

THE WORKER



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DON'T VOTE FOR CAPITALISM

Forecast of stagnation

STAGNANT output and rising unemployment for Britain are the prospects for Britain according to the latest forecast of the National Institute of Economic and Social Research.

This prediction is based on the same appraisal that the Treasury has arrived at - "a slackening in the rate of growth of disposable incomes and therefore in total output next year." In other words there will not be enough effective consumer demand to keep home industry ticking over.

The stagnation and decline is in part a result of the unprecedented fall in real wages over the last three years, not the other way about. Why then is the Government so determined to keep wages low that it is flying in the face of the whole labour movement

in what may be a pre-election period? Marx always said that the basic problem of capitalism is relative over-production and here we see the Government deliberately trying to maintain a wage situation which is inimical to industry serving the home market.

Ever since the war the whole emphasis in Britain has been to increase exports at the cost of the home market out of balance of payments considerations. An argument for wage restraint has been that low purchasing power at home would free more goods to go abroad to pay for imports we could perfectly well for the most part have supplied ourselves.

Why don't they try the perfectly obvious solution?

TUC - More wages, fewer hours

TO SECURE employment and to improve conditions once employed: these are the objectives that will occupy the delegates of the 110th Annual

Why not through adequate wages put enough purchasing power in the hands of the working class to buy all that British industry is capable of making? That would provide a sound home-based economy and purely marginal external trading could take care of the products which don't grow or are not found here.

The reason why capitalism cannot even think of such a solution is that it makes no provision for profits. Put like that is there any worker in the country who would vote for capitalism by voting for a Labour or Tory?

Trades Union Congress, to be held this year in Brighton, commencing September 4th.

The Congress is now in a position to say "No" to incomes policy, unencumbered by any vestige of the social contract. Let unfettered collective bargaining proceed.

There are some faint hearts and pompous asses that talk of the need for "responsible" collective bargaining. They should remember that workers never had the opportunity to be "irresponsible." Workers have never run Britain. And until they do they have no alternative but to fight bitterly for every penny they can get.

There is much talk of the 35-hour week. Workers have always wanted more leisure and the demand is a worthy one which stands on its own merits. Some voices endeavour to mislead, however. They say that a shorter working week is the way to deal with unemployment. This claim is transparently false and should be denounced as such.

The Labour Government is currently leading British capitalism in the wholesale closure of British industry. This is the reason that unemployment is threatening to swamp us all - not because some are doing a bit of overtime.

Furthermore, the closures are not a natural outcome of new technology. Rather they arise from the economic

bankruptcy of capitalism and the desperate need to tame the working class.

So there must be a remorseless struggle against unemployment and for the right to work. But let there be no illusions that this can be accomplished by a shorter working week.

The devious employers and the Government say "If you get shorter hours you'll have to take less money." Rubbish. We want both. Neither fight should be a hindrance to the other. Let not shorter hours be an excuse to neglect the crucial wages issue.

Down with 5 per cent. Down with wage restraint.

So let the fight be principled, let it be conducted intelligently and let us despatch the social democratic baggage that says, "leave it up to the Labour Government."

Some motions before Congress unashamedly declare their loyalty to Labour. Others plead for a Labour with an "alternative strategy" Many motions make a "call" to the Government. Many want new legislation, many want legislation-amended. Still the appeal to their rulers. This must be little advance, 110 years after the first TUC Conference.

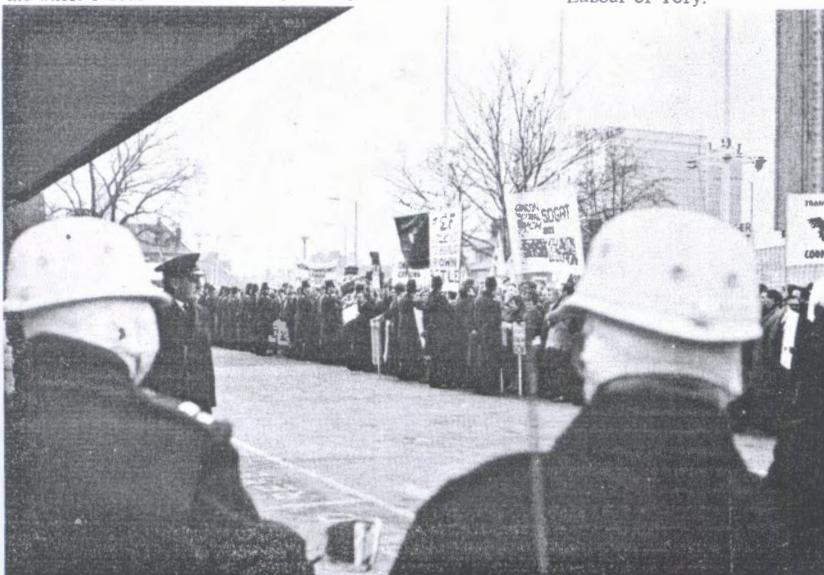
Workers must accept that there is no salvation in the Labour Government or any other capitalist government. It is the Labour government, egged on by the Tories, that

