.

● 60,000 police and army reservists have been called up for the election period, and Muzorewa's gang of 20,000 armed 'auxiliaries' are still allowed to operate unhindered right across the country, while the Patriotic Front guerrillas are under orders to remain in their assembly area.

Such are peaceful and free elections under British Army occupation! Get the British Government and its troops out of Zimbabwe. Only then can the people decide their future freely.

## Editorial

THERE ARE lessons which workers can get out of British Leyland - and not much else! In capitalism's decline there is the continuous threat that any industrial action to prevent a cut in wages will result in massive redundancies. But as with BSC and now with BL, there are going to be massive redundancies whatever workers do.

Even before the votes had been counted in Edwardes' divisive attempt to get BL workers to reject their own representatives' rejection of an offer that amounted to a wage cut, he announced lay-offs of one third of the work force. This was because of the number of unsold Leyland cars, which not even the most prejudiced, union-baiting Tory could blame on Leyland workers.

Lowering wages to the point where it is impossible for workers to maintain a decent standard of life for themselves and their families is the main way of destroying an industry which doesn't make sufficient profits to be kept going.

It is always wrong for workers to slacken resistance in class struggle in the vain hope that capitalists will deal more generously or more leniently with a compliant foe. Capitalism has nothing to do with generosity or leniency - only with profits taken out of the workers' hide.

Another lesson is that no whizz-kid manager can take over an industry which is being destroyed by the contradictions of capitalism and suddenly turn it into a flourishing business. We are used to the politically unscrupulous bureaucrat capitalists like Robens, Marsh or Villiers who are paid a handsome salary to cut back, dismantle, or totally destroy an industry: now we are getting the slick American type 'go-getter' to do the same job. Whatever became of the trans-Atlantic expert who was going to turn the Jensen into a money spinner. We have just seen how the bright boy who was going to make millions for Penguin Books has fared, and we also have Edwardes!

We know perfectly well how to save the British motor car industry. Sack Edwardes for a start. Then design and build a car suitable for the needs of the majority of British people - safe, cheap, economic on fuel and long-lasting. Stop the import of foreign motor cars even if it means that British cars will not be sold abroad.

We know exactly how to do it, but unlike Wedgwood Benn, who has put forward some similar ideas, we also know that no capitalist government will permit such a solution to a BL problem. It would play havoc with the capitalist system here and abroad to embark on such a reasonable venture. We have to destroy capitalism to save British industry; but the fight here and now to maintain a decent standard of living is more and more being recognised by the working class as the fight to destroy capitalism.

## Old solutions to old problems

THE MUCH-HERALDED report 'North-South: A Programme for Survival' has recently been published after much advance publicity. Its brief was to comprehend 'world problems' and to proffer solutions. The problems are appalling, but the solution is the same old thing we've heard before.

800 million people are destitute (a figure arrived at before the effects of capitalist penetration are felt in China) while every year 17 million children, under the age of 5, die because of malnutrition or disease. In 34 countries more than 80 per cent of the people are illiterate.

But the solution is, apparently, capitalism with a human face, which the report takes 300 pages to say. In that sense the report skates over the surface of the problem, for all its statistical embellishment. And how could we expect anything else from this 'Independent Commission on International Development Issues'? That's a very posh name for a 20-strong team of discredited politicians, bankers and economists including the likes of Heath.

Would Heath denounce the massive investments of British capital in Asia and Africa, where so many of the impoverished millions live and die early? Would Brandt, who was Chancellor during a period of massive investment overseas, denounce West Germany's role in South America, where poverty is proverbial?

What is equally proverbial, of course, is the great wealth, power, and privilege of the rich rulers of the 'poor countries', although Heath, Brandt and co. do not deal with

that. Nor do they consider the report of the Anti-Slavery Society which 3 years ago identified slavery still in existence in more than 30 countries. Who benefits from slavery? The ASS reported last August that every year 12,000 Haitians are 'sold' for £5 each at the border with the Dominican Republic. They then cut sugar cane, in appalling conditions, for the six month length of the cutting season. Taken inland the slaves are then 'purchased in lots by landowners, or representatives of the three major sugar producers!'

Wasn't it Lyndon Johnson who sent thousands of US Marines to the Dominican Republic in 1965 to maintain 'freedom and democracy'? Isn't Haiti also within the 'US orbit'? Between 1966-78 the Dominican Republic paid the Duvalliers personally £31 for each cutter, while 'Baby Doe' Duvalier raised the price to £35 in 1978.

