



THATCHER'S ROYAL COMMISSION PLAN FOR POLICE STATE

Previous governments need ed excuses for increasing the powers of the police and undermining civil liberties. Thus we had the Prevention of Terrorism Act (Temporary Provisions 1974) introduced following the hysteria created by the indiscriminate bomb campaign by the Provisional IRA on the streets, and shops of Britain. 'Temporary' though it was, it has consistently been renewed every six months with hardly a murmur.

The Criminal Trespass Law ostensibly introduced as a measure to protect home occupiers from indiscriminate squatting was aimed from the start against factory and place of work occupations. The Royal Commission offers no such excuses. Their report deals a sweeping blow to all civil liberties enjoyed by every person in the country.

Unlike other Royal Comm-

Such a climate of repression, fear, threat and blackmail is created by Thatcher that the far-reaching recommendations of the Royal Commission on Criminal Procedure is being treated as a normal development. The Report published on 8 January, if adopted, will take Britain a long way towards the Thatcher police state.

Persons who have presented their report when all their work and research has been completed, this Royal Commission was put under pressure by Thatcher's government to produce their report for this session of Parliament.

The report backs even greater powers of search, arrest, detention and interrogation. It includes 24-hour renewable detention of arrested persons.

Alarming, it proposes to allow confessions in evidence even if the confessions are improperly obtained, and gives the green light to the use of more force to obtain 'confessions'. It also gives

greater backing to the refusal of the police to allow detained persons access to lawyers. The police will be given wider powers to arrest without warrant and to kick down people's doors and ransack houses. Even children will be affected. 10-year-olds will be fingerprinted if necessary.

The Metropolitan police set up a full time office to prepare its submission to the Commission. Surprisingly it is not fully satisfied with the recommendations since "time wasting, bureaucratic procedures designed to safeguard the civil rights of suspects" are created. Presumably they are annoyed that hardened

criminals in our infants schools cannot be fingerprinted.

The measures recommended by the Philips Commission represent yet another serious attack on the working class of Britain. They are the latest in a long line of attacks and if they are applied successfully will serve to tighten Thatcher's grip.

The aim of the measures is to bully and intimidate workers so that our class is kept under control. The measures are directed at workers not criminals although for Thatcher the two are synonymous.

The National Council for Civil Liberties has condemned the proposals and has called for a national campaign against them. Our response must match up to the intensity of the latest stage in Thatcher's attack on workers.

Threat of strike by workers in the water industry

INDUSTRIAL ACTION in the water industry is on the cards. Negotiators representing 33 000 manual workers are to consult their members with the recommendation that "no further progress is possible by negotiations and that the only alternative is industrial action". This follows the employer's refusal to increase their previously rejected 7.9 per cent pay offer when talks re-opened on January 6th.

The two sides are due to meet again on February 3rd and in the meantime the four unions involved - TGWU, GMWU, NUPE and NUAAW - will be urgently debating the tactics they can employ to challenge what was clearly a provocative offer - less than half the rate of inflation.

The employers have the shadow of Thatcher standing over them and as elsewhere this is strengthening their resolve. They make no bones about the fact that an "outside agency" (blackleg troops!) will be used should strikes take place, although such is the complexity and enormity of the essential job that waterworkers do it is predicted that nearly every member of the scab civil contingencies unit not required in Northern Ireland and NATO will be needed.

Waterworkers will be considering their tactics very carefully in the light of this. The industry is ripe for guerrilla tactics and the potential power is undoubted. As one negotiator put it when asked about the consequences of action, "I can only say this. When you go to pull the chain, it won't go down - it will come up".

Above all it must be understood that it is Thatcher's regime that is the root of this new pay onslaught. To take up the fight on wages will mean that water workers will be pulling the chain on Thatcher. She'll go down, we'll come up!

WORKERS FIGHTBACK

Seamen step up action for wages

BRITAIN'S MERCHANT fleet will be brought to a near standstill this week as the National Union of Seamen step up action in support of their claim for a 16 per cent pay increase. Members of the NUS will refuse to man deep sea vessels bound from Britain for international destinations and will refuse to man ships anywhere in the world belonging to 14 selected British companies. Seamen will also intensify action on short sea routes, including ferries.

The quick action of P&O workers has resulted in a reversal of the company's decision to close the Liverpool-Belfast passenger service. P&O closed the service on New Year's Day, after NUS members staged a 48-hour strike against the national pay offer of 10 per cent. Immediately, 47 members staged a sit-in on the Ulster Queen in protest against the closure, and the NUS threatened to declare an official strike aboard all P&O's UK-based ships. By the end of the week, P&O had re-opened the ferry service.

