



PEACE BLOCKADE - PHOTO REPORT PAGE 4

WOMEN peace demonstrators blockade the main gate at Greenham Common on Good Friday. Photo: The Worker.



For jobs and peace: Thatcher Out! Election now! Make Labour win!

THE FIGHT FOR JOBS

South Yorkshire steel workers walk out

THE FIRE of resistance to McGregor's destruction plans has been lit and has swept through South Yorkshire following the Easter walk-out by Rotherham steel workers.

BSC management were confident about imposing a further 1700 redundancies throughout the Special Steels Division and sent home workers who had been declared redundant because of the unilateral introduction of new shift systems.

Workers at Aldwarke and Templeborough in Rotherham had other ideas, refusing to adopt the new shifts and the compulsory redundancies. Their excellent example has been followed by other plants in the Division and pickets were out at all sites on Tuesday.

Pickets at Aldwarke told 'The Worker' that they were standing firm in defence of what remains of the industry. True, that defence had been too long in coming but they weren't going to let Thatcher wipe them off the map with-out a fight. Both at Aldwarke and at Templeborough, we were given plenty of evidence to demonstrate that the economics of BSC's new working patterns are absolutely crazy, unless your aim is to accelerate the destruction

of steel. Both plants are profit-making and produce steel products vital to engineering and construction. Even working three shifts they were unable to meet demand and yet a two-shift system was to be introduced. Straight, uninhibited political act of genocide against our industry and its workers.

The men are also fighting the possibility of privatisation in the summer. This again figures large in the new moves.

All this was supposed to go on as smooth as clock-work. Instead, the determined struggle of the steelworkers has shaken BSC rigid who never expected to wake up to 8000 in 8 plants on strike. That advantage, gained by decisive and resolute action, should now be built on.

The fight for steel, solid at the core, now needs to be taken out to other sections of BSC and related industries in Sheffield and south Yorkshire. Common cause against a common enemy should be developed with the Yorkshire miners, themselves soon to be threatened by the Mad McGregor. Another group of workers has joined the movement to sweep Thatcher away. She will not survive.

Seamen's lightning strike forces the Navy to hand back hijacked ferry

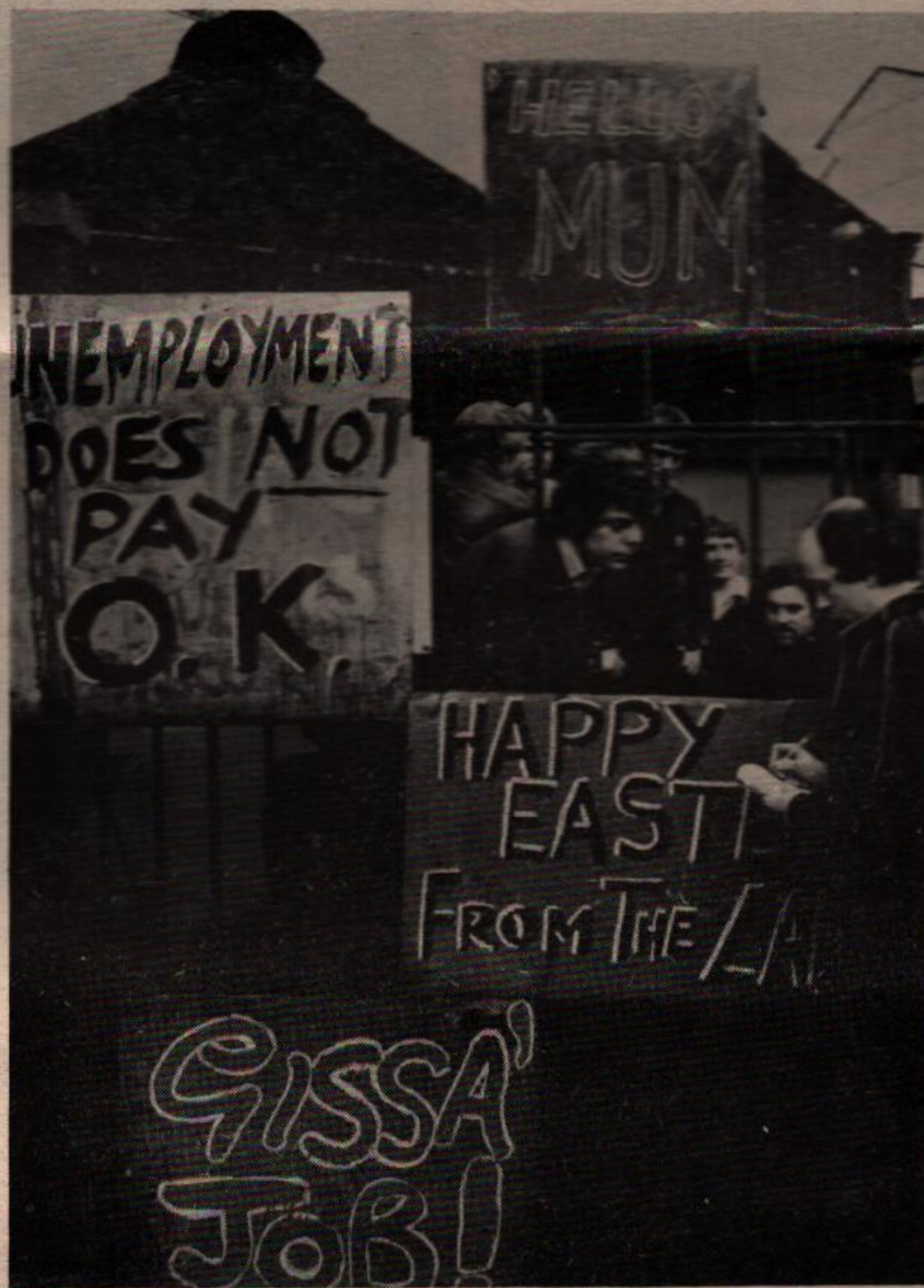
PROMPT action by the National Union of Seamen turned the Royal Navy's hijacking of the troop carrier HMS Keren, scheduled for service in the Falklands, into a wages victory for seamen.