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SUPPORT FOR ALBANIA

All fraternal support to you and courageous Albanian people on China's anti socialist aid withdrawal. Your self reliance, defeated Russian machination and will frustrate new Chinese ploys. Revolutionary greetings.

Central Committee, CPBML.



Back in 1969 demonstrators urged TUC executives to reject Labour's "In Place of Strife", the blueprint for the Industrial Relations Act which the labour movement finally destroyed. The Labour Government's current opposition to collective bargaining is even more vicious an attack on trade unionism

An act of aggression against Socialist Albania

ON JULY 29, 1978, the Central Committee of the Party of Labour and the Government of Albania sent a letter to the Central Committee of the Communist Party and the Government of China. The letter denounced the cessation of aid and loans to socialist Albania and rejected the attempts made in the Chinese Ministry of Foreign Affairs' note of July 7, 1978, to blame the unilateral breaking off of all trading agreements and the withdrawal of Chinese specialists on Albanian ingratitude and sabotage of economic and military cooperation between the two countries.

In the Chinese note, China's aid to Albania is presented as the decisive factor in Albania's development. But the decisive factor has in fact been the resolute, persistent and heroic work and struggle of the Albanian people, under the leadership of the Party of Labour of Albania, for the construction of socialism according to the Leninist principle of self reliance.

The Albanian letter points out that the people of Albania, their Party and Government, have always fought for the strengthening of friendship, fraternal cooperation and mutual aid between Albania and China. They have always appreciated China's aid, considering it an expression of the Chinese people's internationalism, from one socialist country to another, serving the general cause of revolution and socialism in the world. At the same time, Albania has never considered its friendship with the people of any country as a means of economic profit and it has permitted nobody to regard economic aid as an investment by which views can be imposed from outside.

When the Party of Labour of Albania defended the Communist Party of China from the revisionist attacks of Khrushchev at the Bucharest and Moscow meetings of 1960, it was not to obtain some factories and tractors in return; when Albania for many years defended against all the plots of the US imperialists the rights of People's China in the UN, it was not out of material interest; when the whole working class of Albania supported the Cultural Revolution in China to save the country from capitalist-minded usurpers, it was not for the sake of compensation.

Mao Tseung said in 1962 of the aid Albania was giving to China: "First of all, we must thank you, because you stand in the forefront, because you are in a very difficult situation and persistently fight to defend Marxism-Leninism." And Chou En-Lai said of aid to Albania in 1971: "We are doing our internationalist duty and it will be betrayal if we do not help you... As the bastion of socialism in Europe, you are fighting against imperialism, revisionism and all reaction. If we do not help you, we would not be internationalist communists, but traitors."

Albania has not changed since that time. Albania is still the bastion of socialism in Europe. Who then has changed?

The giggling examples given in the Chinese note of alleged technological waywardness by the Albanians are rejected by the letter as distortions and fabrications. And, in any case, even if there were any truth in them at all, could they serve as adequate justification of this one-sided cessation of economic and military aid to a country with which the closest and friendliest ties had existed for some time? In mentioning specifically the military aid being discontinued, the Chinese note breached Albania's secret defensive arrangements and ran the risk of exposing its military situation to the enemies of the Socialist Republic in NATO and the Warsaw Pact.

The Chinese note makes no mention of the fact that the experts and specialists recalled have been handsomely paid by the Albanian people during their stay. No one who has ever visited Albania will believe for a moment the ridiculous charge that the Albanian workers, specialists and managers, did not have the utmost regard and appreciation for their comrades who had come from China to share their technological skills; and the memorial service for a Chinese comrade killed in an industrial accident gave the whole country the opportunity of expressing its heartfelt gratitude. Still, just as happened when the Soviet revisionists broke off all agreements with China and Albania, the Chinese specialists, on orders from above, either burnt or took away with them all blue prints of the incompleted projects which were being built in Albania

with Chinese help.

