



# PRIOR WARNING OF ATTACK ON UNIONS

THE THATCHER government's proposals announced this week to curb the strength of the Trade Unions are in essence nothing new. They are yet another tactic in the continuing war against organised labour. Measures to control picketing and effective industrial action have been introduced as long ago as the first workers learnt that solidarity was the only weapon they had to protect themselves from a class of employers who always had the strength of the state behind them. The labour movement is based on the understanding that different sections of workers have in the end the same interests. Refusal to cross a picket line is not only an act of brotherhood but an act of enlightened self-interest. Those who cross such a line are betraying one of the fundamentals of working class morality, are rightly seen as employers' men and are treated accordingly. But the government, the press, turn this on its head and call it intimidation and brutality. It has always been so.

This week's proposals are intended to prevent this solidarity that workers have one with the other; to make industrial action ineffective.

To ask workers to black goods or to become involved sympathetically in industrial action is to invite the employer to sue for damages. If workers are deemed 'remote' from the specific dispute they too are liable. This remoteness is to be assessed by the courts and men with funny hair. It is said to be objective and in the national interest. It is by no means in the interest of workers. This has always been so too. If a Thatcher shouts about the national interest you can be sure she doesn't mean you or me.

Accompanying these changes in the civil law come exhortations from the Attorney General about the Criminal Law with regard to picketing. He reminded the police that the existing law on picketing was quite good. He told them, in case they had forgotten, that they were entitled to prevent a mass picket if they judged it to threaten a disturbance. It was against the law, he went on, for pickets to link arms or to otherwise prevent access to the place of work picketed. Perhaps this was to appease the Tory back benchers by blaming the steel pickets on the 'softness' of the police. The injured pickets at Sheerness are not convinced. The record of the police in industrial disputes has not been good. No worker on a picket line could mistake the boys in blue, particularly the Special Patrol Group, for sympathisers.

The police are there, Prior says, to protect the

rights of those who want to work, those who have been bullied and intimidated. The rights of the individual must be protected above all, screams Thatcher from the House of Commons - if the individual happens to be a scab. It is clear that employers are the only ones who count as individuals for it is their rights she protects.

The government becomes more hysterical everyday and Mrs. Thatcher's voice becomes more shrill. It is hysteria that comes from fear.

The proposals were predictable enough but the tone accompanying them was insulting and antagonistic. Does Thatcher really believe she is a better man than Heath. She certainly wants confrontation with the working class. The gauntlet has been tossed. Let us make sure we win.

THE STAND taken by the South Wales TUC against Thatcher has meant a step forward for the British working class in its struggle against fascism.

The support the miners have given the steelworkers in South Wales shows clearly the understanding that unity is strength. Even though the call for an all-out stoppage in the coalfield has been rejected by the miners there is a realisation of the consequences of the deliberate closing down of the steel industry in Britain.

The shutting down of steel in South Wales would inevitably lead to massive pit closures which is why the miners were asked to come out on strike



Workers are getting used to the idea of saving London's hospitals from Government attack. Photo: Andrew Wlard (Report).

## Attack on Westminster Hospital

THE WESTMINSTER Hospital, the first London hospital to be founded from public subscription, and a world famous teaching hospital established for over 250 years, is under attack. All staff are preparing, along with other London teaching hospitals to contest mergers and closures expected to be announced next week.

The attack on the Westminster is on two fronts, first by reports from the DHSS sponsored London Health Planning Consortium, and secondly by a University of London committee, under the chairmanship of Lord Flowers, examining the future of medical education. The attack on the Westminster and to a

lesser extent on such as the Middlesex Hospital, marks a qualitatively different stage in the attempts to destroy medical education and the NHS.

The Flowers Working Party Report on medical education in London is already in the hands of the University of London and its recommendations will be announced on the 26 February. It is expected that the major recommendations will be that the Westminster Medical School, the smallest in London but one of the best in the world, is to be closed. The net effect of this goes far beyond the reduction in the number of medical students being trained, however. The quality of the service to patients at the hospital will be severely damaged since the hospital would have its budget drastically cut. All the on-site research facilities would also be pruned and many forms of treatment in the hospital would cease.

