

THE WORKER



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ENGINEERS STRIKE!

National teachers' action throws employers into disarray

MEMBERS of the National Union of Teachers in at least 115 areas of England and Wales are already operating sanctions in opposition to the employers' offer of a 9 per cent salary increase, and rejection of the 12½ per cent claim. More areas are joining the action daily.

The teachers are refusing to supervise pupils during the lunch break, to collect dinner money, to use personal transport for school business (vital to the running of schools on split sites) and to take part in extra-curricular activities.

In fact, the provision of school meals, lunchtime supervision and the transport of children and teachers

during school hours are wholly the responsibility of the local authorities. Teachers have only helped to run these on a voluntary, unpaid basis. Where schools are being closed, it is because the authorities have chosen to close them because they cannot or will not fulfil their responsibility.

Already the effect on the community is great - pupils have been excluded from schools at midday and many schools have closed wholly or partially. Many areas, in addition to giving the sanctions full support have called for stronger action. The Inner London Association has urged that a national policy of no

is prepared to bring in the pupils. Fred Jarvis, NUT General Secretary, commented, "Our members remain ready to teach the children in the schools. It is for the authorities to make alternative arrangements to deal with the situation where our action is taking place."

Stockport: Teachers have been

cover for absent colleagues be implemented and that preparations be made for strike action.

The teachers' action has left the employers in disarray. That the action started while the claim was to go to arbitration has exploded the myth of neutrality in a class society. Already many authorities have broken rank and say they are ready to negotiate. The leader of the management panel was unwilling to face the results of a blank refusal to negotiate, and resigned. The national press has alternated between crowing that the sanctions are not biting and whining about their widespread effect.

Teachers should recognise this and push home their advantage. The cause is the right of their union to pursue the 12½ per cent claim irrespective of Government policy - a claim that is put forward not because others have achieved one like it but rather that is what the members need. The primary task is to extend the sanctions and to assert the full claim.

threatened with a lockout by their Authority if they refuse to provide voluntary (sic) supervision at lunchtimes. The Assistant Director of Education has instructed head teachers that teachers should not be allowed to return to school after the lunch hour until they are prepared to resume "normal duties".

EMPLOYERS CANNOT HIDE BEHIND GOVT GUIDELINES

THE LEAD taken by the AUEW Executive Council in calling for a two-day strike on the 20th and 21st March to back the engineers' claim, which was taken up with approval by the Confederation of Shipbuilding and Engineering Unions, has now been overwhelmingly endorsed by the National Committee (the AUEW's policy-making body). The vote in favour of industrial action to show the engineering employers that they cannot hide behind the Government guidelines to insult engineers with a £42 minimum for skilled workers was 48 to 3.

As was said by Reg Birch, member of the EC of the AUEW, in WORKER No 9: "The employers who have lived always in the illusion that they could revert to the days of wage reduction before the war and have as low a base rate as suited them, still believe they can force us back into that situation through another depression and use the horrendous unemployment of the present against those who are employed. This is why the struggle must be taken up by us. It is a struggle for all. It is not to do with engineering alone. It affects all workers. The Government and employers must be put in their place."

"Typical of the response of engineers to this lead is the resolution carried by London South District Committee of the AUEW: "This London South District Committee declares its full support for the decision of the CSEU and our National Committee for a national 2-day strike action on the 20th and 21st March 1978 to back our National Claim.

"We reject the hypocrisy of the Engineering Employers' Federation that to operate the undertaking given to the Confederation negotiators would now contravene the Government guidelines.

"The Engineering Employers have never willingly agreed to legitimate and adequate wage rates to our members in recognition of their skills. The existing insulting rate of £42.00 per week for craftsmen is evidence of this. We completely reject the Government guidelines and the employers' excuse.

"We urge all Shop Stewards and members to fully support the call for action to advance the minimum time rates and to lodge a claim direct with their employer for the original demand."