The P&O crew members, whilst agreeing to hold joint talks with management on ways of improving the ferry service, made it clear that they would not accept loss of jobs or wages.



LATEST: NUJ chapel members at BPC publishing intensified their 8 week old occupation on Friday 9 January with a demonstration outside their company headquarters at Print House, Holborn. They were supported by about 100 delegates from dozens of NUJ chapels across the book industry. This determined stand against job loss, and against Edwardes-style intimidatory management has not only given a fillip to the fight for jobs in the book industry, but is assuming national importance. A political, union-bashing motivation on the part of the management has become clear. It has been forced to agree with the Union's argument that there is no sound financial reason for the redundancies. The chapel has pointed out that there is more than enough work to be done, leaving the management justifying itself by its 'right to manage' even if it does make the wrong decisions. Photo: Nick Birch

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The Week

THE GOVERNMENT ended last year announcing that 57,000 jobs had been lost in local government, among them 14,000 teachers and over 35,000 other education staff. The drop of 1.7 per cent in the number of full-time teachers was the largest ever recorded. Hestline said that there had been a 2 per cent drop in local government manpower and that "I don't believe it is enough." Since then, of course, St. John Stevas, along with his Arts Department, has gone, pour encourager les autres.

LOOKING FORWARD to the New Year are all those who work in the law and disorder "industry". There was last year an increase of 4633 full-time and 405 part-time jobs, or 2.8 per cent. Not to mention the perks. Policemen have not only been scabbing in the prison officers' dispute, but claiming overtime pay for doing so - a Christmas bonus of £1000 for many.

A GOOD YEAR too for ex-colonialists and others who have preserved their Kuomintang Government Bonds against a rainy day. They will relish the prospect of being paid at last, now that the present Chinese government has declared the Mao socialist period dead, and while they try to nerve themselves to kill his wife into the bargain - for the 'crime' of carrying out the behests of Mao and the Central Committee.

SOME GOOD NEWS for a change. It seems it will soon be the end for the ex-terrorist Begin. Resistance within Israel itself to his policies of war economy and inflation of 130 per cent is coming to a head. Pressure for wage demands is such that even his Cabinet is pressing that agreements such as that with the teachers for a 30-60 per cent increase be honoured. With characteristic intransigence Begin is refusing to give in to the end. May that be soon.

THE TRUE qualities required for a government spokesman were shown by Professor Walters stepping into Number 10 from the USA. Asked how he would advise the government on economics, he was reported to reply that he didn't know, but that he would do as he was told.

Prospects worsen for Jamaica

THERE IS a newspaper on the streets of Britain which has been positively convicted of C.I.A. connections. It will surprise no one to learn that it is the Weekly Gleaner, a Jamaican publication for overseas readers.

This paper has consistently supported the right-wing Edward Seaga, and done its utmost to damage and belittle the policies of Manley.

THE WORKER has reported on several occasions the activities in the West Indies, recently the extremely serious move towards a right-wing government in Jamaica.

Now Seaga is at the head of this island and we can more clearly see the way we already knew he was facing. His first official visit was to Madison Hotel on 3rd December, 1980, where he was welcomed by Mr. Richard Allen, Senior Foreign Policy Advisor to President-elect Ronald Reagan. Mr. Allen

Historic Notes

"DEATH COMING into our midst like black smoke, a plague which cuts off the young, a rootless phantom that has no mercy for fair countenance. Woe is me of the shilling in the armpit! It is seething, terrible... a head that gives great pain and causes a loud cry... painful angry knob... Great is its seething like a burning cinder." So did a Welsh lament describe the hideous Black Death which travelled across Europe from the East in the last years of the 1340s.

Modern science may know of the rat-borne flea which carried the bacillus and even of the more terrifying pneumonic form which travelled through the air. Yet the old lament more powerfully communicates the fear and mystery of this pestilence in which, as Froissart laconically put it, "one third of the world died."

Whatever we know about the mechanics of the plague itself, the reactions of men to this, one of the world's most frightful calamities (modern historians estimate Europe's population to have halved by the end of the century), will remain for us an object of wonderment.

Mankind's survival

How did they even survive let alone reconstitute civilisation apparently unchanged, though of course it could not really be the same after such a catastrophe. That there was hysteria alongside heroism is comprehensible. There were bizarre reactions of men to calamity, the outbreaks of anti-semitism (why particularly in Switzerland, Alsace and Germany?) which reached such proportions that even the Pope pleaded for mercy. Why the flagellant movement, penitents in groups of 200 or 300 marching through Europe scourging themselves, and in the German areas organising such pogroms that Jews were

THATCHER may be bad. Thatcher and Reagan will surely be worse. Policies designed by millionaires, made by Congress and driven by Reagan will be deeply reactionary. The Reagan-Thatcher Mutual Admiration Society says it all.