The ship which is operated by the Blue Star Line for its owner, the Ministry of Defence, was immobilised by a wages dispute between management and seamen when it was commandeered by Royal Naval personnel disguised in civvies and taken out to sea. It was just the sort of action

Thatcher loves. She sees herself playing Elizabeth I with Sir Francis Drake gallantly fighting her enemies - not the Spanish, of course, but British workers.

But the National Union of Seamen showed even more dash. They seized in Harwich the government owned cargo boat, Brown-ing, as a counter-hostage and 28,000 members of the NUS would strike.

It was one of the quickest wage settlements in history and entirely satisfactory for the seamen.



PICKETS outside Stockbridge Steel Works protesting against shift changes which caused job losses. Photo: The Worker.

Cowley workers stand up to BL

THE STRIKE at BL's Cowley assembly plant continues. 5000 workers on March 28 decided on an immediate strike following management attempts to increase working time for no extra pay. A mass meeting on April 6 voted by eight to one to remain on strike.

Track workers in the assembly plant - in the days of the piecework payment system - often completed their production schedules with time to spare, and would wait a few minutes until the end of the shift.

The introduction of measured day work in 1971 did not alter a custom dating back about 50

years. The nearby body plant, similarly used a few minutes before clocking off to clean up before going home. It is tiring and often dirty work in the motor industry.

Cowley workers turn out 37 cars an hour, round the clock: about 900 cars a day. Following redundancies, less workers produce more cars and are badly paid.

By abolishing cleaning time management estimated 100 more cars a week would be produced. In a year this would be the equivalent of almost 5000 cars. In other words management would gain roughly a week's production without paying for it.

Aerospace factory occupied in Sheffield

WORKERS occupying the Sheffield aerospace factory, interviewed by 'The Worker', explained why they had decided to move in on Good Friday. "The fight is over enforced redundancies, 11 the company want to cut. We've been on short-time working for 2½ years and fifteen months ago we lost 60 through voluntary redun-

cy. Six weeks ago they announced that they wanted to close the saw shop and the die shop. This would have effectively turned the plant into an unviable unit. So we weren't accepting the closures or the redundancies.

To stop the closures we blocked the movement of products out of the factory. On the 26th of March, they brought in some cowboys to move stuff out so we decided to occupy, which we did on Good Friday."

Workers at the plant were in good spirits and planning their next moves. The management's actions are so typical of what is happening all over the country. Accountability procedures being used to present profitable sections as loss-makers, shifting around of production between plants, job loss and then closure.

Workers in the AUEW, T&GWU and EPTU have said 'enough is enough' at Firth-Derihon. Their lead should be followed.