The only superpower is the working class

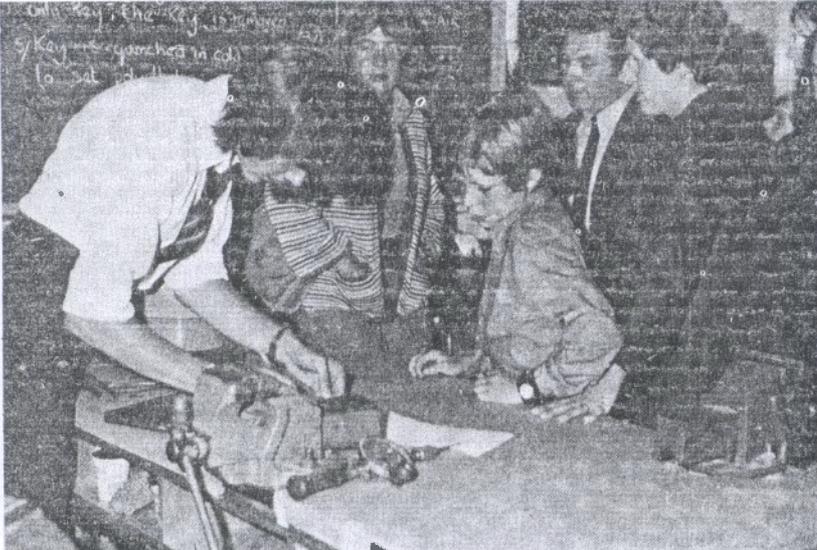
THE 160,000 coal miners in the United States belonging to the United Mineworkers' Union have voted overwhelmingly to reject the settlement which the Carter administration put together in an attempt to end the 3-month strike. The strike is in defence of the right to strike and union-run

benefits like a health service and pensions, to all of which the employers, the mine-owners, are determined to put an end.

The strike has already created an electricity supply shortage throughout the

Continued page 4

Newcastle Upon Tyne: The Authority has closed many split site schools because the teachers are refusing to use their own cars for journeys between sites, and other schools are closing for a half day as children are sent home at dinner time. Teachers are still in the schools ready to work as soon as the Authority



Part of the voluntary activities which teachers undertake for no extra payment are 'open evenings' and parents' evenings. Teachers' sanctions include the refusal to attend these.

"A spectre is haunting Europe - the spectre of Communism"

1848 WAS a year of revolution. Uprisings against feudalism swept Europe - from France to Hungary, Prussia to Italy. In Britain, where a revolution against feudalism had taken place two centuries earlier, 2 million signatures were appended to the Charter calling for universal suffrage. And from London there appeared the first edition of the Communist Manifesto.

The story of the Manifesto begins properly in 1848. At that time there existed no Communist parties in the world; all there was, was concentrated in an organisation called the Communist League. This was composed mainly of French, German and Belgian communists and in England communist members of the Chartist movement.

only provisional

But although it was called the Communist League, it lacked a proper definition of what communism was or what a communist does. It had a constitution: "The aim of the League is the overthrow of the bourgeoisie, the rule of the proletariat, the abolition of the old bourgeois society based on class antagonisms, and the establishment of a new society without either classes or private property." It had a slogan: "Workers of the World, Unite!" Yet all this was only provisional.

A Congress of the League took place in London in June, 1847, and

out of it came a call for a proper manifesto or declaration of communist principles. They called it a "catechism of faith". The Congress called on all sections of the League to consider the problem and bring forward suggestions to a further Congress to be held in November of the same year.

By this time, Marx and Engels had been in lengthy correspondence and exchanged their ideas. They had discussed Engel's "Principles of Communism" and Marx had been working on his own ideas. They were ready for November.

four-day debate

The November Congress was duly held, in Great Windmill



Karl Marx.

Street, Soho. As with all the League's activities, it was held in secret. It was a long meeting and it took Marx four days to convince the delegates that his ideas were correct. In the end, agreement was reached and the Congress charged Marx, along with Engels, with the job of writing the Manifesto.

manifesto ultimatum

Marx returned to Brussels, where he was living at the time, and got down to work. No one knows how long he thought it would take him, but the League certainly had its ideas. We know from a remarkable letter sent by the League to Brussels:

"... if the Manifesto of the Communist Party, which he (Marx) consented, at the last Congress, to draw up, does not reach London before Tuesday February 1, further measures will be taken against him. In case Citizen Marx does not write the Manifesto, the Central Committee requests the immediate return of the documents which were turned over to him by the congress."

political whirlwind

In the event, no such measures were needed. The manuscript was sent to London at the end of January and was printed in German. Even as the last copies of that first edition were coming off the press the February revolution



The title page of the first edition of the Manifesto.

in France had already begun, signalling a year of political ferment. Marx and Engels plunged themselves into this whirlwind.

It was to be two years before an English edition was printed. It appeared in the columns of "The Red Republican", the Chartist newspaper, then edited by Ernest Jones. Over 20 years were to pass before a Russian edition appeared. Now there is hardly a language or dialect into which it has not been translated, hardly a worker in the world who has not heard of it.