The US military has been given \$115,000 million every year since 1955, at 1980 prices. Reagan considers the US military is hard done by and promises more money. He also says he will cut income tax so clearly the money will come from somewhere. At the moment, old age pensions, edu-

was quite emphatic about his pleasure at greeting Mr. Seaga back into the company of those with whom "mutually profitable dialogue could be established." "Magnificent victory" said he. Mr. Seaga, for his part, spoke of the new US administration and his in Jamaica.

So the accusations of there being at least 15 C.I.A. operatives in Jamaica was no fanciful ravings. Mind you, the day after this statement, a relatively important left-wing personage's home was bombed. No one was caught though.

We also find that despite all efforts to keep them away last year, Mr. Seaga has been entertaining a team from the IMF ever since his return from America. Is he going to increase the Jamaican foreign debt of \$1,462.3m? Well, The Gleaner reports that "yes, there will be a worsening outlook in the future for this debt, and the inflation figure of 35 per

Statute of Labourers

virtually exterminated? And yet the flagellants who became a law to themselves supplanting the Church hierarchy, "vanished as suddenly as they had come like night phantoms" when the authorities turned on them, seizing and beheading.

Even more inexplicable, however, is what one historian has called the plague's "greatest social disruption - a concerted demand for higher wages." Peasants, artisans, craftsmen, clerks, even priests were affected. Within a year of the plague passing through northern France, textile workers at Amiens had won three wages increases. In the guilds there were strikes for wages or shorter



hours. The response of rulers everywhere was repression. The English rulers in emergency passed the first 'Statute of Labourers' (23 Edward III) in 1349 without so much as waiting for a Parliament. All were required to work at the same pay as two years before. There were penalties for refusal to work, for leaving of employment to seek higher pay, and for the offer of higher wages by employers. Reissued in 1351 when Parliament reassembled, it provided that a vagrant serf could be forced to work for anyone who claimed him

and outlawed the giving of alms to 'able-bodied beggars'. This statute formed the basis of all the 'conspiracy' laws that succeeded one another down the centuries in an effort to thwart combination of workers.

Rulers repression

Yet the immediate sequel to this legislation shows that, even though it was passed by authority at a time of unprecedented suffering when the plague had scarcely abated, it was a belated and ultimately futile attempt to impose subservience which men had already rejected.

How they had the courage to do so then we shall perhaps never

know. The testimony of employers in 1352 - that wages were double or treble the pre-plague rate - of the increasing brutality of the succeeding legislation (twice in the 1360s), with fines being replaced by gaol, stocks in every town, the branding of fugitives with F on the forehead with hot irons, is proof that the legislation was unenforceable. Indeed the tide of rebellion had swelled so far that it culminated in the great Peasants' Revolt of 1381.

The observer today is principally struck with awe at the courage of the British people at this time when their rulers (and even

historians with hindsight) can only have expected subservience and submission.

One other aspect of the Plague Legislation is of interest. That is its fundamental difference in approach from the attitude of rulers in Britain today. For all the brutality of branding, whipping and flogging of the 'able-bodied poor', and the consistent attempt to lengthen by statute the working day, the great object of the legislators was the driving of men into employment.

The Statute of Labourers denounced, not only those who chose "rather to beg in idleness than to earn their bread in labour". It stipulated that every able-bodied man under sixty with no means of subsistence must work for whoever required him. Alms-giving was prohibited. Reprehensible and self-interested in its underlying greed, which strove down the centuries to lengthen the working day, inveigling in the words of an economist of 1770, against the "conduct of our manufacturing populace who do not labour, upon an average, above 4 days in a week", still its aim was to eradicate what men saw then as a crime against God and society - unemployment.

Thatchers Plague

Even the destruction and havoc of the Plague would have puzzled the men of those days less than today's reversal of the laws on which they singlemindedly built the nascent capitalist system, based on their need to employ, to exploit. The Plague would have been easier to comprehend as punishment visited by God on a sinful world, than the dotage of the system they created, which in its decline enacts lack of work as its 'summun bonum'.

Today, as then, the most difficult thing to comprehend are the unpredictable reactions of men at times of crisis. Would that we might react against our Plague as our forefathers did.