Fords victory at Halewood

THE FORD Halewood workers returned to work on Friday April 8 with dignity and pride. They have shown by their action, over the sacking of a colleague, that solidarity can achieve victory.

The operator accused of bending a 90p bracket and dismissed on the assumption of a foreman, is back on pay and is having the issue decided by an enquiry conducted through ACAS. This is against the company's adamant refusal to accept such a proposal by the union from the start.

The strike by 4500 assembly plant workers left Ford in no doubt that if they wanted their factory back in production they had to give way to workers' action. In spite of open threats about the future of Halewood, the workers remained solid in their determination not to let Ford sack the operator without an enquiry taking place.

It was suggested by the stewards in Ford that this dispute was set up by the management to help them put in unacceptable efficiency proposals. The workers have shown by this victory just what Ford can expect when he tried to put further impositions on the workforce.

Historic Notes The Munitions Profiteers

BRITAIN'S MEDDLING DISCOVERED

AT THIS moment Iraqis are killing Iranians and Iranians are killing Iraqis with (among others) British bullets.

The expert engineers of Britain are no longer producing fine machine tools or locomotives or ships for the world but their skill is going to produce ever more refined, horrific weapons of death for the armament industry, the last profit-making British enterprise.

Once, arms merchants were regarded as sleazy criminals, not above murder and bribery to make their millions. Now, smooth young men in three-piece suits travel the world touting for trade - it was discovered that an evil-tempered old woman in a Mother

Hubbard was not the best salesperson.

The most legendary of all the armament chieftains was Basil Zaharoff, knighted by King George V for his services in winning the war. Sir Basil started life as a 'fireman' in Constantinople, as one of the riff raff on the streets that appeared at fires with wooden buckets and after argument as to fee, squirted the building or else left it to burn.

Sir Basil, one of these breech-clouted 'firemen' rose to become the greatest munitions manufacturer in the world and became a multimillionaire, a maker of governments 'the one man who won every war'. After a slow start in Britain, to which he had emigrated,

and after a trial at the Old Bailey for theft, where he was saved by a rich Turkish uncle and a smart lawyer, he returned to Greece and a clerk's job in an armaments company.

Russia and Turkey were then at war and by the end of that war the young man had several thousand dollars. Vickers, the British firm, now offered him a partnership if he could get a 5 million dollar order from Spain, in dispute with the USA.

He did so and became the most important munitions salesman of all. By now a millionaire, he then did what the Krupps, the Schneiders and the Americans and British munitions makers did - he sold to both sides.

He travelled the world, meeting prime ministers and kings, sowing the seeds of suspicion and hatred, and selling large orders 'for the purpose of national defence'. He was charged with fomenting wars to sell guns. He sold machine guns to kill Boers and to the Boers to kill the British. The Balkan wars were fought with Zaharoff guns against Zaharoff guns. Only once, as a good patriot, he used his own money to arm Greeks against Kemil Ataturk but lost the war.

Like Nobel, he yearned for respectability in his old age and gave large sums to war charities, established hospitals for the wounded and dying. For all his wickedness however, he did not start a war to win an election.

BRITISH capitalism may be in a bad way but that doesn't stop it fishing around in troubled waters abroad. In fact, as the amount of capital exported from Britain multiplies so the City of London backed by the government needs to fish in ever murkier waters. Not for nothing does Joshua Nkomo friend of Rio Tinto Zinc and Lonhro's, come to London via South Africa and in Mozambique the British Embassy is involved in some very shady dealings indeed.

Evidence is accumulating that our embassy in Maputo, capital of Mozambique, is actively engaged in supporting the South Africa-backed Mozambique National Resistance (MNR), which uses terror and sabotage against the popular government.

Last month the Observer identified Alan Gingles, a former British Army lieutenant as one of the MNR saboteurs killed while laying explosives on the Mozambique to Zimbabwe railway line in 1981. On 17 February this year a British South African, Finlay Dion Hamilton, was convicted for sabotage in Mozambique and sentenced to 20 years in prison.

Hamilton was managing director of the South African company Manica Freight in Beira, Mozambique's main port. He was used by the British embassy as a kind of unofficial consul in Beira, and head of the Beira Aero Club. His arrest came two days after the BP-owned fuel storage tanks at Beira were blown up on 9 December 1982. Arms, ammunition and radio equipment were found when police searched Hamilton's home, plus 1000 litres of aero fuel concealed in his private hangar at Beira airport.