Differences and misunderstandings can arise among various parties and states, even when they have relations of close friendship. No matter which side is to blame, the clearing up of such differences calls for negotiation, and all the more should this principle apply to socialist countries and communist parties. On a number of occasions the Party of Labour of Albania has followed the correct policy of constructive and comradely criticism when differences arose with the Communist Party of China.

In all such cases, the Albanian Party put forward its criticisms in a frank and fraternal manner, while maintaining outwardly, as far as the enemies of socialism were concerned, a position of complete solidarity. In the period leading up to the sudden cessation of aid, the Chinese leadership refused categorically to enter into any consultation with Albanians whatsoever.

The letter reminds the world that once the Communist Party of China was against Tito and the Yugoslav brand of capitulation, under the name of a new kind of 'socialism', to capitalism. Now the Chinese leadership makes a pilgrimage to the shrine of anti-Marxist "self-management socialism" just as Khrushchev did back in 1955. Tito's Yugoslavia has not changed. It is still the premier revisionist country of Europe, the birthplace of Eurocommunism and the first member of the socialist bloc to sell out to US imperialism. Who then has changed?

The Party of Labour of Albania sternly warns the Chinese leadership: "Your uniting with Tito now and the suspicious alliances you are trying to piece together in the Balkans pose a great danger to the peoples of this peninsula, to the Yugoslav, Albanian, Greek, Turkish and other peoples... Therefore, the peoples of the world must be vigilant towards the Chinese intrigues in this region."

What must seem puzzling to the world at large is the Chinese leadership, which makes such a play of defending little countries against big and opposing economic discrimination against developing countries by imperialist powers, should show itself in relations with Albania and Vietnam just such a bully itself.

By cutting short aid to socialist Albania and Vietnam at a time when it receives aid and credits from US imperialism and European capitalism and, in turn, supplies aid and credits to such clients of capitalism as Mobutu, the Chinese leadership shows that all the talk about being a "third world" power itself, only concerned with the well-being of the "third world", is just so much eye-wash. The theory of the "three worlds" was concocted long ago by reactionary apologists for capitalism to conceal the reality of colonial exploitation; and the Chinese leadership uses that anti-Marxist concept for the same reason - to cover its own bid for "super-power" status using the "third world" countries as pawns.

The Albanian Party of Labour promises that the Chinese note of July 7, announcing the end of aid to Albania and the reasons for it, will be published in full in ZERI I POPULLIT and hopes that their letter of July 29 will be published in RENMIN RIBAO. "The Party of Labour of Albania, the Albanian Government and people will fight to preserve Albanian-Chinese friendship, which is a friendship between peoples... They are sure the Chinese people will make a correct assessment of the Albanian stand and will know how to judge the anti-Albanian acts of the Chinese leadership."

The letter concludes: "The People's Socialist Republic of Albania and the Albanian people, under the constant leadership of the Party of Labour of Albania, with comrade Enver Hoxha at their head, will thoroughly and honourably fulfil their historic mission for the construction of socialism by relying on their own forces, further proving to the proletariat and all the peoples of the world the inexhaustible and indomitable vitality of the Marxist-Leninist ideology, which enables even a small country, encircled by imperialism and revisionism, as Albania is, to build socialism successfully, to defend and carry it always ahead."

THE WEEK

IN Zimbabwe, police fired into a crowd of striking mine workers killing four blacks and injuring five at the country's largest copper mine. Police opened fire early on the second day of a strike by almost the entire 1700 black workforce at the Mangula mine, owned by the South Africa-based Messina Transvaal Development Company. Is there no limit to the crimes of the Smith regime?

NEARLY two years ago, THE WORKER carried an article reporting on the destruction of the British shoe industry, pointing to the activity of the British Shoe Corporation - owners of True Form, Freeman Hardy Willis, Manfield, Dolcis, Saxone and Lilley and Skinner. It pointed out that the BSC was profiting from destruction by importing cheap (£2.90 a shoe on average) and selling dear (£7.99). We all know how much prices have gone up since then. Now, when a record 30,000 complaints have been received this year over the quality of shoes bought, it has been revealed that 47p in the pound you pay for a shoe is BSC's pure profit. Following a Price Commission investigation BSC have promised not to put their prices up for a year. How nice.