● The Communist Manifesto is available from the Bellman Bookshop, price 25p inc. p&p.

Revisionists compromise in Italy

THE SO-CALLED 'Communist Party of Italy' (CPI) is making a great fuss about being on the brink of "seizing power". This "seizing of power" does not mean stopping the capitalist exploitation of Italian workers nor the establishment of socialism in Italy: it means that the PCI wants to share the country's ruling with the established reactionary parties (particularly the Christian Democrats and "Socialists").

The PCI is actually trying to claim that such a step would be to the great benefit of the Italian people. Modern Italy, after decades of ruthless exploitation, mass emigration, fascist terror, increasing unemployment, widening social and economic gap between the north and south, all-in-all recurrent attacks on the dignity of Italian workers, now faces the ultimate panacea: the PCI's entry into parliamentary government!

The PCI's eagerness to share power - and how can a worker really 'share' power with the capitalist class exploiting him at the same time? - springs from its desire to keep capitalism alive for just a bit longer in Italy. The waffle coming from the PCI as from the other Eurocommunists, upholders of the "three world line" and all other revisionists, about achieving 'real' democracy, allowing 'freedom of conscience', the need to understand the 'realities of our time' and 'dignity for all' is tantamount to compromise with the bourgeoisie: their freedom to continue exploiting workers.

Manifesto "obsolete" - 3 Worlds theorists

IN 1848 "The Manifesto of the Communist Party" was printed, written by Karl Marx and Frederick Engels. It stated that "the history of all hitherto existing society is the history of class struggles" and that "our epoch, the epoch of the bourgeoisie, possesses, however, this distinctive feature: it has simplified the class antagonisms. Society as a whole is more and more splitting up into two great hostile camps, into two great classes directly facing each other: Bourgeoisie and Proletariat." The statement ends, "The proletarians have nothing to lose but their chains. They have a world to win."

It is reported that at a meeting in Belgium, a delegate from one of the last of the feudal states in Europe announced, "The Manifesto is of tremendous importance to the international communist movement and up till now it remains the basis of our revolutionary activities. For every

stage of the world revolution there has to be a concrete strategic concept at the level of world politics. At present this concept is embodied in the theory of the three worlds." Unbelievably, that was not written by someone from Madison Avenue.

He and all the others who propound this do not explain what this theory or, more correctly, pronouncement, is and what are the possible results. Besides its naked expression of racism and its attempt to fragment the working people of the world, its contempt for the proletariat and peasants and their struggles brings a shuddering reminder of the Nazi Streicher. We must love our masters, be they the Shah or ITT or one of our own failed politicians. In Europe it demands we struggle to achieve a third world war under the leadership of the USA, the Fascists, including the moth-eaten remains of British Fascism.

Some members of the ruling class would quite like this because it would dispose of the 9 million unemployed school leavers prophesied for the Common Market Countries in the 1980s. Some of the more intelligent sections of the bourgeoisie might wonder if turning Europe into a cinder will assist in profit making. Workers will denounce it as an imperialist war as they did in 1914.

Since the Manifesto was written, millions of workers and peasants have died fighting for freedom, against fascism and for socialism. In Europe, did Thaelmann and Gabriel Peri and the hundreds of thousands of unnamed people die in vain? No they did not. Workers will never accept their exploiters as allies nor will they die for any bloc. The wickedness of the new propaganda is matched by its stupidity. It is unwise to underrate the peoples of Europe.

Fighting in the Horn of Africa increases the peoples' dependence on imperialism

NOTHING undermines the independence of African countries more than a war between neighbouring states. The war between Ethiopia and Somalia makes this clear. Weakened by imperialist and feudal rule for decades, the impoverished people still suffering from the burden of imperialism are now further weakened by a war both countries cannot afford. That peasants are dying now on the hills of the Ogaden is achieving nothing to further the future of their countries. The war has and is increasing their dependence on this

or that imperialist power or this or that aspiring new power in the Middle East and Africa.

The pretence of the US, Britain and the other EEC countries that they are standing aside while the Soviet Union is supplying arms to Ethiopia, and the call from the Western imperialist countries to support "the other side" is designed to make foreign interference acceptable as a day-to-day business.

Facts show that the US, Britain and the rest of the EEC are not far behind the Soviet Union in

supply of arms to the countries in the Horn of Africa directly or indirectly through Iran, Israel and Saudi Arabia and others. This is not enough, however, for MPs who are calling for direct interference in the affairs of the Horn.