On the same day as the Flowers Report is to be published a document from the London Health Planning Consortium, called 'Towards a Balance: a framework for Acute Hospital Services in

## Save South Wales Steel !

Indefinitely. Although the call was a good one in essence there is a danger in having such an 'open ended' call. However directly the miners may be hit by the closure of Llanwern or Port Talbot or ultimately both, the fight to save steel must come from within the steel industry itself.

The ISTC must declare that Llanwern and Port Talbot are going to remain open then the miners can declare that no pits will close and they will both have the overwhelming support of the South Wales TUC.

The time will be ripe in the near future for the South Wales TUC to call for action which

must be taken up nationally by the whole labour movement; their fight is ours too. That call will not be rejected.

The ballot that the miners have just taken part in has revealed yet again the lengths the employers will go to, to hamstring our unions. Taking its cue from Edwardes the NCB took it upon itself to interfere in the ballot by communicating a 'no strike' vote at one pit to another pit still in the process of voting - how they love a secret ballot!

To save our basic industries, to save Britain we must learn from and continue the struggle the South Wales workers have embarked upon.

Historic Notes

Guerrilla Struggle against the Bill

This second article in our series looking back over recent attempts to emasculate the unions deals with the early stages of the fight against Heath's Industrial Relations Act. Irregular, guerrilla opposition was indispensable to maintain a protracted struggle against the employer's law. This created the conditions in which the Engineering Union flouted and made inoperable the Industrial Relations Act and, other unions supporting, ultimately destroyed the Heath government.

Less than six weeks after the last general election, the 'Financial Times' carried a prominent article headed "Will Thatcher last until 1984". It was clear, even then, that Thatcher's dictatorial approach would meet with stiff resistance. Aware of developing opposition (though not manifest in Parliament) Thatcher and co. insisted they had a "mandate from the people". In fact, only 35 per cent of the electorate had voted for the Tories.

So Thatcher is none too popular with anybody, while many are openly hostile. This sounds like a job for Superman/Batman/Saatchi and Saatchi. Beyond Superman's capabilities, Saatchi and Saatchi have been given £90,000 to launch an advertising campaign on behalf of the Tories. It is unprecedented for such a campaign to be fought so early in the life of a government. The idea is for advertisers to soft-soap us into believing that hospital closures, 50pence school meals, low pensions, mass unemployment and military expansion are just what the doctor ordered.

People kidded by the last Saatchi and Saatchi election campaign will laugh their way through the next one. Apparently, opinion polls reveal that 2 million Tory voters have deserted the ranks, so Thatcher has good reason to be worried.

The campaign slogan is "If you care about Britain, keep it out of the Red". (Ho, Ho.). Hopefully, posters such as these will leave plenty of white space underneath. Manufacturers of felt tip pens will be stepping up production. You might write, in block capitals, "If you care about Britain, (and Thatcher does not), don't get the Blues, rally round the Reds".

The Brandt Commission has revealed that the massive arms export trade of imperialist Europe and the USA threatens to 'kill the golden goose'. So much waste has brought shaky economies close to bankruptcy. They also mention the return on this investment - 10 million killed in "minor" wars since World War Two.

Now, just 9 months since that election, the question is not 'will Thatcher survive', but rather 'will the Tory government survive'. Joseph's 'royal visit' to the steel workers picket lines in Wales was met with a volley of eggs and rotten fruit. Last week, one of Thatcher's London homes was picketed by 300 pensioners all too aware that Thatcher gets over £400 per week, for overseeing the destruction of the country, while pensioners get £27 per week, after 50 years of work.

IN PLACE OF STRIFE was withdrawn by the Labour Government because of the opposition from the Trade Union movement. But there was never single-minded opposition to state interference. Opposition was even undermined by the pervasive support among trade unionists, at all levels of the movement, for the Labour Government while at the same time there was opposition to Labour policy in practice.