British residents in Beira have complained that the embassy recognition of Hamilton could have seriously compromised their position with the Mozambique government. The Foreign Office, however, refused to comment. The British Ambassador has been seen to visit Hamilton in jail a number of times, perhaps to ensure that there are no leaks.

Model for Britain

FOREIGN Office support for the fascist regimes in Chile and Turkey continues. The British National Nuclear

Corporation (NNC) is currently engaged in hawking Magnox nuclear reactors around Santiago and Ankara, more or less begging for a sale.

Turkey has signed the nuclear non-proliferation treaty. Chile hasn't. Both represent the kind of regime Thatcher would like to establish in

Britain - her chief economic advisor, Alan Walters, often quotes Chile as a model to aim at.

Asked about Chile's reputation for torture and repression, Dr Neil Franklin, managing director of the NNC, said, "We should wish to be satisfied that the present government was tolerable to the people... On the other hand, democracy is not the norm in human affairs." What better clue to the future face of Britain should we be so foolish as to allow Thatcher another five years?

Aid for El Salvador

WHILE EXHORTING churchmen to pray for those who live in "totalitarian darkness" and describing communism as the "focus of evil in the world", Reagan continues to finance murder in Central America. While the Senate grudgingly voted extra aid for El Salvador, El Salvadorean liberation forces were strengthening their hold on Morazan province, Chalatenango in the north and San Jose Flores.

Local peasants who are being mobilised to cultivate beans, rice, vegetables and chicken to sustain their military arm claimed that 126 of their number were massacred last month by government troops. This has not been confirmed by the UN Human Rights Commission who are concentrating on Poland at the moment.

Guatemala's General Rios Montt's killing of Indian peasants in anti-guerrilla operations caused no problems for the US government until it became clear that the military is losing the fight. Now even the Pope claims to be sickened by violence - signalling the

need for a tactical change.

This has been taken up by Jeanne Kirkpatrick, US ambassador to the UN. Noted for extolling the virtues of military dictatorships, she now pleads for a more enlightened approach to the Region - a sort of Marshall Plan, or perhaps Vietnamisation?

Strengthening the Salvadoran Army will fail as eventually it becomes a source of men and weapons for those engaged in the struggle to be free.

The attempt to "destabilise" the Sandinista regime in Nicaragua and return the country to the fascist dictator Samosa will fail too.

Nicaragua raised the question of the US-backed invasion of its territory by Samosa mercenaries from Honduras. Jeanne Kirkpatrick accused Nicaragua of turning the Security Council into a propaganda weapon for revolution.

She found herself opposed by Grenada, Vietnam, Cuba, Panama, Mexico, Zimbabwe, Tanzania, China and Pakistan, who all condemned US imperialism in Central America.

FRASER MONETARISM IS AN AWFUL MESS

AUSTRALIA's foreign policy is undergoing a few changes after one month of a Labor government. No longer will Australia be party to the Reagan-Thatcher axis of restricting cultural, sporting and scientific exchanges with the Soviet Union.

The Prime Minister has stated his government 'will remove the hypocrisy' which existed in the previous government's relations with the USSR. The Australian Labor Party is committed to a policy of aid to Vietnam.

This policy has already drawn impatient fire from China as well as the US and ASEAN nations who see it undermining their policy of isolating Vietnam.

Bob Hawke has promised not to 'move precipitately in that area', however, he also remarked that his government saw 'no merit in the situation where the only relationship the Government of Vietnam is likely to have is with the Soviet Union'.

Protection of Australian manufacture and jobs is another important part of Labor policy. This has meant a Government decision to take a more active and tougher role in resource

negotiations with Japan.

For years the Japanese have deliberately underestimated their needs for coal and iron ore and encouraged Australia particularly to increase production of such raw materials. This has produced a situation where the Japanese can so restrict their demand they can also determine the price. Naturally what they manufacture then competes easily with any home-grown product.

The Fraser government's monetarism has left the Australian economy in what the financial pages of the newspapers now call 'an awful mess'. So there's the old chestnut of Labor having to straighten things out and therefore not having the possibility of making radical change.

However, the halting of the previous government's attempts to break up Telecoms, squeeze publicly owned broadcasting, and generally hand over public assets to private strippers must count as progress for the time being.

Monetarism is only another name for counter-revolution and for any government to take a stand against it must count as progress.



Woman guerrilla fighter in El Salvador, where listening to a radio can mean death. Credit: El Salvador Solidarity Campaign.