Imperialism has carved up Africa for its own interests. It is a tragedy for the people of Africa when independent states go to war about boundaries worked out by imperialist powers long after they were forced to depart. It provides imperialism with a chance for a come-back.

THE Manpower Services Commission (MSC) is being subjected to more criticism by teachers in further education. The government is using the MSC to create an alternative structure of so-called "training" alongside the apprenticeship and further and higher education structures. The 1973 Employment and Training Act emasculated and drastically altered the levy/grant system for apprenticeship resulting in a decrease in apprenticeships. Further education has been starved of funds while the superficial training of the Training Opportunities courses have been extensively funded. Colleges should not be enticed by "the easy money" offered to run MSC sponsored TOPS courses which undermine the education standard of the further education sector.

BRITAIN paid a total of £738.8 million to the Common Market last year and received £359.3 million, a net contribution of £377.5 million, according to the Chief Secretary to the Treasury.

OF ALL the possible tactics for hospital telephonists to employ in their current pay dispute, listening in to doctors' telephone calls to see if they are emergencies or not, and cutting them off if the calls appear not to be essential medical ones must be one of the worst. Never mind that they have called down the wrath of Callaghan - his wrath rises over any dispute. But they have managed to start turning the doctors away from a position of support for their struggle. A spokesman for the BMA said over the weekend that he was in sympathy with their claim, but that doctors were now in a state of perpetual fear that an urgent call will be cut off in mid-stream. How do the telephonists know what is urgent? In any case, telephonists have even been cutting off calls between doctors and representatives of their union, the BMA. Everyone who works in a large building knows how crucial the switchboard operators are: surely they can find a better way, and one which hits the management and not their fellow workers.

RESEARCH by Dr Tomlin at Queen Elizabeth Hospital, Birmingham, ties in with other recent evidence to show that operating theatre staff run greatly increased risks of producing stillborn or damaged children, most likely due to prolonged exposure to anaesthetic waste gases. Although the Department of Health recognised such risks two years ago, and recommended fitting scavenging units to clear them, it has allocated no extra money for this purpose, and most hospitals are still without this equipment. Once again an example of callous disregard for the health and safety of some of the most skilled of our class.

HEARD in the Bellman Bookshop: "Some people say that if socialism is inevitable, we can sit back and wait for it to happen. They could equally well say that since, eventually, a cure for cancer will be found, we can close down our centres of cancer research."

POLICE expenditure on the national recruitment campaign in the current financial year will be £592,000 as compared with £376,054 in the year 1976-77 according to Government figures.

EDITORIAL

IN THE ECONOMIC struggles of the working class is the germ of revolution. There is no other avenue to socialism than the way of mass involvement in class conflict.

Things will not be changed by conspiracy, by furtive bands trying to subvert the forces of the state and committing acts of terrorism. Things will only be changed by the workers.

No clandestine activity behind the working class's back can serve our purpose. We can sharpen capitalism's dilemma and help the mass of workers to see and understand it. Only the mass can make it impossible for the bourgeoisie to go on ruling. Politics is the question of what to do with the mass. When the mass adopts Marxism-Leninism, the theory of revolution becomes an invincible material force.

As Marx says in THE COMMUNIST MANIFESTO: a proletarian revolution is the "self-conscious, independent movement of the immense majority in the interest of the immense majority."

We must be clear about the class enemy's strategy. The two million unemployed in Britain, the seven million unemployed in the EEC, the millions of young people in western Europe deprived of work - is this not the same as the massive unemployment in Germany before Hitler? Its purpose is to weaken our organisation and our resolve and make us a prey to fascism. They talk of getting back to stable prices and wages. Prices and wages were very stable at the height of the great depression in Britain. Depression is to serve them again as the road to fascism. Fascism is simply capitalism in extremis.

The fight for wages is our answer to their attempt to impose fascism on us, the first sign of which is a denial of our right to bargain. That is the importance of the engineers backing their claim with the threat of nationwide industrial action. It is attacking capitalism where it lives. The breakdown of negotiations provided the chance on a national scale to oppose the Government openly.

If we are clear about class struggle in our own country, we can decide how to defend our country against capitalism's attempts, with the full connivance of our own bourgeoisie, to destroy it as a home for the working class.

If we are clear about class struggle here in Britain we will be able to distinguish the forces elsewhere who are our allies in taking on the same capitalist enemy.