All this is an integral part of the international capitalist scene that Heath, Brandt and co. now want reformed. How do you go about reforming the likes of Duvalier and his 'Tonton Macoute' or the multi-nationals that depend on that kind of tyranny? Look at Brooke Bond and their tea plantations in Sri Lanka. Look at coffee plantations in Brazil. Have African gold-miners' wages risen 300 per cent in line with gold prices?

When Heath says the plan is "to get the world economy going again" we see that the whole enterprise is capitalist-based. Capitalism does cause misery world-wide. That's no solution. The revelation of revolution is the carnival of the oppressed.

# Thatcher is hell bent on destruction unite to destroy her first

NEVER before in Britain has an "administration" alienated so many workers in such a short period of time. In every workplace, in every home and community, Thatcher has made enemies as she tramples along her path of aggression against the working class.

Her attack on the people has been on a wide front. It has ranged from the erosion of the value of wages through inflation, to starving the minds and bodies of young children, depriving sick people of medical care to State intervention to break strikes.

The hatred that she bears the most vocal, the best organised and educated section of the class - those in trade unions - is reflected in her attempts to curb the freedom of unions to defend the livelihood of their members.

In addition she is attempting to deprive dependents of striking workers from financial support from the class. Moreover she would have a cull of workers by provoking a nuclear war with Russia. Such is the extent of the hatred she bears workers everywhere.

Her tirades against Russia, the declamation of health and education and the attacks on our unions are all inextricably linked. She is hell bent on destruction. Only by breaking the resistance of our class can she hope to save her neck.

Never before has a Government gone so far and so fast towards fascism. Thatcher, its driving force, its commander, is the main enemy of the class NOW! She must be stopped before one way or another she destroys us.

Naturally there is resistance. But the separate battles being waged against her policies must have a common strategy.

Uniting against Thatcher, and driving her out is a tactical necessity. The strategic aim is proletarian revolution.

Thatcher and the system she represents must be brought down. The working class has suffered the misery and exploitation of capitalism for too long. The defensive struggle for survival must become more and more offensive. Only then will there be survival for the class.

Uniting all against Thatcher, getting her before she gets us, is a necessary step that must be taken. It is not an end in itself but a means to an end - the establishment of a socialist Britain.

## For education a national struggle



SCARCELY a week passes without news of an addition to the number of branches of the National Union of Teachers in dispute with the education authorities over spending cuts. Teachers are on strike in Avon, strike action has been halted in Nottingham to allow talks, more strikes are planned in Trafford and half-day strikes in Coventry and Northamptonshire received large-scale backing. At the end of last term inner London teachers struck for half a day. Many other areas are conducting campaigns of refusing to cover for absent colleagues or take oversize classes.

Thatcher daily becomes more isolated and soon will stand alone and inept. Even Tory MPs are losing heart for the attack on children's school transport. But there is not nearly enough anger yet in the profession nor in the working class as a whole. MPs sit down to lavish dinners subsidised by workers' children and then vote for those workers' children to eat less - and we all allow it.

Struggle is taking place throughout the country but not yet nationally. That is the major task before the union membership to direct their action against Thatcher and her government. For education, now a national struggle!

## Avon teachers' challenge

THE MAGNIFICENT stand taken by Avon NUT members against the deteriorating quality of education offered by Avon County Council is an example which should be followed by all who face similar destruction in their area.

The opposition which began in four schools at the beginning of term has now taken the form of 3 day rota strikes in 9 different schools each week. The time spent by teachers on strike is devoted to delivering an explanatory letter to every home affected.

This action, designed to cause maximum disruption to the Local Education Authority with minimum damage to the Union and the children, challenges the right of government and local authorities to destroy an education system fought for and won over many decades.

## Oxford NHS: capitalism's knife inflicts the cuts

IT SEEMS that soon we will be paying for the Health Service at every turn; as usual in taxes and National Insurance contributions, but also with every prescription, every GP visit and again for 'hotel' charges in hospital. Finally we will pay in the sponsored runs, raffles, whist drives and jumble sales that the Government is encouraging and Jimmy Saville organising, to allow us to 'save' the Health Service. We have always known that the survival of the NHS is not safe, but we will not save it by giving more to the Government.

Certainly the NHS in Oxfordshire is short of cash. The Oxford Area Health Authority (Teaching) is expected to announce overspending of £2 million last year, despite a freeze on job replacements which led to a 2 per cent reduction in staff and a drastic shortage of nurses. In addition to the cuts in the Government's NHS grants, a large cash shortfall has been caused by the increase in VAT by which the Government contrives to take back a larger proportion of what is left. A clampdown on supplies of drugs and equipment has been ordered and stocks held in cupboards are being drastically reduced - to

what effect?