This weakness in working class opposition found expression in the 'solemn and binding' agreement with the Labour administration, elaborated by the TUC as a framework for cooperation with the government, and a quid pro quo for the withdrawal of In Place of Strife. The Solemn and Binding Agreement like the Social Contract, offered to Callaghan later, was more than a face-saver offered to the Government, it was based on the dream of union cooperation with government. The Government, on the other hand saw it for what it was - an indication of passivity. Heath, succeeding Wilson, could hardly doubt that the Trade Union movement would this time submit to state legislation to fetter it.

Heath had every reason to hope for success. Although on December 8th 1970 half a million workers came out against the Industrial Relations Bill, it was without TUC blessing. The TUC was wedded to temporising and advocated education and discussion meetings. In March 150,000 workers under TUC banners flooded Trafalgar Square in protest. The Engineering Union called two national strikes, on the 1st and the 18th, the latter in particular massively supported and involving many other unions, several million workers in all.

Nevertheless the Engineers were alone among all unions when

on 26th January 1971, they looked realistically ahead to the Bill becoming law, and decided to prepare well in advance for a campaign of non-cooperation with it in that event. By contrast, the TUC at Croydon, expressed the lack of clarity in workers' minds, when it decided against a campaign of industrial action, in spite of the support for that of the AUEW.

The Bill became Act in the course of 1971 and at the TUC Congress in the autumn, there was much dust raised over "de-



Reg Birch of the AUEW Executive Council receiving the offer from the District Secretary, London South, and other AUEW members to defend the union property if requested to do so. (photo: WORKER Sept. 1973)

registration" under the provisions of the Act. In effect, this was a refusal to consider the "non-cooperation" with the Act adopted by the AUEW.

As the year ended, the WORKER wrote: "The situation in the Engineering industry is about as complicated and muddled as it could be. Unemployment rises. The Industrial Relations Act exists. Already, the employers have taken gauge of the confusion, have taken note of the lack of involvement of the membership" in the current wage claim.

It was from this position of weakness that opposition to Heath grew, slowly at first, from struggles which were isolated and guerrilla.

In July 1971, the Upper Clyde occupation began. The miners took on, and in 1972 won, their wage claim against the Government. Throughout most of the year the AUEW waged a guerrilla campaign on its claim with official support for all factories taking action. It was a struggle from weakness which in the end involved many more than could have been involved in frontal

in the union's favour. Slow to learn, the employers a month later tried to exploit rivalry between the dockers and container men.

Under the Act five dockers were put into Pentonville. Working class reaction this time was overwhelming. The dockers were released, the law was proved to be an ass.

In September the government, under pressure, retreated on the Act. It would only be used as a last resort! The TUC were invited to and agreed to set up conciliation machinery with the Government to do the Government's work where the Act would not be used. This was a tactical retreat the better to use the Act, which still remained on the statute books.

Despite the resolve of the TUC that unions should not register under the Act, a decision culminating in the expulsion of the National Union of Seamen when it did so, union after union took the decision to defend themselves in the National Industrial Relations Court (NIRC). The AUEW however, stood firm in its resolve not to recognise the court and its successive defiance resulting in the sequestration of larger and larger sums of money from the union's funds. Finally, the presiding Judge, Donaldson, lost his temper and imposed a massive fine. A national engineering stoppage took place on Guy Fawkes's Day in 1973. The Industrial Relations Act was effectively smashed. The unions had shown that its real assets were its membership and not its funds.

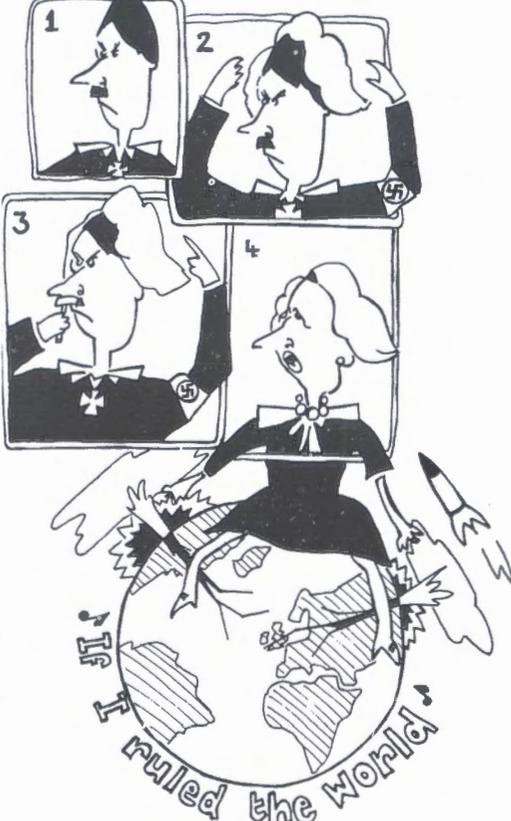
The Act was repealed by the Labour Government which was elected following the smashing of Heath's pay freeze by the miners in the spring of the following year. The Act was gone, but it was a close run thing.