Watch out ! Reagan's about

cation and housing seem the most likely sacrificial victims. Stockman, the new budget director, says nothing will be sacrosanct (except the military interest).

The resurrection of the B1 bomber project would cost \$53,000 million. Modification of the Minuteman missile system would cost \$32,000 million and Reagan is especially keen on extra naval expenditure on the, already, most powerful navy in the world.

cent, and unemployment at 40 per cent sadly will also get worse."

Wait a minute though, says The Gleaner, this is not going to be the fault of the Jamaican Labour Party, Mr. Seaga's little baby. Brigadier Robert Neish said everyone must be on their guard against the new threat of sabotage to Jamaica's economy, industry and political life.

Apparently there has been a 'planned campaign of sinister men' who have organised "... bank-rob hold ups, hold ups of people at stop signs and traffic lights, robberies of doctors, lawyers and other professionals."

So there we are, if Jamaica is bled dry, sold off to foreign gangsters, or blown up it will be all the fault of these 'desperate hoodlums, the... left-wingers, though paid high salaries to be full-time teachers and researchers, yet find so much time for almost full-time political and trade union activity.' Or so Neish says.

Carter's conscription register may be used by a Reagan administration. Will the American people stand back and allow all this to happen?

Reagan's new Ambassador to the United Nations, Jeane Kirkpatrick, has said that "moderately repressive autocratic government", where those governments are friendly to the USA, is preferable to revolutionary movements. Reagan will soon have the opportunity to put into practice such a policy in Central America.

The recent overthrow of the Somoza dictatorship in Nicaragua has shown others fighting US-backed dictatorships that it can be done. In El Salvador last year, kidnapping, torture, mutilation and murder were employed against opponents of the largely military junta. 9000 peasants, workers, academics, politicians, and priests were murdered in 1980 by plain clothes death squads. The far right talks of the need to liquidate 100,000 people to keep power. Salvadorean army brigades recently clashed with guerrilla groups several hundred strong. It is obvious whom Reagan will support. Resistance in Guatemala will meet the same reaction.

Any doubts about US foreign policy which Reagan may have will be resolved by Haig, his new Secretary of State. Haig conducted the war in Vietnam, including the bombing of Cambodia, was a confidante in high office under Nixon and more recently was supreme head of NATO. What more needs

to be said of this Nixon-hand-me-down?

It is reliably reported that Reagan's advisers have considered bombing the city of Qom if Iran does not behave, and furthermore that it could be bombed by US F111s of the Egyptian air force flown by Israeli pilots. In all seriousness that has been considered. The people who regard the Gulf as a 'sphere of US interest' are the same people who worry about the logistics of getting US army divisions from 8000 miles away! Hence orient-states to do some of the fighting.

Like Thatcher, Reagan is beset with domestic problems that homespun wisdoms and rhetoric are inadequate for. Foreign diversions are called for to unite nations against mythical threats from overseas. Reagan's advisers have, privately, admitted as much.

For 20 months Thatcher has been astraited, moaned and whined about. But despised as she now is, no real resistance to her policies has been forthcoming. To say that an election would be something like the Little Big Horn for the Tories, with Thatcher cast as Custer, is all very well. But do we wait passively until 1984? Those who think like that now have Reagan in the White Office to add to our troubles. A series of defeats for Thatcher - on pay policy, cuts, arms expenditure and EEC membership - is what is desperately called for. If not, do you fancy the alternative?

Civil Liberties under Attack

Editorial

"Labour laws and labour attitudes may be best transformed in a climate of fear" (Sunday Times 4/1/81). Such is the conclusion of economic journalism in Britain, the same week as there opens a new campaign to increase the powers of the police.

Not that fear is so easily generated, whatever we may read about terrorism. Last year, the papers were saying that Britain needs a depression rather than a recession. Now it's a "climate of fear". What such a thought relies upon is that 1981 will be as quiet as 1980. That the workers will not react to further destruction. The simple formula is Thatcher destroys jobs, fear of losing jobs destroys the will to fight. Last year that formula destroyed 700,000 jobs.

Yet do we really believe that the fear of Edwardes has produced gutlessness at British Leyland? Can we say MacGregor is the reason for steelworkers meekness? On the other hand why must Thatcher import such people to carry out her closure plans? Bill Sirs was clear when he said of the British Steel ballot "Threatening our members in this way does not necessarily produce the results Mr MacGregor wants." How clear are the members?

Trade unions were built upon the urge to survive during the most intense "climate of fear." The years of struggle produced something like a climate of fear among employers and the laws and attitudes pertaining to labour in Britain today were reforms wrung out of those employers. Certainly nothing was gained by any hesitation to oppose oppression.