The base of the NHS is being eroded and all its growing points trimmed - the Witney Community Hospital unopened; the General Practitioners' accident service scheme unstarted. Doctors are concerned about the present, as the John Radcliffe becomes unsafe due to shortage of cleaners and as the AHA threatens to deny surgeons access to wards at weekends if they do not come up with a firm proposal for 5-day wards; but also about the future as they see the education of new doctors suffering as a result.

A doctor on the AHA told them that they could not "run the hospital like you run a business" - but if the Government cannot do this they will close them down completely. Thus the narrow mindedness and shortsighted greed of profit could be the death of us. If we let it. Doctors, as scientists, do not confuse cause and effect and although they are forced at the moment to treat mainly effects they struggle to treat causes outside the hospital. As workers we must not allow our fight against the cuts to obscure the knife of capitalism which inflicts them.

## 'Just a social visit'

AS THE Government announced its scheme for hiring 1000 snoopers to police social security payments, a play called "Just a social visit," written by Dave Simpson and starring Maureen O'Brien and Charles Kay, opened at the Soho Poly lunch-time theatre in London's Riding House

Street to run till March 8. The play deals with the consequences for one woman of just such sneaky surveillance, and shows how difficult it is for one person to hit back effectively and for anyone caught up in the administration of such a system to behave humanely.

## Heartfield posters

AT THE Bellman Bookshop we stock posters of the work of John Heartfield, German communist photomontage artist. The posters are drawn from the covers of the weekly Arbeiter Illustrierte Zeitung (AIZ Workers' Illustrated Magazine) and Die Volkszeitung (popular review), two cultural and news magazines that appeared between 1930 and 1938, first in Germany and later, after Hitler's seizure of power, in exile.

John Heartfield (1891-1968) whose real name was Helmut Herzfeld, studied painting and drawing. Drafted into the German army in World War I, he left it sickened and revolted by what he saw.

For some time he toyed with the counter-culture Dadaist movement, but soon abandoned it as a dead end. In 1919 he joined the newly formed Communist Party of Germany. In 1927 he was a member of the German State Artists' Economic Association. In 1928 he helped found the German Association of Revolutionary Artists and the Plastic Arts.

Heartfield's use of the photograph had a clear purpose, as he wrote in 1931, "With the Imperialist War of 1914-18 the pillars of bourgeois culture began to cave in. Events followed one upon the other so rapidly that artists were unable to keep up. The plodding pencil was overtaken by the bourgeois press, spreading its lies... using photography as a propaganda tool to influence the people. The photograph, after all, strips a fact bare, makes it easy for everyone to understand. When you show a photo of a news event, nobody can question it. That's what makes the photograph so powerful."

A look at any of his works will prove how far he achieved his stated aim of "contrasting the high-sounding and deceptive words of the nazis with the reality of terror and war they were unleashing."



One of his montages, making the point that the nazis were backed by the capitalists, shows Hitler with his arm upraised to salute but at the same time to receive a handful of money from the capitalist. The title is: "The meaning of the Hitler salute," and the caption reads: "Motto: millions stand behind me."

The wide distribution of Heartfield's photomontages (AIZ had a circulation of 50000 in 1931) gave them an important role in the anti-fascist struggle against Hitler. Much of what he depicted remains relevant today, particularly his warning to workers after the rearming of Germany in 1932, which showed a dove impaled on a bayonet in front of the League of Nations with a caption reading: "Where Capital lives, Peace cannot live." The following year Hitler came to power.

## EEF hysteria on inflation

THE PRESENT rate of inflation - deliberately created by the Thatcher Government to attack living standards - is not really as bad as it is according to the Engineering Employers Federation.

In a detailed letter to their members who are preparing for the start of this year's negotiations the EEF says: "The rate of inflation is much closer to 13.5 per cent than 17.2 per cent, because the latter includes a once and for all increase in VAT." This apparently is the employers' attempt to take the hysteria out of wage negotiations.

### Guns not butter

'HITLER, THATCHER; Guns before Butter' drew a large audience to the Bellman Bookshop, London. The meeting was ably chaired by a resident of East Anglia whose welcoming remarks to the meeting were peppered with black humour. Very understandable since East Anglia is the proposed site for Cruise missiles, thus the whole region becomes a target in the event of nuclear war.