confrontation.

In June, the Government used the act to enforce a ballot on the question of industrial action on the railway men. A massive vote in favour of struggle was the embarrassing result for the Government.

In July the government, seeing the dockers divided on a national stoppage and preparing to retreat, blundered into using the Act. They imprisoned three men. Instantly the dockers were all out, the men released and the mysterious Official Solicitor settled the situation

a Star is born.



How to destroy a people without trying.

IF YOU have a morbid taste for really black humour, you should read the details that are being circulated at present of the Government's plans for all of us in the event of a nuclear attack. The 'polity' is called 'self help' and is contained in a booklet called 'Protect or Survive'. Self help is in fact a euphemism for the fact that this Government intends to do absolutely nothing to protect the people in a situation their war-mongering policies could bring about. Our leaders are nothing if not consistent in their determination to rid themselves of us.

Even if they think that we are going to be attacked (by whom?) they don't intend to inform us of this fact in the weeks preceding, but I daresay we should realise something strange was afoot when the TV and radio close down three days before our impending destruction. What is intriguing is that by then we will have been given a date. The media will be replaced by a single programme consisting of news, official announcements and a little bit of entertainment (to keep up the morale) plus details of measures for survival, and what might these "measures for survival" be?

Well, basically there are no measures for the likes of you and me. We are counselled either to take shelter inside or lie down in the streets. We are told that if we

leave the area in which we are resident, the authorities in other areas will not help us with food, accommodation or other essentials... what else is new? And as for you residents of tower blocks, the word is, "Do not shelter on the top two floors".

Still "a family in its own home will be best able to look after its own members" unless, of course, you're a bungalow dweller.

Tower blocks and bungalows aside, the rest of us who are supposed to live in two-storey houses are urged to remove all inflammable net curtains and to make a fall-out room containing an inner shelter where we will stay for 14 days. As we are supposed to remove lavatory chains in order to conserve fresh water in the cistern, one can only speculate as to where the "fall-out" room will be located in most homes.

Fortunately we need not worry - at least the Government will be safe. In advance of an attack they will take shelter. Probably the only sound in London after the holocaust will be that of 'Hear, hear's' emerging from the ventilation shaft of some deep cavern as Parliament congratulates us on our sacrifice. It is difficult to judge which is more horrific - the prospect of our obliteration or a human race regenerated from the likes of Thatcher.

# Editorial

THE CHARADE of hawkish voices raised against the cooling notes of Prior's proposals for outlawing certain forms of industrial action while the right-wing press berates him for being too mild and moderate is all designed to persuade workers that they had better accept this version of anti-trade union legislation for fear of getting something worse.

With a bit of legal interpretation from a Lord Denning all that is necessary for the outlawing of class struggle itself can be found in these proposals. Take just one provision - the restriction of legal immunity to persons who break or threaten to break a contract in furtherance of a trade dispute and not for "some extraneous motive". What exactly constitutes an "extraneous motive" which would make trade union members and officials liable to a civil action for breach both of their employment contract and commercial contracts as well if they are involved in industrial action? Presumably anything which can be construed as not strictly in furtherance of a trade dispute.

Last year the International Transport Federation blacked a ship not only to improve conditions for the seamen on that particular ship but as a move to abolish flags of convenience generally. That intention to do away with a convention which has led to appalling conditions for so many merchant seamen would be an "extraneous motive". So would be any action of the miners of Wales against the destruction of the steel industry in South Wales which is bound to affect their future employment. So also would be any action taken by workers to prevent the unfair dismissal of a fellow worker or the victimisation of one of their elected representatives.