Thatcher condemned

A PROPOSED Enquiry into the political situation in northern Ireland has caused uproar amongst MPs of all parties.

The Enquiry, by a Commission of the European Parliament, has been condemned by Thatcher as interference in another country's internal affairs. A case of the pot calling the kettle black. Britain's armed interference is, apparently, an entirely different matter.

For all their support for the

EEC, Thatcher is still concerned that some of her government's barbarities may not prove acceptable to the rest of Europe. It is not long since Britain was convicted of torture in Ireland by the European Court.

No wonder Thatcher is so incensed at Livingstone's visit to meet elected representatives of the Irish people. The latest local council election showed clearly what contempt the British colonialists are held in there.

* IN BRIEF Crime wave in Midlands

ARMED West Midlands police recently smashed their way into a Birmingham flat with sledgehammers and held the three occupants at gunpoint before taking two of them to the police station. The couple, aged 64, were later released. The third suspect, their 90 year old mother, is deaf, and failed to wake when police with

guns broke into her bedroom. Police questioning has also cleared her of armed robbery.

West Midlands Chief Constable later rejected a damages claim for £534 and offered £378. Birmingham pensioners who slept soundly in the knowledge that the police were on guard outside may now begin to worry lest they come in.

Editorial

THATCHER'S war on the working class has transformed the industrial scene in Britain. The main centre of industrial battle has become the public sector and the main thrust of industrial action has been directed against this Government in what might be called insurrectionary strikes. The essence of this kind of class struggle is that damage inflicted on the enemy, Thatcher, is just as important as any gains made in terms of wages and conditions. The 9-month strike the health workers were able to sustain through their guerrilla action brought only a small increase in wages but did great harm to Thatcher and completely exposed her secret plans for privatising the NHS. And of course when industrial action does result in a clear victory over wages and hours of work, like that of the water workers, then Thatcher is struck a mortal blow.

When Thatcher creates mass unemployment to weaken resistance to wage cuts, any struggle against unemployment, like the engineers' strike 2 years ago for a shorter week, is part of the fight for wages: and any successful fight for wages, such as that of the water workers, tells Thatcher that she will not be allowed to go on de-manning the water industry. The fight for wages and the fight for jobs are one and the same and that fight goes on.

Thatcher seems to be aware that she has signally failed to destroy the British workers' will to resist. In her appointment of Mc Gregor to the Coal Board against the advice even of her own Cabinet and in using the Royal Navy to hijack a ship whose crew was in a wages dispute with the owners she showed that she wants an all-out fight with some section of the working class to provide her with a victory in the class war here to go with her Falklands 'victory'. In the run-up to an election she sees herself in a triumphal procession in which some captured trade union banners can be dragged along in the dust beside the Argentine standard.

But only a mad or excessively stupid commander provokes a battle with an enemy who has plenty of fight in him. She has totally failed, in spite of bringing about the highest unemployment ever and enacting a whole complex of anti-trade union legislation, to demoralise the organised working class. Workers who have borne the worst brunt of her attack, in BL and in British Steel, are taking industrial action at Cowley in Oxford and in six British Steel engineering plants in Sheffield and Rotherham against the Government. They say no more redundancy. No more wage cuts.

Thatcher will get the fight she is spoiling for - and it will crush her.

Thatcher steals from the sick

THE INTRODUCTION of the Statutory Sick Pay (SSP) proposals from April 6 must be one of the most cynical moves Thatcher has made to date, and she should be hammered for it.

It is not only a ducking out of responsibility toward the sick, by passing the administration of the first 8 weeks' sickness onto the employer. As another blow to the welfare state this would be bad enough.

It is also an insidious move to boost government coffers at the expense of sick employees and employer.

Under SSP, all pay during sickness will be liable to tax and National Insurance deductions. Under the old system the sickness benefit paid by the DHSS was exempt from these.

What this means is that a married person with two children, earning £120 per week could be £16 worse off after SSP (plus the fact that there will be no additional payments for dependants - SSP is a flat rate payment). In addition, the higher rated industrial injury benefit - paid for accidents and injuries at work, or because of a prescribed disease - is being scrapped. This alone is intended to bring in an extra £5m to the government.

As a result of the change there will be attempts to lower the number of civil servants dealing with sick pay.

