

THE WORKER



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LABOUR'S PROGRAMME: UNEMPLOYMENT UP COLLECTIVE BARGAINING OUT

EVEN according to the latest Government figures unemployment has taken a sharp turn for the worse. At the same time, government officials were reported to be confident that the trend is level or falling.

In the light of successive Government policies and of the cadaverous state of British industry such assurances have the same bland flavour as Chamberlain's "peace in our time". All contemporary estimates, bar the Government's, of the numbers of jobless over the coming years forecast enormous increases.

Indeed, when asked to justify his predictions on unemployment before a parliamentary committee, the Chancellor of the Exchequer found himself in the embarrassing situation of being unable to do so, even after consulting his advisers.

In a similar vein, the Prime Minister told the House of Commons that unemployment is "what happens" when there is a "world crisis". He might have added "of capitalism" and had he been a little less ingenuous he might have furthered the education of honourable members by informing them that unemployment is just as much a product of the form of society we live in, and which he represents, as motor cars and fish fingers.

The crisis is indeed beyond this or any other capitalist Government's control but it is certainly not an act of God, and it is certainly not uncontrollable. Moreover, there can be no separation between the world crisis and the crisis of capitalism in Britain. Each contributes to the other, each feeds on the other.

Yet if the Government can not itself be held solely responsible for the crisis and for unemployment, it has certainly done a great deal to

help it on its way. The continuing cuts in social welfare expenditure, accompanied by ritual incantations of the "you can't spend yourself rich" pattern, together with connivance at the industrial destruction of Britain, have all helped to multiply the effect.

Of all the conventional wisdoms, the most pernicious and nonsensical is the one to the effect that overmanning and underproduction are the basis of the failure of British industry to provide jobs. In fact, British workers work longer hours (including more overtime) and for less money than do their counterparts in the other EEC countries. Labour has never been more productive yet there are continuous exhortations to produce more and more with less and less, and economic and political discontent grow in proportion.

The simple truth is that under capitalism and the market system there is too much production; too many motor cars, too many television sets, too many ships, too many of just about everything including workers. The overworking of some becomes the cause of unemployment of others; the very quest for profits becomes a bar to profits and productivity.

This comes about because of the contradiction between finance and industry, between bank and factory, which is characteristic of advanced capitalist economics. Capital is invested in the most profitable areas of production.

High profits encourage more to enter a given sphere of

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Workers march through the streets of London in defence of the right to work

Failure of Middle East Peace Talks

COMMENTATORS could not agree upon the outcome of the Leeds Castle talks between the foreign ministers of Israel and Egypt, watched over by US Secretary of State, Vance. The 'peace progress' was to have started again according to the smiling Vance. However late editions of the daily papers in Cairo reversed their headlines from the progress made at the talks to their failure to achieve anything. Whatever must the people of Egypt be thinking!

The farcical thing about these talks is that the people most affected by their outcome do not get a mention, let alone a hearing. The Palestinians, say the Begin government, do not exist. Carter says they exist but they cannot be allowed to determine their future; only participate, maybe,

sometime in the future. Sadat says that the Palestinians exist and ought to have the right to self-determination, but for the time being he is going to talk to those who don't.

The people of Egypt and Israel who are also directly affected, are represented by their respective governments; the Egyptian Government, who recently introduced new oppressive laws making even the most feeble opposition an act tantamount to treason; and the Israeli Government, who consider territorial expansion as, literally, a God given right. As for the US, its only excuse for chairing and directing the talks is its imperialist interests and ambitions in the Middle East and the rest of the world.

Nowhere at any time has peace come through negotiat-

ions between those whose history is one of war, expansion, and oppression at home and abroad. The voice of peace which Sadat's visit to Begin's Israel intended to stifle for a long time, if not for ever, is not heard in these US sponsored talks. Outside, the voice of peace is gathering strength to the dismay of the warmongers. In Israel, where the Zionist idea of territorial expansion has had its hold for a long time, the biggest demonstration took place in Tel Aviv protesting against their Government's policies.

The Palestinian and other Arab people's call for a secular state, where Arab and Jew can live in peace and harmony as they did for thousands of years before, is a call for peace to which Begin, Sadat and Carter turn a deaf ear.

THE WEEK

THE PRICE of a loaf of bread went up from 8p to 26½p between 1967 and 1977, a gallon of petrol from 28p to 75½p, a quarterly season ticket from Woking to Waterloo from £23.80 to £99.60, say Lloyds Bank. In 1967 we were told that inflation was a thing of the past. We didn't believe that. Now we're told that inflation is the thing of the future. That we can't tolerate.