Of course, the Longbridge workers have anticipated the anti-trade union legislation. Indeed, if all British workers behaved generally with their selfishness, cowardice and stupidity there would be no need of Prior's proposals. Britain would already be a fascist state.

Falling under the ban of "extraneous motivation" would be all attempts to use industrial action to prevent plans for the destruction of industry or the savage cutting back of health, education or the social services. Even industrial action that would be called legal according to the provisions of the proposed legislation, like the current steel strike in so far as it affects BSC plants, would become illegal the moment some steel worker on strike proclaimed, as we quoted in the last issue, that "the pay claim is second now - this is a war on her in Downing Street".

As Marxists, we have always pointed out that every class struggle is political, that every fight over wages and conditions is, in some measure, a fight against the capitalist system. That means that every trade dispute, particularly now that British capitalism can no longer afford collective bargaining, is more and more openly "extraneously motivated". The distinction between "furtherance of a trade dispute" and "extraneous motivation" is like the social democratic distinction between "economic" and "political" action; and is a false distinction.

So we say to our own class: make all struggle, all industrial action even more extraneously motivated by directing it toward revolutionary change of an exploitative system that is intolerable.

And to Thatcher we say: go ahead and pass whatever anti-trade union, anti-working class laws you want to have rubber-stamped by a Parliament we don't recognise. We will never cease from the class struggle which alone has enabled us to survive two hundred years of oppressive rule and which, carried to new heights, will end exploitation for profit. When the working class by its own conscious action has turned itself into "outlaws" according to the capitalist legal order, we shall have the new socialist order in which the exploiters are outlawed.

## Battle for ILEA spreads

THIS GOVERNMENT'S determination to destroy state education both by starving it of funds and removing from it the children with the greatest potential, is illustrated by its attempts to destroy ILEA\* (the Inner London Education Authority) which over the years has become synonymous with well-resourced comprehensive education. ILEA has one of the best pupil teacher ratios in the country, spends more per child than any other authority and has the widest range of specialist facilities.

Seemingly out of the blue last summer, Wandsworth Council, led by a faithful Thatcherite, applied to Mark Carlisle, Secretary of State for Education, for the right to take over control of local education from ILEA in order, they said, to increase local accountability and cut down on "waste". They want, of course, to bring back selective education. The idea had never been sounded out locally.

But over the months unanimous opposition has poured in from organisations of parents, teachers and school governors. Thus of 116 representations received by the Secretary of State by January, only 3 supported the Council. And who or what were these heroic three? Two were sent in by the Council and the third was from the leader of the Council! A massive National Union of Teachers' public meeting launched the campaign to Keep Wandsworth in ILEA and, since then, local parents, recognizing the threat to their children's education, have formed WASP (Wandsworth Association of School Parents) a superbly well-organised group that is attracting mass support.

The Council's excuse for never having mentioned the idea was that they wanted to know what Mr Carlisle thought of the idea first... Ah, naive bliss! How strange then that it has long been rumoured that the idea was initiated by Carlisle's own political adviser, one Stuart Sexton. The plot now thickens, for

# BL workers betray the Class

BRITISH LEYLAND workers at Longbridge instead of demanding the sacking of Edwardes have permitted the sacking of Robinson, their shop steward and Convenor. By their short-sighted and unprincipled decision, agreeing to the victimisation of their Convenor for his opinions and who worked on their behalf, they have let themselves down and all organised workers throughout the country.

The workers at Longbridge have voted themselves cowards of the year. The whizz kid Edwardes from South Africa crowned himself emperor and the workers at Longbridge proclaimed him God.

When Leyland is finally laid waste, who will take the blame? Certainly the whole working class will take the consequences, but what shall we say of those "Edwardes' workers" who so eagerly licked their master's boots. When the British motor industry is no more, and we become assemblers of foreign kits, how will we remember British Leyland? What kind of organised workforce can vote for victimisation and for the end of organisation?