Employers will have to pay the administrative costs of SSP, but workers, where organised, will be aiming to get their sick pay schemes improved to cover the shortfall in wages. The size of this task is considerable - because of the new tax rule the sick worker illustrated above would have to secure an extra £25.22 from the employer to retain the same income as under the old scheme.

Many employers will try to toughen up sickness procedures; turn it into a disciplinary matter, or use it as a means to isolate individuals - to the point of sacking them rather than pay SSP. Indeed, the lack of controls positively encourages this. If the employer consistently refuses to pay, the worker will have to apply to the County Court for enforcement. If the employer sacks a worker rather than pay, he can only be made to pay SSP where it can be shown he sacked someone "solely or mainly for the purpose of avoiding liability for" SSP.

Unions will have some hard negotiating to do to protect their members from worsened conditions when sick. Those workers without organisation will suffer yet another blow to their living standards. As a whole we should make sure that the business counts towards the day of reckoning for Thatcher, the sickest part of it all.

Steel mills shut-steel imported

COULD it be that one of Ian MacGregor's final accomplishments as chairman of British Steel is to sound the death knell for Ravenscraig, Scotland's giant steelworks? Whilst steel production at home is being systematically destroyed. MacGregor is proposing that £100 million be invested in a 51 per cent stake in an American steel company. Talks have already taken place between BSC and US Steel about shipping high quality unfinished British steel from Ravenscraig to the American steel plant so that BSC can avoid the tariffs imposed on finished steel.

The reason given for this liaison is that close links with American steel firms could guarantee steelmen's jobs in Britain. In reality at least 2000 jobs would have to go immediately because there would no longer be a need for ingot production, thus closing the slab mill and the Gartcosh cold reduction mill. MacGregor wanted to shut Ravenscraig and was thwarted. But in this way he can continue the process of running down the British steel industry while helping the American steel firms sack US workers.

Britain now imports 60 per cent of the sophisticated tool and high speed steel used in this country as compared with 5 per cent before Thatcher.

The new plan has already met

Thatcher guilty, time for sentence

'THATCHER guilty, time for sentence' was the title and theme of a meeting recently in Brent, North West London, organised by the Communist Party of Britain (Marxist-Leninist).

There was no need to spend time at the meeting detailing Thatcher's guilt - the evidence is clear to anybody who lives in Brent; the thriving industrial centre of Park Royal is now an empty shell; Brent's health services and hospitals face more and more cuts, while providing a much needed service.

The speaker and contributors at the meeting concentrated on our ability to execute the sentence and the need to do so quickly.

They pointed out that Sladebrook School, which was threatened with closure, is still open and thriving. It was noted that in the recent local election the Labour candidate was returned with the greatest majority ever.

fierce opposition from steel unions. Even Tory back-benchers regard it with sceptical amusement. Funny or not, the plan represents an attempt to hammer

the final nail into the coffin of British steel production. The only export we would welcome from British Steel to America is MacGregor.



Teeside coke oven - what future? John Sturrock (Report)



- THE OCTOBER REVOLUTION
- SOCIALISM AND INDUSTRY
- COLD WAR

Hitherto unpublished documents by Stalin including his answer to Churchill's Fulton speech.

Available price 50p plus 20p postage

from Bellman Bookshop,

155 Fortress Road London NW5

FOR PEACE AND JOBS-ELECTION NOW! THATCHER OUT!

May Day Meeting 1983

LONDON: April 30, Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, 7.30
 BIRMINGHAM: April 30, Friends Meeting House, 5.00
 BRIGHTON: May 1, Queens Head, opposite station, 7.30
 EXETER: April 29, Music Hall, Central Library, 8.00
 GLASGOW: May 4, Partick Burgh Hall, 7.30
 HULL: April 29, Meeting Room 1, Central Library, 7.30
 LEEDS: May 1, Swarthmore Education Centre, 3.00
 MANCHESTER: April 29, Milton Hall, Deansgate, 7.30
 NEWCASTLE: May 1, Bridge Hotel, High Level Bridge, 7.30
 NOTTINGHAM: April 29, International Community Centre, 7.30





BRITAIN'S 'nuclear valley' near Reading in Berkshire was brought to a standstill over Easter, when 100,000 people converged on the area to hold one of the most ambitious peace demonstrations this country has ever seen. CND, the organisers, has expected 40,000.

Months of training and preparation came to fruition at six o'clock on Thursday morning when peace campaigners began a 36 hour blockade of the US cruise missile base at Greenham Common near Newbury, and the ordnance factory at Burghfield just outside Reading, where Britain's nuclear weapons are made.