To survive now, the working class in Britain must take up an offensive position. The economy is being destroyed by those who hate "planned economy". Their planned destruction has already taken its toll on our basic industry. This year more money will be shipped abroad to decrease investment in British industry by a further 10 per cent. At first destruction was hidden by talk of inflation and monetarism. Now they have convinced themselves of our weakness and unwillingness to fight, so they brag about their real objective.

They are traitors and we can tolerate neither their attack on Britain nor their advocacy of a "climate of fear". Let's give them our answer - Thatcher Out

THREE recent Acts of Parliament have further diminished our rapidly dwindling civil liberties.

First, the Imprisonment (Temporary Provisions) Act, brought in hurriedly by Whitelaw to deal with the prison warders' industrial action. Like that other 'temporary' law, the Prevention of Terrorism Act, this new measure in fact introduces both permanent and novel powers. For example, the police have now acquired a new permanent power to hold people in detention, while the Home Secretary is enabled to reintroduce the 'temporary' aspects as and when he wishes.

Part II, Section 8 of the Act says that the new powers (which includes detention of prisoners by troops in army camps) have to be renewed each month by Parliament. But in fact all this means is that the Act is simply laid before Parliament and deemed to be approved unless positively rejected by a vote in the Commons. Similarly the Government can simply renew the Act every 12 months.

Troops now have legal power to act as 'constables', meaning the they can arrest people in the community; so useful when strike breaking! So in one hurried, overnight law we have the legal institution of martial law powers,

a further strengthening of the State's repressive apparatus and a graphic example of what a toothless old watchdog Parliament really is.

Scottish law leads

Which brings us to the Scottish Criminal Justice Act which confers greatly increased powers on the Scottish police and tips the balance from accused to abusers in just the way McNee and Anderson have been clamouring for. Scottish police will not now have the power to detain a person suspected of having information about a suspected offence while they check his or her identity, (as the original draft wanted). This is some consolation, but they will still be able to require such a person's name and address; and it would be an offence (punishable by a £50 fine) to refuse to give it.

The police will be able to arrest without a warrant anyone they suspect has committed a suspected offence. Lord Gifford asked in the House of Lords if this would not require the carrying of identity cards so as to answer the request for names and addresses.

In most cases attempts by back-bench Labour MPs to make amendments to the worst excesses of the Act were unsuccessful. The

Scottish Council for Civil Liberties wrote to the Secretary of State for Scotland, "Scarcely can there be another instance of a measure which a Government did not require, facing so much weight of informed opposition, detested by a huge majority of Scottish MPs, yet proceeding so unstoppably into law".

Temporary permanence

And last, but not least, the monstrous succubus of these new style laws, the Prevention of Terrorism Act (PTA) continues to reveal hidden poison. Hitherto, we believed, the PTA was restricted to suspected terrorist activities in relation to Northern Ireland. However, the Home Secretary has now declared that Section 12(1)(b) of the PTA contains "powers not specifically restricted to terrorism connected with Northern Irish affairs." It appears that the police can arrest somebody for a suspected 'act of terrorism' without having to connect it with Northern Ireland. They can carry out forceable fingerprinting and interrogate for 48 hours without hindrance. Only if they wish to extend the detention beyond 48 hours do they have to declare a Northern Irish angle.

Ireland's occupation

In 1978 Lord Shackleton declared that the PTA would never be applied to 'problems in this country' unrelated to Northern Ireland. Which only goes to show, 'put not your faith in the Lords.' Though we could also have the humility to recognise that the British working class is now reaping the harvest of doing so little about Northern Ireland's occupation and repression over the last decade. We always knew Ireland was a testing ground for repression at home, and it's coming true.

To deal with this, he wants greater use of the common law of sedition. It looks as if the poor old constitution's days are numbered. The only questions who will get there first, them or us?