If Robinson had called for layoffs and cut backs, for closure and redundancy, presumably he would have won full support of the members. Being a trade unionist, he naturally thought

that the axeman should be challenged and called for the expansion of the industry he worked in for 38 years. And so he got the chop. Instead of getting the full backing of his Executive Council, he got a pathetic enquiry. But at least the Executive Council got it right, after 3 months, that he was victimised.

If an Executive Council in the midst of its present mood of mutual congratulation and delight in their own ineptness can still get something right, why can't the members on the ground at Longbridge? Is there going to be a scramble for redundancy money again? It is, after all, 1980 and

workers in Britain are under attack from every direction that Thatcher can muster. We don't have to lose everything before we can wake up just a little bit and brace ourselves for a counter-attack, do we?

The vote at Longbridge is just another in the long line of tragedy of errors for which Leyland workers have become renowned. They voted for 25,000 of their mates to get the sack (instead of sacking Edwardes; then it looked as if some sense of reality was creeping in when they voted against a 12 per cent wage cut. Now, finally, they have voted against the Executive Council decision, against the District Committee decision, against the Shop Stewards' decision and against their fellow member and convenor Derek Robinson. And they dare to talk about the right to work.

So who cares if Leylands shuts down now? Only some thousands of trade unionists who fought through their branches and union machinery that the Executive Council might see what was as clear as day. Only those millions of organised workers who wish to save British industry and stop the destruction. Only the oldest and wisest and strongest labour movement in the world that would not want this despicable vote to go unchallenged.

## Thatcher out!



Put her in the dustbin of history

## China - Teng Launches Attack on Mao

THE MOVE by Teng Hsiao-ping to have Liu Shao-chi rehabilitated is the most open attack he has so far made on Mao Tse-tung himself. During the cultural revolution, which was a massive effort to mobilise the working people of China to defend to socialism won by revolution, Liu Shao-chi was exposed as a "capitalist roader" determined to destroy socialism from within by sapping socialist morality with capitalist incentives.

Now that Teng has been enabled by the coup following the death of Mao to go so long down the road

of restoring capitalism in China, he would naturally like to restore also the reputation on one of the most notorious traitors to the real interests of the Chinese people. That Teng still has to proceed in the negative manner of not attacking Mao by name but of praising someone opposed to everything Mao stood for shows how deeply sensible the people of China still are to all that they gained from Mao's application of Marxism-Leninism to the conditions of China - even if they have not so far shown themselves capable of defending

those gains from the little men who have come after and are plotting not only with class enemies in China, but also with imperialist enemies abroad to destroy everything the revolution in China has achieved.

This attempted resurrection of the capitalist Liu could well have the effect of raising against the present "capitalist roaders" the mighty ghost of Mao Tse-tung which is simply the socialist aspirations in the breasts of the working people of China.



## Gloomy forecasts on production and employment as Budget approaches

DURING the next two weeks Howe will be preparing the major part of the March 26 budget. The outlook is gloomy all round, and in the past few days he has received submissions from Treasury officials which predict an even more gloomy economic future.

A fall in total industrial output this year of nearly 3 per cent is predicted, together with a rate of retail price inflation of more than 15 per cent during next year. It is most unlikely that Howe will reduce the Minimum Lending Rate, despite unease even within his own ranks, and there will certainly not be any further reductions in direct taxation. He may well shrink from large increases in indirect taxation because of the likely reactions to the higher inflation they would cause.

Meanwhile, the Engineering Employers' Federation has published a report which forecasts an 11 per cent fall in mechanical engineering sales this year and a 10 per cent decline in net new orders. Many more jobs than the 27,000 lost in the first 10 months of last year are likely to go. The working party which produced the report, both employers and trade union represen-

tatives, have no doubt that the Government's long-term policy for the economy will have very serious consequences for industry.

While more than a fifth of Britain's industrialists interviewed in a poll forecast up to three million unemployed in four years' time, even confidential government figures predict two million out of work by this time next year, a rise of a quarter. These figures have been produced by the Manpower Services Commission, which was brought into being in order to deal with the 'problem' of unemployment, is facing massive cuts in its own cash budget, and even a 12.9 per cent reduction in its own staffing levels. The MSC's Employment Services Division, which is responsible for Job Centres and other employment offices, has stated that it will be unable to carry out its job-finding service owing to the reduction in its own staff, and the Commission as a whole will be "unable to deliver in full the programmes it has hitherto considered necessary to meet labour market needs".