It was a great success. At Burghfield only 25 out of a total shift of 200 turned up for work, while at Greenham hundreds of police were needed to force a passage for a convoy of buses.

On Good Friday, the two block-

The fight for peace

ades were linked by a 14 mile human chain, which also took in the Atomic Weapons Research Establishment at Aldermarston, mid-way between the two. This enormous chain, four deep in some places, was coordinated by stations every mile equipped with two-way radios.

At two o'clock flares were released to show that the chain was complete, and balloons drifted up from along its length.

In Glasgow on Easter Saturday, 3000 took part in a mass 'die-in' at St George's Square. They were later joined by a further 10,000 demonstrators for a march through the city centre to a rally in Kelvingrove Park.

The Government's response to

this was petty and vindictive. In the Commons, Thatcher told the Greenham peace woman to link hands around the Berlin Wall, while Heseltine went there himself to lay a wreath and expound on the cost of freedom. And just to show that it was all a communist plot, two Soviet diplomats and a journalist were expelled for allegedly spying.

The peace demonstrations were not just limited to Britain. In Germany over the Easter weekend an estimated 750,000 people took part in marches through the major cities, as well as similar blockades of US bases. At Neu Ulm, tear gas was used to disperse the demonstrators. There was also a protest outside

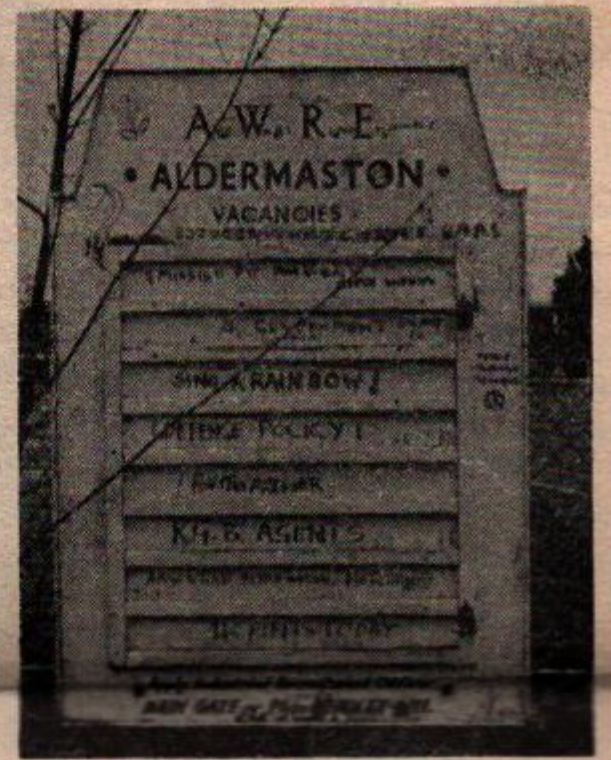
the De Peel air force base in Holland, which is a possible site for cruise missiles.

Reagan has also felt moved to make a fresh offer to the Soviet Union over the deployment of new missiles, in essence: "The zero option is dead, long live the 'almost zero' option." It was immediately rejected.

This Easter's peace activities mark a new phase of active resistance to NATO's war plans. They were a dress rehearsal for much bigger blockades if the missiles are deployed. In the meantime, CND plans to hold a national peace canvass of every household prior to the election.

It can only be of benefit to the Labour Party, whose recent campaign document has reaffirmed its commitment to removing US bases, and running down Britain's nuclear arsenal. They must not miss this opportunity to tighten the noose around Thatcher's neck.

● Top left: Women peace campaigners blockade the main gate at Greenham. Top right: The peace chain links the two blockades. Below: For itinerant cyclists, vacancies at Aldermarston. All photos: The Worker.



ADM MUST ACT TO UNITE NUJ TO FACE COMMON ENEMY

MERGER talks between the National Union of Journalists and the National Graphical Association have broken down. Now it is the subject of much discussion, especially within the NUJ.

Whether or not a merger between the two unions would have meant the further development of industrial organisation and unity needed to face the Thatcher government was not a foregone conclusion - but the need is certainly there.

In provincial newspapers a retreat on the question of wages (a 'rise' of two per cent not back-dated) has been seen by the employers as the signal for an onslaught on jobs, in the name of 'new technology'.

the NUJ fails to implement policy and bring a small minority of Thatcherites and careerists with their unprofessional lies and distortions into line, the NUJ's standing in the eyes of the public, fellow trade unions, and indeed, its own members will be brought into further contempt.