Hence our slogan for the coming May Day: ONE WORLD, TWO CLASSES, WORKERS THROW OFF YOUR CHAINS!

Vandalism for profit

RECENTLY the Government in its Green Paper on Housing stated that there is no longer a housing shortage - in fact we now have a surplus. So everything seems to be all right after all. Yet Exeter Housing Group's survey of empty property carried out last November showed that Exeter's housing is just as bad as it was two years ago.

The Council is the worst landlord in Exeter. 64 per cent of Council-owned residential property empty now was empty 2 years ago. Many houses were originally taken over in the light of planned road schemes which were scrapped. Since then some have been demolished, and others have become the subject of disputes between Exeter City Council and Devon County Council as to who is responsible, so they are still empty. It has been pointed out that it is usually cheaper to renovate and let the houses than it is to pay bed and breakfast rates to homeless people even on a short term basis. Just like Exeter's empty houses, simple economics falls down in this situation.

The Council has powers to deal with empty property (forcing owners to repair or serving compulsory purchase orders), but

since it is unwilling to repair its own housing it is not surprising to find that these powers to make more housing available are not used. Companies wishing to redevelop but blocked by preservation orders or without planning permission simply refuse to repair the buildings and let them fall into irreversible decay. Then they are allowed to demolish and redevelop.

These tactics are used indiscriminately - buildings relatively old and new alike are treated with the same contempt for their importance either as homes or historical monuments. A recent example is that of a street of fine 17th century houses that were allowed to rot away entirely and have now been pulled down. During the war Exeter lost a lot of property at the hands of the Nazis; nowadays planning aims to equal Hitler's devastation, only on a more lasting basis.

This is wanton vandalism by neglect, and capitalist property relations are the most destructive vandals of our buildings. When we are told it is not worth repairing it generally means the risk of losing money is too great to warrant the effort of investing capital. People are homeless while houses deteriorate.

Civil Service wages hit

IN RESPONSE to the Society of Civil and Public Servants' pay claim for between 22 and 28 per cent, the Civil Service Department has made it clear that Government guidelines override any considerations of fair comparisons, and their interpretation of the guidelines is that they mean a settlement well within single figures.

They also propose three deduc-

tions. SCPS members are to pay for the cost of 1) rectifying anomalies created by the Government's pay policies, 2) structural changes in the numbers of Civil Servants in different grades, 3) changes in incremental distribution arising from Government manpower cuts: proposals described by union negotiators as outrageous. A firm offer is expected from the CSD shortly.



GEC is aggravating the serious economic situation in Liverpool, where more than 90,000 workers are already jobless, by closing down an electric cooker factory throwing another 670 out of work.

Steel jobs roll away

IT IS one of the inhuman absurdities of a system based on profit that while a Government uses all its force to fix the wages of those producing wealth as low as possible, steel workers are offered bonuses not to produce anything at all. It is exactly like the destruction of crops in a capitalist world where millions are starving, and for the same reason, to maintain prices at a profitable level.

The East Moors steelworks at Cardiff has been closed down, with niggling redundancy payments for the 3300 workers thrown out of work. These workers will swell the numbers of unemployed in Cardiff already running at over 10 per cent.

Next on the list for closure is the steelworks at Ebbw Vale, to be followed by others till more than 20,000 jobs have disappeared. There is no way to estimate in money terms the loss of what 20,000 skilled workers could produce over a life time, together with the effects on future generations of the means of production they would have contributed to making. Such losses are part of our charge against capitalism which we will one day have to collect from them with interest!

To say that these steel factories are obsolete and can only run at a monetary loss is also part of capitalism's double talk. They run at a loss because of the vast debt charges, profits the capitalists paid themselves in the past, which have to be met. One of the tremendous advantages of socialism is that older and newer forms of means of production can go on serving the people over a long period while the new gradually replaces the old.

Growth rate hopes now non-existent - official

THE January trade and unemployment figures, recently published, are provoking much debate. It would appear that even the proponents of capitalism know neither what it will do next, nor, when something happens, what it means. On the one hand they express shock and horror at the down-turn in what had previously been interpreted as a sustained improvement in the economy (a surplus on Balance of Payments current account since last July), and on the other, delight in the 'improvement' in the unemployment figures (seasonally adjusted) together with much musing as to long term significance. (Do they really mean something, or as last year's is it a brief drop before they start a sustained climb again?)