The speaker agreed the meeting title was provocative for some, yet truthful for the majority whose living standards were now being out while military expenditure flourished. 'Guns before butter' was coined by Goering in the winter of 1935-36 following complaints about falling consumption levels. Between 1935-9 military spending increased by 2000 per cent.

Now Thatcher, having out billions from public services, among other things, was expanding weapons expenditure by many billions of pounds. "This government of dunces was cutting education and preparing for war" said a speaker from the floor. "We fight, and throw out Thatcher, or we go under" said another.



May be the EEF would have a better case if they had removed a few more "once and for all" items from the list of price rises. They could by a really big effort along these lines remove inflation altogether - or even argue for a wage cut because prices were in fact falling.

That would be consistent with the Government's contention that 29 per cent increase in gas prices represents the falling cost of gas to the purchaser. The EEF should bring together all such gems of modern statistics and then go on to show

that industry is expanding rapidly and the major problem in Britain is that we spend too little on education so people no longer understand how good capitalism is for them.

Talking of hysteria surely one of the signs of it is that people can no longer accept reality and have to invent a new one to make things seem real again. Inflation in Britain is a way of stealing money earned, and it is a benefit to governments and employers. May be that is why they want to hide how much it is in their interest.

## Law against children

IF THE Education Bill becomes law after April, some authorities intend to increase the price of a school meal from 35p to 60p. Haringey has already passed a resolution to increase the price to 45p as part of its package of cuts.

We are moving towards a school meals service for the rich - those who can afford an average price of 50p a day; and for the very poor - those families claiming supplementary benefit, who, under present law can still claim a free school dinner. The stigma attached to claiming will be multiplied extensively. Thousands of families who are neither rich nor 'very poor' will find this extra financial pressure hitting hard.

Some authorities intend to abolish the school meals

service altogether. Children will have to go home for lunch (thus imposing restrictions on families, most probably women), take sandwiches, or carry cash into local shops and cafes. This must also increase unemployment among public sector workers.

Free milk for children under eleven is to be abolished as is free transport. The cost of feeding and transporting a child to and from school could cost a family an extra £5 per week per child.

Is it fair to make children bear the brunt of Thatcher's savage economic policies? No. It is immoral. These cuts and proposals must be fought with all the energy and venom being unleashed on the working people of Britain by this Hitlerite government.

## Social security cuts to help rich

THIS WEEK the Government announced that it is to employ 1000 extra inspectors in the DHSS to tighten up on the Social Security 'scroungers' and save £50m a year. In the same way as the Thatcher Government immediately upon obtaining power raised police and army pay and laid the foundations for wage cuts through increased inflation, now that they are increasing unemployment they attack the supplementary benefits system.

In the same week, Thatcher announced in Parliament that they are to make deductions from benefit payments to strikers' families to take account of union strike pay, even if strikers aren't receiving any! One supposes that in the same way as our friendly

Government is to help us with our unions' elections, perhaps they would like to look after our strike funds for us (in the same way as they look after our taxes?).

Workers in the Inland Revenue and Customs and Excise will see straight through the avowed intentions of this scheme to stop 'scroungers' defrauding £50m a year. £50m pales into insignificance against tax frauds and customs and excise swindles that are known to exist but cannot be uncovered due to lack of staff. Yet the Government intends to cut the number of staff in these two departments. Perhaps tax frauds and drug smuggling are the supplementary benefits for the rich?

Since the Government is so

keen that the Social Security system should work well and that only those entitled to claim do so, surely one would think, that they would also be mounting a similar exercise to encourage people to claim some of the estimated £340m supplementary benefits not claimed by legitimate claimants - of course you would be wrong!

The final irony must be that this Government is employing anyone extra at all, apart from policemen and soldiers. The largest DHSS offices throughout the country are in Newcastle; perhaps the 1000 extra inspectors are really a part of a 'make work' scheme to alleviate one of the worst unemployment queues in Britain!

## 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

JOHN HEARTFIELD POSTERS

Available now at Bellman Bookshop (see this page).

## Public Meetings

LONDON

Rm 249 Middlesex Polytechnic, Queensway, Ponders End, Middlesex at 1 pm  
 Tuesday February 26

The new reality - destruction not cuts

Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, WC1 at 7.30pm

Friday February 29

Bellman Bookshop, 155 Fortress Road, Tufnell Park, NW5 at 7.30 pm

Friday March 14

Friday March 28

The economics of destruction  
 The future betrayed? Our children's inheritance is not for sale

EXETER

Oddfellows Inn, New North Road at 7.30 pm

Monday February 25

Unite all against Thatcher,  
 Get her before she gets us

## The Worker

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