In all these areas the NUJ has policy - but the union has failed (or been unable) to implement it; and in such a context the failure of talks aimed at developing trade union organisation can only be harmful.

But this is not the whole question. The manner of the talks' failure is a warning to the membership of the NUJ. It must put its own house in order.

reality to widen.

The actions of the ad hoc committee, presented as a principled stand for NUJ democracy, were nothing of the sort. Their formulation of a shopping list of demands against the NGA as if it were an employer and not a fellow trade union, was misguided.

The underlying message of their particular list (on 'more' democracy, 'more' equality for women, the independence of the union journal) - that a fellow trade union is a sexist, undemocratic, bureaucratic and dictatorial organisation - was absurd. Tebbit's Green Paper line, in fact.

The plain truth of the matter is that the NUJ has not got the luxury of picking and choosing matters of principle.

Matters of principle

Crucial matters of real principle are being forced on the NUJ by Thatcher and the employers. Yet the very ability of the union to act in a cohesive united manner is threatened because the annual conference has decided it does not trust its own executive and passes power and responsibility to another body, separate and parallel to the national executive, claiming equal authority - but with no constitutional standing.

Furthermore, we have seen that whilst passing the most admirable and worthy policies, the NUJ is failing to implement them.

As treasurer John Devine said in The Journalist "If a body of policy would have given us the highest paid jobs in the world, with the most progressive

membership within the trade union movement, then the NUJ would be spearheading the world in search of the new society. But it did not and we are not'.

Policy not posture

The NUJ cannot afford to continue the pretence that posture is the same as policy. And it is not a solution to retreat from the problem by outlawing 'political' stands in the pretence that somehow a trade union can be a non-political organisation.

Aire Valley textile strikers take brave stand against their bosses' intimidation

TEXTILE workers at the Farsley firm of Aire Valley Yarns have refused to accept the sacking of their shop steward, Liaqat Ali, for trying to organise workers at the company into the TGWU Textile Section.

For nearly a month, a constant 24 hour picket has been maintained outside the three associated factories of these rapacious, Thatcherite employers. Scab labour is being drafted in by the owners. 'The Worker' saw at least one dangerous incident with maniacal scabs driving through the picket at 40 mph brushing one man so that he stumbled and almost fell.

NUJ members must face facts and confront the basic issues head on by restoring the rightful authority and accountability of the national executive, by directing priorities and organisation to defeat Thatcher through the fight for wages and jobs.

And we cannot ignore that, in an election year, the NUJ is part of the labour movement. Another term of Thatcher would be a disaster and the NUJ must take its stand.

The companies are typical of many smaller, money-grubbing textile concerns which abound in this day of the small business. They employ non-union labour in slave conditions. 'The Worker' was informed that men at Aire Valley work a standard 60 hour week at the princely sum of £1.02 per hour.

The workers at Aire Valley have taken a brave and principled stand against victimisation and against the kind of conditions Thatcher would impose on us all. They have had to cope with police harassment and the threatened usage of Tebbit's anti-union laws. They deserve all the support which can be mustered.

THE Book Branch of the NUJ passed the following motion at its April meeting.

'This Branch is convinced that a Tory victory in the forthcoming general election would be disastrous for the book publishing industry, for its members' livelihoods and rights and for all trade union activity. The branch considers that a Labour victory would directly help the Union to pursue its stated objects as in Rule 1e(i) and its current policies. It therefore calls upon all branch members to vote Labour and upon the NEC to support this stand.'

In broadcasting, the Hunt report on cable television threatens jobs, organisation and standards; and in magazines and books job loss continues, despite some gallant stands.

On top of the Employment Act the NUJ faces Tebbit's quasi-law - a 'code of conduct' attempting to ban journalists' closed shops and outlaw their right to strike, as a threat to the freedom of the press. Meanwhile the Police Bill attacks journalists' professional and civil liberties.

And in national newspapers, if

The merger talks were called off, not because truly fundamental disagreements had emerged between the two unions, but because of flaws in the NUJ's own organisation. NUJ members had allowed their own structure to be bypassed by giving responsibility for the talks away from their own national executive to an ad hoc committee.

The consequence has been confusion and division. More important, it has allowed the gap between policy and practice, between slogan, posture and

The Worker

One year: £12 post paid
Six months: £6 post paid

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____