But, who needs an employment service when the Government is consolously fostering unemployment and closing industry.

# Steelmen stick to their guns Hull fishing has been destroyed by EEC

THE INSISTENCE by the BSC on sticking "absolutely firmly on the self-funding principle", which is the formula by which the government is limiting steel wage rises while claiming not to intervene, led to a walk out of representatives of the two main unions involved in the 9-week long steel strike.

The general secretary of the ISTC said the walk-out did not mean a final break; but there could only be a settlement if the corporation was prepared to be flexible enough to enable negotiations to resume. On February 26 the unions are due to meet the BSC again anyway to discuss closure plans.

The British steel strike has even forced itself into the

consideration of the European Commission where astonishment was expressed at the BSC's plan to make 52,000 workers redundant by the end of August. The Brussels Commissioner for Social Affairs said a more reasonable timetable for cuts on this scale would be three years and that "there were some shock treatments no doctor would prescribe."

The spirit of the steel workers in continuing their industrial action was shown by a speaker from the ISTC invited to address the Hull Trades Council. He said he had not come to ask for support but to demand that fellow workers carry out their duty "since the attack on steel

workers was an attack on the whole labour movement."

He said it was not chance that the government had picked on the ISTC which had a history of compromise with the employers and no recent tradition of solidarity. Thatcher had thought steel an easy target for attack. "But they forgot the old saying: 'let sleeping dogs lie' and went and trod on our tail. Now we've got our teeth in her leg and we're not going to let go."

The Trades Council Disputes Committee has arranged accommodation for steel workers with Hull families so that 24 hour pickets of steel stockholders could be maintained.

TEN YEARS ago Hull was the biggest fishing harbour in Europe. That was before Britain joined the EEC and the Common Fisheries policy reared its ugly head.

On February 14th the Fishing Owner's Association announced it was going into voluntary liquidation. A spokesman stated: "Today's bombshell is possibly the beginning of the end for the British fishing industry." Heavily subsidised Common Market imports are to blame for "the annihilation of the British industry" he continued. "It would appear to be a political decision that we are not

to have a fishing industry."

The liquidation means redundancy for 130 'bobbars' who unload the fish and 55 workers in the Fishing Vessel Owners' Association. A further 3000 - 5000 jobs in associated industries - processing, cold storage, engineering, food and fuel supplies - will also be lost.

Other ports like Aberdeen and Fleetwood are also at risk. Lowestoft is particularly threatened by cheap imports of Dutch plaice.

There is only one way to stop this and similar destruction and waste - Get Britain out of the EEC.

## Will Britain carry-on in Zimbabwe? Meccano workers carry on - Airfix rumbled

BRITAIN, according to Thatcher, has been very busy in Zimbabwe acting as the 'honest broker', devising a system of government for the natives and generally laying down moral principles. British and South African troops have been monitoring vigorously (309 deaths since the January 4th ceasefire) and British bobbies have gone out with umbrellas "to gain valuable experience for the future".

It pays to look at why British Imperialism is prepared to devote such time and energy to this monitoring.

Thousands are still detained under martial law; Zanu Patriotic Front estimated a further 2500 arrests between January 4 and February 14.

Between two thirds and three quarters of the Zimbabwe economy (in terms of investment, output and profit) is dominated by British, South African and US capital. Any threat to this investment will have repercussions throughout Africa. In 1978 British investments in West Africa were estimated at £800 million. Britain's trade with black Africa in 1978 totalled £3.3 billion. In the words of Conservative Francis Pym, "So far as Africa is concerned the communist threat has never loomed larger".

Looking more closely at this Thatcher Government's interests in Zimbabwe, 13 Tory MP's have directorships in firms operating in Zimbabwe including

Commercial Union, Rediffusion and Lonhro. A further 11 have interests in firms operating there: another 7 are 'consultants' to such firms. The Foreign Secretary, Carrington, is an ex-director of Rio-Tinto Zinc, Barclays Bank and Cadbury-Schweppes in Zimbabwe, and he retains substantial shareholdings and connections in these firms.