CHARING CROSS Road in London is generally known for its second-hand books, its art prints and its music shops. Winding gently down from Oxford Street's commercial glare to Trafalgar Square, it is a curiously civilised street. This is largely due to one line of 18th Century shops along its southeastern side. In the name of progress these are now to be destroyed. In their place there is to be erected a giant new souvenir shop for the benefit of tourists. But the reason tourists come to this country is precisely because of the existence of roads like Charing Cross. Capitalism can't do a thing right!

THE recent case of a shepherd in West Wales who was only paid £7 a week and had wages arrears of £15000, illustrates a problem facing many agricultural workers: Farmers are prepared to exploit and many farmworkers simply tolerate their miserable conditions.

BEFORE a company pays any tax to the Government an allowance is given to cover the cost of replacing machinery as it wears out. It has been recently revealed by the Bank of England that this tax allowance, coupled with 'investment grants' from the Government, amounted in recent years to more than the total investments made by the whole of the private sector put together.

LAST year's increase in tuition fees for students is having its desired effect. Having put up the fees for postgraduates from £182 to £750 the number of students going on to postgraduate study has dropped by 5 per cent in a single year. The effect on undergraduates is less marked because of a different finance system, but even here the increase in numbers has been lower than forecast.

Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia ten years on

TEN YEARS ago, on August 20, 1968, the tanks and troops of the Soviet Union invaded Czechoslovakia, allegedly to defend socialism, but in reality to protect Russian imperialist interests. As our Party statement issued at the time stated:-

"What the Soviet leadership is defending in Czechoslovakia is not socialism, but the political, economic and military subordination of certain countries in Eastern Europe - the system whereby the Soviet Union controls the trading relationships of these countries for its own imperialist advantage, thus turning them into satellites." Czechoslovakia had stopped being a socialist country long before the invasion. The dismantling of socialism had started under Novotny. Dubcek was more naked in his revisionism and his desire to embrace western imperialism directly so that any advantage incurred would benefit him and his clique rather than the Russians. The Kremlin was not going to

let one of its minions make deals with the US or West Germany when it was beginning to establish such links itself.

The Russian invasion of Czechoslovakia had nothing whatever to do with the protecting or restoring of socialism. The very people who had destroyed the Bolshevik state were not likely to start rebuilding it in Czechoslovakia even if it were possible to build socialism from outside, which it is not. The mighty Red Army could not be used to export revolution during the great days of Lenin and Stalin as socialism is not an exportable commodity but must be fought for within each country by its working class and its allies.

The Russian army of 1968, an arm of Russian imperialism and the Warsaw Pact, invaded Czechoslovakia to suppress the people and prevent them from rising up. The invasion, planned with the full knowledge of US imperialism, then severely under pressure at the hands of the Vietnamese, was to see that

Czechoslovakia did not follow the Albanian example and learn to stand on its own feet as a genuine socialist country.

Since the invasion little news has come out of Czechoslovakia of workers' struggles. The British press and media in general are only interested in the enemies of socialism, the so-called champions of human rights, Charter 77 and the like. These are nothing more than capitalists and those who want to take back Czechoslovakia to private capitalism under US domination.

But there is resistance - not on a large scale as yet - which is anxious to free the country from the ever-growing stranglehold of Russian imperialism.

Under the pretext of integrating Eastern Europe the Russians have developed bilateral arrangements which were less than 20 a decade ago but now have risen to more than 50. These bilateral agreements, ostensibly to protect the mutual interests of both countries, are very one-sided.

While some 65 per cent of Czechoslovakia's industrial potential must be diverted to making consumer goods for the Russian market, it has to buy, at greatly inflated prices, Soviet products it does not need or which it could buy more cheaply elsewhere. Most dangerous of all, it has been sucked into Russian military plans and has little room for manoeuvre.

Tied militarily and economically to the Soviet Union, the only hope for the working class of Czechoslovakia is revolution. Not the spring of 1968 which was nothing more than a call to restore bourgeois capitalism, but October 1917 should be their clarion call.

Albania stands all alone, the only socialist state in Eastern Europe with neither Soviet tank nor Chinese gun to protect her, but she has the most important weapon of all - a united people determined to fight for socialism under the leadership of a Marxist-Leninist Communist Party. The way forward for Czechoslovakia is clear.