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AT A RALLY outside the White House Marlon Brando told the crowds: "I was astounded that the Secretary of State could go around the world, that the Vice-President and President of the US would have the nerve to talk about human rights, when we were the last nation to give up colonial control of our people." He was joined by Dick Gregory who condemned pollution and the economic priorities of the US Government.

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WHILST British Airways rejoices over its success in getting Government approval to re-equip its fleet of Tridents with Boeing 737s rather than the British-built BAC 111s, British Aerospace is telling workers that thousands of jobs are being saved due to the revival of the HS146 project. Apparently the go-ahead was given for the two deals because this makes it easier for the Government to keep its options open; either to collaborate further with the European or with the American manufacturers in dismantling and destroying the British Aerospace industry, whilst exploiting the remaining skills to the hilt.

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COMMENT ON police wages: If the Government are going to try to hold wages to 5 per cent, they had better pay the police a lot more money!

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To justify its anti-Albanian act and to hide the real reasons

The Spear of the Nation

ON July 18th, Nelson Mandela 'celebrated' his 60th birthday in a prison on Robben Island, a notorious South African punishment camp for those who resist or oppose its bloody, savage, racist minority rule.

A third of Mandela's life now has been lived behind bars; his speeches and writings have been banned and the organisation he led proscribed. His wife has been banished to Brandfort where she is kept entirely isolated.

As leader of the National

OAU in Khartoum demand stronger Zimbabwe policy

WHILE Muzorewa was in the United States obediently obeying the interests of the Smith regime in trying to get sanctions lifted, the Organisation of African Unity, meeting in Khartoum, demanded a strengthening of sanctions against a Zimbabwe ruled by a completely unrepresentative and racist government.

In the 100 days since the so-called 'internal settlement' was set up by Smith with the collusion of black renegades from the liberation movement, the guerrilla war waged by the

liberation forces has steadily mounted in intensity.

More than 1000 enemy soldiers of Smith's repressive army have been killed, ten jets and helicopters have been shot down and over 70 armoured vehicles and lorries have been destroyed.

In more than 270 attacks launched against the reactionary armed forces hundreds of enemy soldiers have been captured. Thousands of Zimbabwe patriots have been liberated from the racist regime's prisons and concentration camps.

Statement issued by the Albanian Telegraphic Agency says Chinese Government is false friend of Socialism

Tirana July 12 (ATA) The Albanian Telegraphic Agency is authorised to announce that on the 7th of July, 1978, through a Note handed over to the Embassy of the People's Socialist Republic of Albania in Peking, the Government of the People's Republic of China announced its decision to immediately sever all aids and payments of civil and military credit to Albania, to leave a number of very important projects incomplete and to withdraw all Chinese specialists working in Albania.

With this unilateral and arbitrary action, the Chinese Government takes a conscious and pre-meditated step to aggravate relations between the two countries, to damage the economy of socialist Albania and its defence potential. Its hostile action fills with profound indignation and anger all the Albanian people. This action will also be condemned by the fraternal Chinese people.

The people of the People's Socialist Republic of Albania have nurtured pure feelings of love and respect for the Chinese people. They have courageously defended the People's Republic of China in the most difficult moments which it was experiencing, and they have sincerely fought for a true and internationalist friendship between the two countries. But, by violating with big state arrogance, the agreements concluded officially between the two sides, knocking off every principle of Marxism-Leninism and proletarian internationalism, the Chinese Government and its leaders, consciously act to break and destroy this friendship. The severing of all aids and the withdrawal of the specialists from Albania also reveal the character of the granting of these aids.

To justify its anti-Albanian act and to hide the real reasons

which led it to undertake such a perfidious action, which will most certainly be condemned by the entire world public opinion. In its note, the Chinese Government presents invented arguments and accuses the Albanians of ingratitude. The Albanian Telegraphic Agency is informed that the Government of the People's Socialist Republic of Albania will reply at the proper time to the Chinese note and will acquaint world public opinion with documented facts so that the peoples can judge and become convinced that right lies on the side of Al-

bania.

The breaking off of the economic, civil and military aids by China for Albania and the withdrawal of the Chinese specialists from Albania emanate from the adoption by the People's Republic of China of a big power course, in its deviation from the scientific theory of Marxism-Leninism, in its rapprochement and collaboration with imperialist and reactionary forces in the world, in the renunciation of aid and support for the revolutionary and liberation forces in the international arena. The leadership of China

makes economic collaboration with our country conditional upon Albania's acceptance of and submission to this anti-Marxist policy. The Party of Labour of Albania and the Albanian Government have made efforts to solve the disagreements which existed between our two Parties on the Marxist-Leninist road, but the Communist Party of China and its leaders have refused such a road.