Sickness benefits

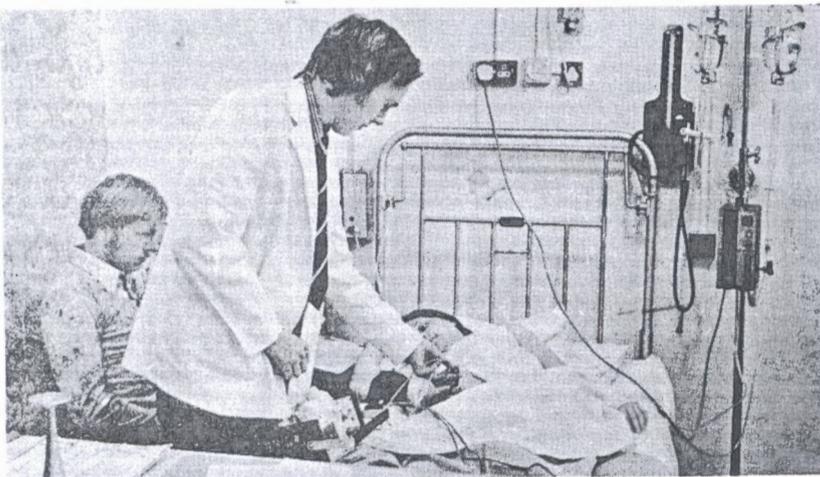
MAJOR NEW legislation on sickness benefits is likely to be passed through parliament this year which will affect us all. While from 1st April, 1981 we will have to pay substantially increased national insurance contributions, from 1st April 1982 there will be huge cutbacks in what is paid out to us if we fall sick. These plans are going ahead even though the National Insurance Fund has had a surplus for years - last year it was £687m.

The idea is that from April 1982 employers should pay sick pay for the first eight weeks of an employee's illness in any year. After that the state would take over the payments - at a proposed level of £30 a week.

Social Services Under-Secretary, Linda Chalker, claims that many people receive double payments when they are sick because firms don't deduct payment when the DHSS pays sickness benefit.

A more accurate estimate of the effects of this new legislation has come from the Low Pay Unit. "The new minimum level of £30 will be lower than the present rate of entitlement for most employees, and will commit many families to even deeper hardship in the event of illness."

At present sickness benefit included an earnings related supplement of 85 per cent of earnings. If the breadwinner in a family of four falls ill they get £54.42 under present legislation - this will be almost halved next year, as the earnings related supplement is abolished and it will be £30 a week for all. While our hard-earned money is clawed in through N.I. contributions when we need that money we shall be given a pittance. Where does that money go? Are they using it for Trident Missiles?



Modern obstetric monitoring techniques give this couple every chance of a healthy baby

THERE WAS A fascinating article in the weekly magazine, "World Medicine", a few months ago, written by a doctor who had just retired from general practice. He recalled some of his early experiences as a family doctor after qualifying in 1929.

It was hard in those days even to set up as a doctor without sufficient hard cash to back you. GP practices were bought and sold. The writer finally chose a practice where money was not the main issue, in the Welsh valleys.

Patients too were clearly defined by their ability to pay - or not. Private patients paid between four and five shillings a visit and medicines exchanged hands for up to a guinea if they were rich or aristocratic. But those medicines were wrapped carefully in red paper and sealed with red sealing wax.

Panel patients, respectable working folk, would earn up to £400 a year. They paid a fee of 9s 6d a year and their privilege was not to have to pay 2d for the bottle containing their medicine - although these were not wrapped up.

Then came the club patients, usually the wives and children of the workers. The fee was 6s

General Practice 50 years ago

a year and 3s for children. These patients were charged 2d for the bottle if they failed to bring their own. Lowest of all were the parish patients who received treatment if they could obtain a note from the "relieving officer". In 1930 the writer's firm was paid £70 a year for treating two to three hundred of these patients.

During that period, GPs were literally general practitioners - general and orthopaedic surgeons, obstetricians, pathologists and general physicians. They carried out routine surgery in the local cottage hospital.

Without modern blood transfusion techniques and blood giving sets, blood transfusions were hazardous operations. When a miner was brought in with a bad leg injury he had lost so much blood it was too risky to operate without a transfusion. The young doctor located the local Group O blood donor and took a pint of blood. They then had the problem of getting the blood into a collapsed vein with just a tube and funnel. This method was fraught with

dangers - the tiny air bubbles inevitable with a tube and funnel make the blood liable to clot.

Post mortems were frequent - every coal miner who had died had to be examined. The local doctor did this in a small wooden hut, unheated and with no hot water. The 'table' was an old couch with no central drainage. Understandably the reports were sometimes less informative than they might have been.

With maternity cases, most confinements took place at home. There were no routine blood tests, and many patients would have been severely anaemic when they went into labour. Forceps were frequently applied in a room lit only by oil lamps and on a low sagging bed.

Diphtheria and other infectious diseases, now almost eliminated, were a part of every doctor's life. The writer describes the first tracheotomy he carried out on a gypsy child who had been suffering from diphtheria for nine days, being treated only by the camp witch doctor. He was dying of asphyxia. He describes the terrible

feeling of fear as he tried to make the incision in the child's swollen neck and his gratitude to the experienced matron who gave him courage: "Feel the hyoid, doctor, and stab right through it." The welcome bubbling hiss of air followed, but the child still died later of infection.