For fourteen years the Smith Regime looked after these interests of successive British governments. The force of sanctions is now fully exposed; suffice it to quote one recent set of figures: Turner and Newall (Rhodesia) the industrial group, disclosed the increase in their net asset value during the years of sanctions - from £6.3m to £92m.

MECCANO workers reaffirmed their resolve to keep their works in Blinn's Road, Liverpool, open. A mass meeting on Wednesday 13 February agreed to continue the occupation and step up attempts to find a buyer. So far a serious offer has been made to buy the plant by a religious organisation, who plan to run it as a cooperative.

However, the Guru's inner eye did not foresee the evil eye of capitalism in the Airfix boardroom. Airfix are being deliberately obstructive towards what the workforce

understand is an offer that would cost Airfix much less than closure. They also understand that Airfix want to continue making their product elsewhere, and want to close the Liverpool plant.

To sell it would only give them a competitor, if indeed they dare use the Meccano name, which it appears is the only thing that Airfix ever wanted from the factory.

Having rumbled Airfix's intentions the workforce are more determined than ever that their factory will stay open, and will not shut.

## Attack on Westminster Hospital (cont'd from page one)

London reconciling teaching with service needs" will also be made public. The very title of the document indicates the thinking behind it, in that it is deemed necessary to "reconcile" teaching with service needs. This document is the result of the "findings" of several working parties which looked into several specialties including cardiothoracic surgery and cardiology, neurology, and radiotherapy and oncology (the treatment of cancer).

The consistent trend of attack on the Westminster Hospital threads its way through these reports. The cardio-thoracic report recommends that heart surgery ceases at the hospital despite two purpose built cardio-thoracic operating theatres and a computer based monitoring system for post-operative care. The local Community Health Council should be ashamed of themselves for falling into the trap of saying that the money should be spent on something else.

The radiotherapy and oncology report recommends that the radiology department (one of the busiest in London and justifiably world famous) should close. The working party says that it is too small yet they only saw a quarter of it since the rest was closed because of decorators! It is suggested that the department be moved across the river to St. Thomas' Hospital where a large, empty radiotherapy department with no patients awaits its arrival. They didn't bother to enquire why that department was built. Further, it is expected that the optalmology report will recommend that the Westminster cease work in this specialty.

Where, one might ask, would that leave the Medical School? Without any cardio-thoracic surgery, radiotherapy or ophthalmology carried out in the Westminster, even if the Flowers Report did not recommend the closure of the

Westminster Medical School, the University of London would have no option other than to do so, since it would no longer be attached to what could be called a teaching hospital, in that a large number of important components to a full medical education would not be available.

The general feeling in the Westminster is that it is to become an outpost of the St. Thomas' Hospital and Medical School. Such a move would not be due to rationalisation for an improved service but rather would mean a reduction in the quality as well as quantity of health care not only for Londoners but also for people all over Britain. This is so because particularly difficult cases are often sent to teaching hospitals where integrated teams of doctors, technicians and nurses have developed special skills over many years. The closure of a teaching hospital means far more than the loss of beds; the destruction of the teams and common expertise would be unquantifiable.

The staff of the Westminster Hospital have already started to organise for its defence, lead by several world famous consultants in a Campaign Committee. Plans involving all the unions, the local Community Health Council and it is hoped, local residents, are underway and an all staff meeting has been called by the Campaign Committee for the 26 February.

## 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 Market Place
- Hull Bookstall Old Town Market, Saturdays
- Liverpool Bookstall every Thursday Liverpool University

## Public Meetings

### LONDON

Friday February 29th  
OUR TRADES UNIONS OR THEIR LAW?  
Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, W. C. 1.  
at 7.30pm

Bellman Bookshop, 155 Fortress Road, Tufnell Park, NW5 at 7.30 pm  
Friday March 14 The economics of destruction  
Friday March 28 The future betrayed? Our children's inheritance is not for sale

### NEWCASTLE

Thursday March 6th  
For Britain, For Peace, For Socialism: Out with Thatcher  
Post Office Inn, St Nicholas Street, Newcastle. at 7.30pm

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