EDITORIAL

ON THE FACE of it the Labour Government's whole Chrysler operation looks like sheer lunacy. It pours millions and millions of pounds into an American motor car company and claims that this 'generous' offer of our money as taxpayers to Chrysler is to save our jobs as Chrysler workers. But its whole 'anti-inflationary' policy is designed precisely to increase unemployment - the only growth area in the British economy. Then when Chrysler almost immediately sells out to Peugeot-Citroen we discover that over £50m of our money given to Chrysler to save our jobs was not even a loan to Chrysler but an outright gift. And furthermore there is no assurance at all that Peugeot-Citroen has any intention of preserving intact the companies acquired from Chrysler and the jobs associated with them.

But the appearance of utter madness on the Government's part disappears as soon as we stop thinking of state operations in a capitalist society as being in any way concerned with the interest of the working class and see them for what they are - desperate attempts to bolster up a capitalism in decline all over the world. The one incontestable fact to emerge from the business is that a capitalist firm, Chrysler, has made a big profit quite unconnected with whether it was actually producing any cars anybody wanted or not. There is no doubt that Peugeot-Citroen will do the same.

The only key to an understanding of what is happening anywhere in the capitalist world is the realisation that capitalism is not interested in making things for people to use, only in making profits whatever happens to people in the process. Free enterprise capitalism, like some carnivorous monster, attacks one industry after another, gorges on it while enormous profits are still to be made and then leaves the carcass in the care of the capitalist state while it finds some new more profitable industry to batter on. Thus coal, iron and steel, rail transport, shipbuilding have each in turn fed the monster and when its appetite for profit could no longer be sated were left to be supported by the state, left that is, to be maintained in a crippled condition by us the taxpayers. Not only does the monster desert vast areas of industry like the flight from labour-intensive industries to capital-intensive industries; but it also is continuously on the move to any place where an as yet unorganised labour force promises easy profits with little opposition. And as it goes careering around the world in its reckless pursuit of high profits, the various capitalist states are left to pick up the pieces and try to make some sense out of the chaos capitalism leaves in its wake.

That is what is happening to the motor car industry. Inflated to gigantic size out of all proportion to people's real needs when it was enormously profitable it is now, particularly in the older industrialised countries, turning into a starved ward of the state.

Professor Jewkes, one of the old-fashioned economists who still believes in the capacity of a free market to solve all economic problems, describes the struggle between free enterprise capitalism and the collectivist bureaucratic capitalism of state intervention and nationalisation as "the struggle between Adam Smith and Karl Marx."

State bureaucratic capitalism has nothing whatever to do with Marxism - only with capitalism itself in a morbid condition of decline. Capitalism today can no more survive without nationalisation of those industries which are essential but non-profitable than a crippled man can get along without crutches. That is why when workers call for more nationalisation as the remedy for their ills they are only calling for the continuing survival of the system that exploits them. Our concern is to get rid of the monster capitalism itself, together with the state crutches, pep pills and what not we indirectly supply ourselves to prop up the moribund beast.

In the meantime we have to defend our jobs, wages and the very industries capitalism is bent on destroying. How our just demands are met is the Government's concern; but that they are in fact, met must be the concern of the whole Labour movement.

WORKER LETTER

To Zeri Popullit
Tirana, Albania

August 8, 1978

Dear Comrades,

At this time when adherence to a correct Marxist-Leninist line by the Party and people of Albania has resulted in the Chinese leadership's hostile act of cutting off all economic and military aid and of unilaterally tearing up mutually-agreed contracts, we send our fraternal greetings and pledges of solidarity to our fellow revolutionary newspaper.

This is not the first occasion when the Albanian people have been subjected to economic pressure for their refusal to bow down to any imperialists or to revisionists of any stamp and we are confident that their self-reliant determination to build socialism by their own efforts will continue to win great victories for themselves and for the international working class.

THE WORKER is proud to join forces with ZERI I POPULLIT in the welcome task of making known to workers everywhere the principled stand of the Albanian people and their Party of Labour, with Enver Hoxha at their head, in the defence of socialism and in the encouragement of the revolutionary advance of all exploited peoples. On behalf of the international proletariat we thank you, comrades, for the example you give the world of the all round well-being and continuing progress of the people under a dictatorship of the proletariat.

Fraternally yours,
Editor, THE WORKER.