There were of course no antibiotics, no penicillin - in fact few drugs of any value. There were morphia, digitalis, atropine and aspirin, but little else. Bronchopneumonia, the great child killer, meant three or four visits a day, with oxygen and atropine the only weapons. Almost every case was treated at home, because the hospital had no more to offer. Hospitals were still regarded in the country as places to die in rather than places for treatment.

To the writer of this article there is one advantage of having worked in the pre-antibiotic era: the sense of wonder when antibiotics make light of such lethal diseases as pneumonia or meningococcal meningitis has never left him. To watch a young man or woman wake from the coma of cerebrospinal meningitis after sulphonamide therapy is to see a real miracle of today's medical science and technology.

New road for the missiles

Bulldozers herald arrival of Cruise

THE GOVERNMENT has announced that it has decided to resurrect a plan to build a major new road from the M1 motorway near Rugby eastwards to Kettering.

Part of the route goes through Naseby, where Cromwell scored a victory over Charles I, and would destroy this historic site. Many historians opposed this destruction when the plan was originally put forward: and after a public enquiry it was shelved.

Why, then, is the Government pressing ahead with the plan, which nobody in the locality wants, at a time when many minor roads are deteriorating and councils do not even have enough money to guarantee that main roads will be gritted in bad weather because of the spending cuts?

The answer is cruise missiles.

Molesworth, one of the two intended bases for the missiles, lies just to the east of Kettering. And the new road would conveniently link the base with the motorway network (M1 and M6) running around Birmingham, which would be used to disperse the missiles anywhere up to 200 miles away in time of war.

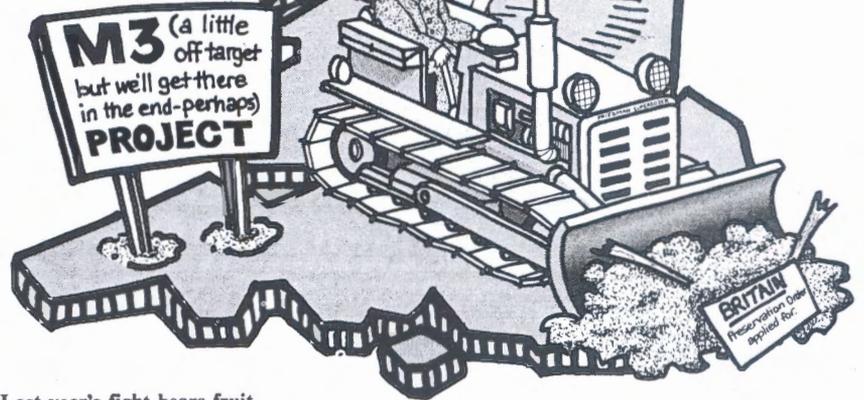
Similarly, the other base at Greenham Common, near Newbury is close to the M4, which provides a link with Bristol, and thence to South Wales and the South West.

So, our countryside and heritage are to be destroyed - not by retaliatory Soviet missiles - but by the warmongers who claim to lead us. They

stop council house building but are prepared to squander millions on a road so that they can play musical chairs with missiles to the tune of the Death March. Are we prepared to allow it?

In 1645 on the field of Naseby, the British people showed how they deal with tyrants. Let Naseby once again be the

symbol of our resistance, this time to the upstart Thatcher.



Gas workers reject pay offer and press for shorter week

LAST WEEK negotiators for manual workers in the Gas Industry rejected an offer of less than 10 per cent.

The claim this year is for 23 per cent and a shorter working week. British Gas have conceded that the week should be cut and have proposed 38½ hours, but on wages they are doing Thatcher's work for her.

The Gas Industry makes enormous profits and is under attack from the various international monopolies who want to grab lucrative parts of the industry, as well as the Government which is talking about hiving off the gas showrooms.

The Government has determined that the price of gas will increase by inflation plus 10 per cent each year, and have introduced a form of taxing natural gas at source as they do with North Sea Oil. Oil Companies have been complaining for years that British Gas pays too little for the gas - they have come to rea-

lise that what they used to burn off as waste is now profitable.

Chemical companies are demanding rights to buy the gas at source rather than from British Gas. Industrial users of gas who have for years been subsidised by the domestic user now complain that they have to pay the same price for gas.

Of course, the price of gas is too high - that is Thatcher's policy. But the Gas industry is unique as an energy industry in the sense that it is nationally controlled from source to point of use. This is important in terms of safety as well as efficiency.