Both sets of figures demand very close scrutiny. What for example underlies the £179m deficit on the current account in January? Firstly, a sharp fall (4½%) in the volume of exports, particularly marked since the late summer. Although output was not higher and consumption lower, a rise in the volume of imports, in the last two months, particularly in food (17½% last month), chemical purchases (27%) and manufactured goods, continued the trend of 1976-1977 when volume of imports of manufactured goods rose by 12.9% and that of consumption goods by slightly more.

Taking a closer look at the unemployment figures we see that in February, the areas with relatively lower unemployment, such as the South-East, had the highest fall, while areas of highest unemployment - the North-West and Wales - did worst. In fact, the 'improvement' in the unemployment position is concentrated in the South-East, South-West, West Midlands, Yorkshire,

Humberdale and Scotland, while all other areas, far from reporting lower unemployment, in fact reported more. The 'improvement' is thus concentrated in service and light industries, while areas of heavy industry are worsening!

The unemployment figures in fact betray the underlying trend in the British economy just as surely as the Balance of Payments figures - decline, and accelerating decline in its industrial base.

And the reality clearly is that no attempt is being made to stop or reverse it, as THE WORKER has consistently reported - more that decline is the result of deliberate desertion of Britain by capitalism, in search of higher profits and of destruction at the hands of the EEC and international capital.

We have had spiralling prices, wage restraint, the destruction of industry and resources, redundancies and loss of jobs. Now they fill the air with discussion, thus implying a serious attempt to understand and control the economy and the justice of their actions. On the one hand the Government will claim that the worsening Balance of Payments indicates the vital need to resist, primarily, demands for laxity in wages policy, and also changes in the Budget towards lower taxation, improvements in consumer purchasing power and the like. There will be a renewed call for wage restraint.

On the other hand, the unemployment figures will be used to exhort our class to tighten its belt further through wage restraint and other forms of 'reasonableness' in order to sustain the 'improvement' - 'look how much we've done, help us to do more!' More what? Price spirals, wage restraint, closure of industry and redundancy?

Capitalism in crisis — no growth = world slump

HEALEY has told a meeting of the National Economic Development Council that there is no hope of achieving anything like the 3½ per cent growth in domestic production which the Government had forecast. He excused the failure as a result of the slump in world trade.

Last year output in Britain measured by Gross Domestic Product was no higher than in 1976 and considerably lower than in 1973 and that is what Labour is boasting about as economic recovery!

The main feature of the capitalist world scene, just as in the period leading up to the Great Depression, is the growth of protectionism. EEC countries, against the advice of the US, are protecting themselves from Japanese goods and Japan is taking action against its lower-cost Asian competitors like Taiwan and South Korea. And the US, which wants others to leave trade to market forces, in the case of its own industries under threat is moving toward trade barriers as well. And so it goes.

Countries like Britain blame

the trouble on the low-inflation big-balance-of-payments-surplus countries like West Germany and Japan which ought to be the "locomotives" of world economic recovery. The surplus countries maintain that the collapse of the US dollar because of the enormous US deficit is appreciating their currencies unduly and having a deflationary effect on their economies which makes it impossible for them to do anything and all the industrialised countries will have to try to go forward together in a "convoy" strategy of growth.

Meanwhile the developing countries are demanding cancellation of their debt of over £102 billion to the industrialised world. This is strongly opposed by West Germany which says that such debt relief would result in eroding financial discipline and could lead to even richer countries wanting to cancel their debts too! All these empty arguments and empty excuses cannot disguise the absolute crisis of world capitalism. They show how utterly fatuous is the 'third world' theory of international relations.

'The Worker' 155 FORTRESS ROAD, LONDON NW5
6 months £2.50 (including postage)
1 year £5.00 (including postage)

NAME.....
ADDRESS.....

LETTER Manpower Services ruin job opportunities for unemployed

Dear Editor,

I have been very impressed by your recent articles on unemployment, particularly those concerning the Manpower Services Commission. I am 20 years old and have 3 science 'A' levels. I have been unemployed for 9 months. In that time over half the vacancies I have been notified of have been those with the seemingly admirable title 'Job Creation'. But at a recent interview for temporary library work it became clear to me what Job Creation really is.

I had queried the wage, which was £33.80 for a 37 hour week (calculated for age 18 but older people get no more). The interviewer agreed it was low but explained that the rate was fixed by the MSC (who organise Job Creation). As a library employee I would have been paid more, and the interviewer said they would prefer to take on full-time staff to perform the duties. This had been stopped because of 'rationalisation';

instead they had been swamped by Job Creation schemes.