Military threat to air safety

THE FRENCH air traffic controllers' work to rule is as much about the safety of passengers as about salaries. Safety is threatened by obsolete equipment and overloaded work schedules, and by military aircraft which make a skilled job even more difficult by their reluctance to conform to the civilian system.

Behind the dispute is the threat of intervention by the armed forces. In 1973 the French Government tried to break a strike by ordering in military air traffic controllers. The result was the death of 68 passengers in a mid-air collision over the South

of France.

Military aircraft threaten all passengers in Europe. We remember the accusation of disrupting "defence" levelled at British assistant controllers last summer. They went on regardless to win 8 per cent and a flat-rate bonus.

In West Germany agitation by air traffic controllers since their action in 1973 to force military aircraft to identify themselves has had some success. Italy's controllers have long been pressing to lose their present military status, and this, coupled with agitation in the Air Force, may force the Government to give

in. Civilian status for Spanish controllers had to be won by strike action in 1976 and 1977.

Yet the Spanish Government admits that with the sky crowded by profit-grabbing airlines and warplanes, there are not enough controllers. The certainty that, unless standards are improved, there will be a new air disaster, is what gives urgency to the French controllers' demands.

Passengers' lives are at stake. But the authorities refuse to move and treat them like cattle in an attempt to goad them against the controllers. So far, to no avail.

Iran: base for reaction

THE present upsurge against the fascist Shah is a people's movement, not the movement of a few religious fanatics, as the capitalist press would have us believe. Its extent is such that martial law has been imposed in numbers of cities - with all the brutal repression characteristic of the Shah.

We should remember that the present rule of the Shah was established by British and US imperialism 25 years ago when they overthrew the popular government

of Mossadegh and reinstated the exiled Shah. The people of Iran will never let the Shah escape again. His regime has been maintained because it is used as a policeman of imperialist interests in the Middle East. Defence accounts for 27 per cent of the national budget and it is the largest importer of arms in the world.

Anyone who supports the fascist Shah regime condones the slaughter of the Iranian people, and is helping to raise a force for war and misery.

Agricultural workers

NEARLY 5000 farm workers attended the recent Tolpuddle martyrs rally in Dorset, where Minister of Agriculture, Silkin, took the opportunity of announcing the Government's intended 5 per cent pay limit, but only heavy rain greeted his speech. The general secretary of the agricultural workers' union, Jack Boddy, quickly established that the union would have nothing to do with any 5 per cent since the recent biennial conference had decided on a bold new wages policy of £80 minimum wage by 1979 and £100 by 1980.

Conference was clear on its wages policy, defeating a more moderate executive amendment. But confusion was evident during

the debate on EEC membership, and a motion calling for complete withdrawal from the EEC was lost, while there was no firm decision on a motion calling for the abolition of the Agricultural Wages Board. Clarity was restored in the election for President (the most influential post in the union) when John Hose, a forestry worker, gained a clear majority over the Union's sponsored MP.

Overall the conference reflected the weaknesses of the union, but with a clear sighted wages policy and fresh leadership, the NUAAW is well armed for the next two years. It is up to the membership to use these weapons effectively.

Council housing cuts

THE GLC's policy of selling off council houses to tenants reached a crucial stage when a document revealed that more than 1000 GLC homes are standing empty awaiting buyers while thousands of tenants are waiting to be rehoused through transfers and the waiting list.

What is so obnoxious about this scheme is that newly completed council houses are boarded up and some of these have been left empty for more than 6 months.

During this period the GLC has spent £10,000 on rates alone for empty houses since 1977, £208,000 to keep out vandals breaking into these newly built houses and in return have lost £175,000 in rent income, all for the sake of pursuing a policy

based on the ability to pay rather than on the basis of people's needs.

The document further reveals a callous attitude on the part of the GLC officials. They are to embark on a £250,000 campaign to sell off 10,000 by next April. Other costs include a £2.5 million on private estate agents, surveyors and other professional fees associated with the sale.

The Government and its agents are abandoning a housing programme based on social ownership for that of selling council houses.

The sale of council houses is an expensive our class cannot afford. It is increasingly becoming obvious that this Labour Government or any other capitalist government has no interest in resolving the housing shortage.

men will be used in the NATO contingent in Germany. Occupation of Ireland was cited as another reason for the increase.

The Army, naturally, was delighted: "These measures will enhance the Army's operational capacity, and accord well with President Carter's initiatives in the NATO longterm defence programme."