It ill behoves the management of British Gas to follow Thatcher's line on wages, when the industry itself is under such attack. Gas workers in fighting for better wages are also ensuring that the Gas Industry remains strong and well able to resist the attempts to carve it up.

Last year's fight bears fruit

ILEA refuses to accept new Govt cuts

THE STRENGTH of public support for the Inner London Education Authority against Thatcher's attack on its very existence has given the ILEA the confidence to refuse to accept Government cuts.

ILEA has declared a budget for the coming financial year of £694 m, which it estimates to be sufficient to maintain the existing level of the service (given a 6 per cent wage rise and inflation of 11 per cent) plus a reduction in the cost of school meal charges. The Government had previously declared that ILEA could manage on approximately 1/3rds of its budget (that is £468m) a figure so low that it could not be achieved even if all vacant jobs were not filled and there were staff cuts in all sections.

Because of ILEA's refusal to submit to the Government's proposed budget, its potential Government grant of £141m has been cut back to a mere £7m in order to punish ILEA for not joining in the Government's destruction of the education service.

ILEA has found the strength to make its much-needed stand for education against the Government because of the massive union and parental campaign throughout London to oppose the break up of ILEA. Leader of the Authority, Sir Ashley Bramall, commenting on ILEA's budget proposals said that the people of London had supported ILEA because it stood for a well-resourced education service. Further, that ILEA was not willing to remain unified only to serve as the Government's axeman. ILEA would remain as the relatively well-resourced education service for which the people had fought.

Thus not only is ILEA going to maintain its present education service but its budget allows for a 10p cut in school dinner prices to bring them back to 25 p (and

this at a time when some Thatcherite education authorities have axed school dinner provision totally). Since the increase in the cost of school dinners, the numbers of children eating them has sharply declined and ILEA rightly recognises the importance of nourishing school meals for all children, and the criminal waste of resources in having schools fully equipped to provide lunches but not doing so.

Inevitably, ILEA's refusal to make cuts in line with Government policy will mean sharp rate increases. We must ensure that Londoners lay the blame fairly and squarely with Thatcher where it belongs, for we have already paid for our education service through our taxes.

ILEA has given education authorities throughout the country the lead in withstanding this Government and hopefully others will follow.

Longworth occupied over beds loss

THE STAFF of Longworth Hospital in Oxfordshire have recently occupied their hospital to prevent the loss of beds. The Oxford Area Health Authority has recently closed a hospital in Cowley which has led to a loss of 200 beds. Longworth Hospital is a geriatric hospital where most of the patients have lived for many years.

The Area Health Authority maintains that it merely wishes to close the top floor which it considers to be a fire risk (though the fire brigade say if it is adequately staffed there is no more danger than there is in most hospitals of

a similar nature). The workers in the hospital recognise that this is purely a measure which will lead to a total closure. The AHA tried to close this hospital two and a half years ago but were prevented from doing so by the action of the staff.

Support for the occupation has come from many workers in the surrounding area, particularly carworkers and students. The local trades council has also pledged support. The unions involved, NUPE, COHSE and ASTMS, have been slow to give national support but local officials have assisted the occupation,

phlet is available from the NCCL, Kings Cross Road, London, WC1, price £1.50.

WHEN A STEELWORKER was fined £100 for assaulting an inspector, a TV video tape of the demonstration outside the Hadfield steel works was produced at the trial showing that the worker was at the other end of the street from the assault. The conviction was quashed; but the recorder said he was satisfied that the police had tried to give "a true and honest account."

* IN BRIEF

"THE DEATH of Blair Peach" report produced by an independent committee under the auspices of the National Council for Civil Liberties concludes that the former President of East London Association (NUT) was killed on April 23, 1979, by a deliberate blow inflicted by a member of the Special Patrol Group. The Secretary of the NCCL said that the demand for disciplinary proceedings against those responsible was being raised again. The pam-

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Public Meetings

- LONDON
- Thurs. 15 January 'For Your Future, Thatcher Out Now' Students Union Building, Trent Park, Middlesex Polytechnic (Oakwood Tube) 1.00 pm.
 - Fri. 6 February Ireland One Nation
 - Fri. 20 February 100 per cent Against 6 per cent Film - followed by discussion details to follow.
 - Fri. 6 March Make War on Warmongers
 - Fri. 20 March Unemployment - 3 Million Reasons To Sack Thatcher
 - Fri. 3 April
- All meetings held at Bellman Bookshop at 7.30 pm.
- BRISTOL
- Thurs. 5 February 'Wage War on Thatcher' Swan Hotel, Stokes Croft 7.30 pm.

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