What becomes clear from this is that by its use of low pay and strictly temporary employment Job Creation seeks to undermine organisation in the place of work. The fundamental aims of unionism deal with unity concerning wages and conditions and Job Creation provides cheap unorganised labour. Under capitalism now the only real source of job creation is in the organisation of those in work (demanding improved provision of services, shorter working week and not covering vacant posts).

The Job Creation Scheme in the long term is really only another form of job destruction. Permanent work positions will disappear for good as Job Creation employees become a roving pool of cheap labour for the capitalists.

The undermining of organisation goes hand in hand with the undermining of skill. If further proof other than my

own and 2 million other workers' unemployment is needed it is clearly displayed in the MSC's Training Opportunities Scheme (TOPS), which the unemployed are supposed to believe will train them for a bright future. Whoever heard of a ten week engineering course? And you could wait 18 months for some courses in Exeter anyway. Of course there's no work at the end of it but Job Creation.

When unemployment was debated at the TUC Youth Conference recently there were a few ecstatic calls of support for the invaluable work of the Manpower Services Commission. As a worker who has experience of the MSC I would say its work is invaluable to capitalism alone, and like other state bodies, workers pay through taxes for the benefits of its work. In unemployment, capitalism portrays its own wasteful and destructive nature, and both employed and unemployed should unite for its destruction.

US coal - continued from Page 1

Middle West and the Appalachians which threatens industrial shut-downs in 11 states and has helped bring the 'all-mighty' dollar down to an all time low in relation to the mark and the yen.

Carter has now invoked the notorious anti-union Taft-Hartley Act which orders the miners to go back to work for an 80-day 'cooling off period' during which fresh attempts at a settlement will be made and, if that fails, a second ballot will be held on whether the strike is to go on or not.

The Taft-Hartley Act, or the Labour-Management Relations Act, to give it its proper title, was passed in 1947 in a wave of anti-unionism to modify out of existence the liberal Wagner Act passed in 1935 which was known as the American trade unionists' "Magna Carta". The Taft-Hartley abolished the "closed shop" or hundred per cent

unionism, prohibited demarcation strikes and blacking.

The strength of organised workers when they fight to defend hard-won freedoms is splendidly shown in this courageous resistance of the US coal miners. Carter can invoke the Taft-Hartley Act and order them back to work; he can institute criminal and civil proceedings against local officers of the Mineworkers' Union and impound union funds; he can cut off federal relief, like the food stamp programme, to try to starve the miners and their families into submission; he can agree with the employers, the Bituminous Coal Operators Association, to implement the pay rises now as a "sweetener" to induce the strikers to obey the injunction to go back. But none of this will avail if the miners are united and determined to fight on till their basic demands are met.

Hospital workers - casualties of the cuts

CLOSED health services and untreated illness are now a familiar picture due to the Government's starving of funds to the NHS. In London, chronic staff shortages and the present 'flu outbreak have caused a wave of hospital bed closures. For example, the casualty departments at Westminster and King's College Hospitals were temporarily shut earlier this year. 36 beds have been closed at the Mayday Hospital, Croydon, following pressure from the Royal College of Nursing.

"Natural wastage" and the philosophy of cutting staff so close to the bone that the odd sickness means a unit has to close were to blame, stated a spokesman from the Confederation of Health Service Employees, Representatives of doctors and nurses at King's College, angered by the threat to standards of care, have written to their Area Health Authority to demand more staff - "no statistics are required to gauge the low morale of the staff at this major teaching hospital." Outside London the picture is the same. There were 5073 unemployed nurses in December, twice the 1975 figure.