Double fares

SINCE the West Yorkshire Passenger Transport Executive was formed 4 years ago, bus fares have doubled: now there is to be a further increase, 12½ per cent.

Eager to give the impression that the WYPTE was not breaking any 10 per cent norms, a spokesman claimed that the effective increase would be only 9.54 per cent when the loss of passengers due to the increased fares was taken into account.

It would appear that the job of a modern Passenger Transport Executive is not to run a bus service, but to destroy it using the clever tactic of raising fares.

In Brief

THE UNIONS at the Bristol firm of Masson, Scott, Thrissel have demanded an investigation into the purchase of cutting and winding machinery by the Thames Board Mill Company. This company was given a £10m grant by the Government for the installation of new machinery at their Workington plant. Out of this grant they have given a £2.5m contract to a West German firm despite the fact that machinery to the same specification was tendered by MST.

The situation is made even more absurd by the fact that MST themselves have received some subsidy through the print and paper industry to develop their range of machinery.

The workers at MST have pointed out that it is their money which is being spent. They see no reason why 70 per cent of the grant to Thames Board Mills should be used to connive at the destruction of British industry.

BATH'S Community Health Council is "deeply concerned about the decision to close beds at the Royal United Hospital because of the shortage of nursing staff."

In all, 45 beds are being closed during July and August, not because of holidays but because there have "not been enough recruits ..."

One of the nursing staff told THE WORKER that "six or seven years ago they were crying out for nurses. And yet successive cuts in the NHS over the last 3 years have meant that they can't afford to employ more staff although we know the Government has the money. They say there are 38 vacancies but we haven't seen any of them advertised in the journals or local papers. There are more people than ever before applying for jobs here because of the large number of trained nurses who are unemployed."

AUEW AT HARVEY'S, BRISTOL, ACT AGAINST THE EMPLOYER

THE DISPUTE between Harvey's management and ten AUEW maintenance fitters over the (non) recognition by the company of their union still goes on in Bristol in spite of a meeting at the TUC between the AUEW steward at Harvey's, the executive member of the AUEW, TGWU officials, members of the TUC Council and Harvey's management.

Although it was made abundantly clear to the management that the TGWU and AUEW were in

agreement over the recognition of the AUEW at Harvey's, management would not agree to the formula laying out the basis for recognition and negotiating rights.

AUEW members in the district are giving their brothers full support. In a ballot, a levy of all members to support the strikers financially was overwhelmingly voted in.

Action has been taken in factories in Bristol to support the strikers - lorries have been

banned from transporting any goods in or out of their factories which would cross the Harvey's picket line. AUEW members at Ashton Containers (the makers of the cartons for Bristol Cream Sherry) have informed management that they will not repair any machine involved in the containers which may break down.

The members on strike are resolved to see their claims through. With no maintenance production will soon be affected.

More wages, fewer hours

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initiates widespread decline and intends to cripple the workers' capacity to resist.

Workers will have to emancipate themselves and will have to secure every puny advance themselves. Nothing will be bestowed upon them.

Let this be a Congress of no illusion. The situation is grave and the task is immense. Labour and Tory are pygmies. Let the giant working class turn to itself for salvation.

The next issue

The next issue of The Worker will appear in 2 weeks' time on 7th September



Trade unions undermine war effort

PRESSURE of industrial action has forced the government to come up with an offer which may be acceptable to the 183,000 industrial civil servants in their wages fight.

The basic rate will rise from £32.50 to £44.80, with Phase I and II increases now consolidated into that figure.

Whitehall's response to the blacking of the four wretched nuclear submarines was nothing short of panicky. For all their jaw about war, and the shrill propaganda for a crusade against the USSR, the top brass is obviously more worried about its real enemy, workers here in Britain.

The bourgeois war machine has been sapped from within.

For example, the Copenacre naval defence stores, Wiltshire was temporarily without admirals, captains and

top administrators, as drivers, supported by security guards maintenance men and canteen staff, struck for 24 hours. Metropolitan police drivers, supported by other workers, were out for a day to produce the "serious disruption of police work" promised by the Civil Service Union. From Portsmouth to the Clyde, and ever since the first of July, no military establishment could be relied upon.

The overturning of military discipline by the collective decision-taking of trade unionism is of significance. Someone may have told the Minister of Defence about the Bolshevik soldiers, for last year's "no objection in principle" to unions in the forces is now "I do not think it is right to encourage a widespread recruitment campaign."

But no-one listens to him.

The civilian workers' success has given a big boost to the campaign for recruitment among the ranks as well. A joint approach to Mulley has just been made by 20 unions, both industrial and white-collar, while the AUEW and ASTMS have been pressing for members.

Before long "dumb insolence", that favourite officers' charge, will be a thing of the past. As the union side said: You can hold back some form of organisation for five or six years, but not much longer. It already exists in Holland and Germany to some extent, and this is bound to spin off into other EEC countries."

Workers will see that the EEC is not the machine for war that our bourgeoisie, along with others across the world, hope it will be.

POEU struggle for a shorter week

A PROVISIONAL agreement has been reached between the Post Office Engineering Union (POEU) and the employer, the Post Office, to reduce the working week to 37½ hours. Delegates to a special delegate conference in the coming weeks will be asked to confirm or reject this agreement.

Action for a shorter week stemmed from the POEU's 1978 Annual Conference, where delegates called overwhelmingly for a campaign to win 35 hours a week. The action took effect quickly.

After two months of struggle employing a wide variety

of tactics, thousands of subscribers were waiting for connection, the success rate on international calls was down to something like 5 per cent and many countries could not even be reached, the internal trunk network was getting tied in knots: on top of all this 900 exchanges were in cold storage as a result of earlier action.

In short, the Post Office was over a barrel and was forced to begin negotiating a shorter working week.

The engineers now have to decide whether the provisional agreement is acceptable

enough to warrant settlement on its terms.

The agreement is fraught with provisions for flexible working, overtime will continue to be paid at the old rate and the whole is muddled by the principle of no additional cost currently being peddled by the Labour Government. The Post Office's "good will" has already been shown up by the numerous suspensions it made during the dispute.

The engineers must now examine their position with clarity to ensure that the settlement is a genuine reduction of weekly hours.

WORKER INTERVIEW

THIS interview took place between THE WORKER and members of a picket line outside the Maudsley Hospital, Camberwell.

Question. What is the action about?

Answer. It goes back to a 1977 NALGO Conference decision to get social workers off the old national grading scale, which has remained while the responsibilities of social workers have been increasing.

Q. How long has the dispute been going on?

A. We've been taking action in Southwark since June, refusing to take on new work and court duties, and although this has hit the population we serve, the Council hasn't reacted at all. The employers tried to by-pass the union with a national offer which ignores most of our demands, but this was rejected unanimously by our branch.

Our strike action in Southwark is official now that NALGO has asked for local negotiations, a request rejected by the employers' National Joint Council this week.

Q. Who is involved?

A. Basic grade social workers, trainees and untrained social workers are taking the action, and we have almost total support after a postal ballot and our branch's backing. Elsewhere, Hammersmith have already got local negotiations, Tower Hamlets and Newcastle are on strike, Lewisham have taken one-day actions, and most London boroughs, and Liverpool, are planning to take action soon.

Q. What about the Whitley Council?

A. The principles we are fighting for include rejection of the Whitley machinery as the negotiating body, local negotiations instead, recognition of increased responsibilities, and therefore proper grading and pay.

Q. How successful have you been so far?

A. It is still early days yet, but local actions are spreading all round the country. We have been surprised by the degree of local support from other council workers

We will call off our action only when we get a concrete acceptance from the council of our right to local negotiations.

Down with the 5 per cent

A CLAIM for a 47 per cent pay rise by 18,000 heating and ventilating engineers, represented by the National Union of Sheet Metal Workers, is a flat challenge to Government guidelines. It will be followed by a similar claim by 30,000 plumbers.

The Civil Service unions, representing 500,000 white-collar workers, have drawn up plans for strike action to enforce their struggle against Government wage-fighting.

As an expression of this militancy on the issue of collective bargaining running through the labour movement can be quoted the following resolution:

"This London South District Committee welcomes the TUC

General Council's overwhelming rejection of the Government policy to limit wage increases to 5 per cent.

"This decision reflects the feeling of our members who have had enough of Government guidelines, Phases one, two and three, which subjected them to untold difficulties in defending and improving their living standards.

"We urge the TUC and all unions to stand united and firm in rejecting attempts to impose permanent wage controls and to give full support to any union that is involved in struggle and requests assistance to achieve its claim."

This was carried unanimously by London South AUEW.

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