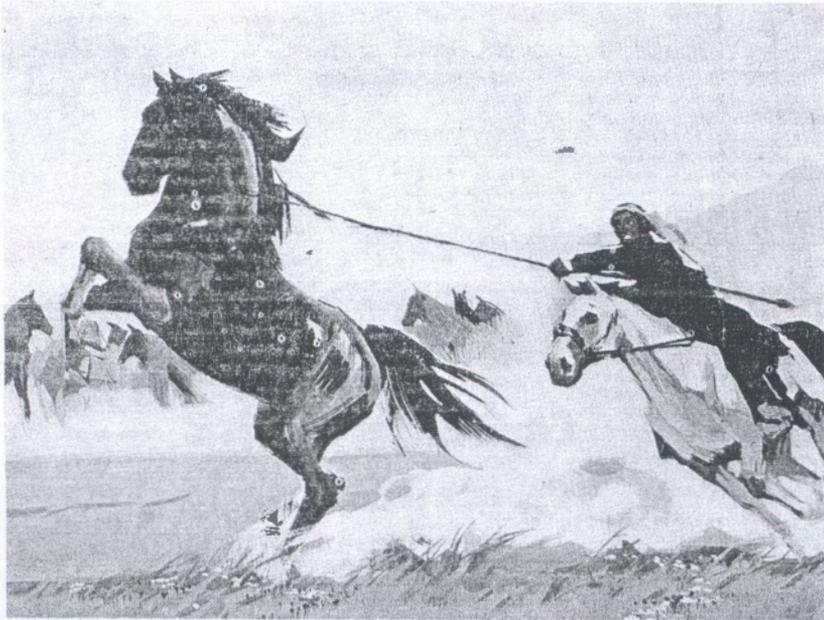
The British Medical Association recently described the total NHS waiting list in England of 510,000 as "a scandal without parallel in any technically developed country." Yet all over the country beds lie empty for lack of funds and staff to make use of them.

A consultant surgeon at

Good Hope Hospital, Sutton Coldfield, recently announced that he had a waiting list which would require 36 years to clear at the present rate, leaving many old people to suffer on needlessly to their deaths. Just seven miles away at West Heath Hospital, Birmingham, a 17-bed ward was closed because of a staff shortage last month.

At the Queen Victoria Hospital in East Grinstead, 27 beds have stood empty in one of the plastic surgery wards for the past nine years, leaving a still-growing waiting list of 2600 with facial scars and disfigurements, who have little chance of getting an operation ever unless their disfigurement is making them mentally ill.

Against this background health workers must fight on a double front to defend the National Health Service. One is the fight against cuts, where four London hospitals are due for the axe: Hounslow, Elizabeth Garrett Anderson, Plaistow and Bethnal Green - and these have recently joined forces. And at the Romsley Hill geriatric hospital near Birmingham, due for closure despite the official shortage of 210 beds for the elderly in the area, nursing and ancillary staff are preparing a work-in, following the example of the victory at Glan Ely geriatric hospital in South Wales, saved by staff action. The Labour Government has closed at least 160 hospitals since it took over.



"Young Riders of the Grasslands"

A new book from China for children

20 pages, price 35p including p & p.

"YOUNG Riders of the Grasslands" by Hua Kuo-Chang, illustrated by Liu Ta-Wei is a new children's book from China. The story is good, the illustrations superb, the printing and lay-out impeccable. For those who admire horses this is the book.

It reminds me of an occasion in 1973 when I had the honour to visit the Peoples Republic of China. Our delegation was taken to visit a commune which specialised in breeding horses. The leader of the commune took us into an immense stable where there were black, chestnut and grey stallions in loose boxes. He asked us to walk down the middle of the stable and not touch the stallions, then firmly closed the big doors to keep out the band of children who wished to come too.

We were all ignorant townsmen but one of us was dafter than the rest. He stopped to pat the smallest black horse.

From its eye, even we could tell it was the fiercest. It was obvious he was about to take a nip out of the intruder when the horseman rushed forward, smacked Blackie on the nose and said something sharply. Even though it was in Chinese we understood that the purport was, "Do not disgrace yourself and the commune in front of these imbeciles of townees." The horse hung his head, stamped his feet and retreated to the back of his box.

We left the stable. The little horse, once his master was safely gone, pushed his head over his box and emitted a high pitched whinny of contempt and derision for the interfering foreigner. We were worried that we had offended the horseman because he was tight-lipped, but at the challenge of the little black stallion he shouted with laughter, the children pushed open the doors and giggled and all the

horses stamped and whinnied and we all laughed until we were ready to cry.

The sun was shining into the dark stable so that chaff danced in the beam of sunlight, the sleek horses gleamed in the light and the bright colours of the children's clothes shone in the dark beyond. We were standing on a meadow almost as soft and green as an English one. Turner could have painted that scene.

We were at ease with our hosts and happy; everything there belonged to those who worked, winter was a long way away. If we had not been reserved Chinese and even more reserved English we would have put our arms round each others' shoulders and gone on our way singing.

As it was we shook hands formally and said "Thank you for a nice visit". At that moment all of us, Chinese and English, knew exactly what Socialism meant.

PUBLIC MEETING

Meetings on Fridays at 7.30pm at Bellman Bookshop:-

March 17th James Connolly, the first British Marxist.

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Every Saturday at Paddies Market, Great Homer Street, Liverpool