Actions like this, such as the severance of aid and the withdrawal of specialists and so on, which the Albanian people have experienced before with the Khrushchevites revisionists, cannot have any success in Albania. The pressure, blackmail, of no matter what shade, to bring our Party and people to their knees, have not had and will never have any success. They have been transformed into defeat for their authors. The pressure and blockades cannot suffocate the voice of socialist Albania, will never force the Albanian people to renounce their correct Marxist-Leninist stand, and will never lead them away from the struggle against imperialism and the revisionists of all shades.

Under the tested leadership of the Party of Labour of Albania with comrade Enver Hoxha at the head, the Albanian people, now accustomed to chauvinist and imperialist methods, which innumerable enemies have used against it, will face up to and overcome with success all obstacles, will win new victories constructing the complete socialist society with their own forces.

The Albanian people, under the leadership of their Party of Labour, will continue to fight on this course and they are convinced that they will always enjoy the support of all the freedom-loving peoples and of revolutionaries of the world.



Enver Hoxha and Chou En-lai in 1960 when Albania and China stood shoulder to shoulder against imperialism and revisionism.

HISTORIC NOTES Workers win the vote but 'equality' proves inadequate

In 1867, to the horror of many, workers "entered the pale of the constitution." Well some of them at least. There had been Reform Bills before - in 1852, 1854, 1860 and 1866 - but the first to be passed was passed hurriedly after workers for the first time showed their displeasure at being treated as second class citizens and joined mammoth demonstrations in Hyde Park.

Even so, only a small proportion of workers gained the vote and this concession was used to split them ("respectable artisans") from other sections of the class. This first major concession was followed in 1884, and 1918 when women over thirty were first given the vote. Universal suffrage did not fully arrive until 1928 - resisted by capitalism along every inch.

How then did workers use their first vote? They used it not to turn their back on trade union activity but to defend it. The results of the 1874 general election were a shock to British politics. The Tories - who had become a traditional 'silly' party, not taken seriously as a possible government - swept in, on the vote of the 'intelligent artisans'.

Natural conservatives? Nothing of the sort. The years from 1866 had been years of sustained legal attack on trade unions. The TUC of 1873 after much debate had passed a motion which decided "to organise the voting power of the working classes with a view to opposing vigorously and determinedly every candidate for parliament who does not pledge himself to vote for the abolition or alteration of any law affecting injuriously the character and freedom of Trade Unions, especially the Masters and Servants Act, The Criminal Law amendment Act, and the law of conspiracy as applied to trade societies, under which the gas strikers have been convicted."

The Liberals, the majority of whom were employers, refused any such pledge. But many landowning Tories did not - and by 1875 the trade union victory in law was decided. It is significant that a similar attack one hundred years later, the Industrial Relations Act, was defeated without any such recourse to parliament.

The TUC of 1875 did give a vote of thanks to the Tory Home

Secretary, but they were by no means enamoured with parliament, which was referred to as "that legislative chamber - more notorious for its massive golden bar, than its intellectual calibre." In this, they were, perhaps, ahead of their time.

The granting of the vote, moreover, was used by some unions to advance their aims. "If we have a right to vote in the administration, we have in consequence a right to a great deal more in other directions. We are no more masters and servants but equals, having the right, as those above us have, to regulate as we think proper, when we shall work, how long we shall work, and to put our own value upon what we sell." So argued the Scottish Typographical Society.

Twenty years later, the demand for independent labour representation within parliament began to grow - not because of any political strategy had been accepted by the mass of workers, but because the problems they faced, unemployment, sickness, poverty in old age, low wages etc. had not been solved in any way by the achievement of "political equality."

EDITORIAL

HOW does the capitalist world look from the Bonn Summit? The first thing to say is that all the proposals which came out of the meeting are negative in character, designed to prevent or slow down a continuing world economic decline. Measures were discussed for ending industrial stagnation, for reducing inflation, for cutting off excessive energy imports and for warding off protectionism. At last year's London Summit short-term growth targets were set up which were obviously not reached. At this Summit longer range aims were agreed with a minimum of precise goals, so that it will be a longer time before everybody realises that nothing at all was achieved. The Prime Minister of Japan put the nature of the Bonn agreement very nearly: "We agreed not to criticise each other's pledges".

A commentary on this Summit pledged to economic growth was given by Data Resources Inc., the biggest economic forecasting unit in the US. The prediction for the industrial countries was faltering to nil growth, continually increasing high unemployment and a severe exacerbation of trading problems.

Our Party has always stressed the absolute decline of capitalism as the context within which the British working class has to formulate its political strategy. This is not based on the predictions of market research institutes but on the contradictions in the capitalist system which can be seen working themselves out in ever more destructive forms — not simply periodic cycles of boom and slump but an overall and irreversible decline of the whole system.

One of the main contradictions Marx pointed out is that between the capacity for industrial development and the tendency toward a falling rate of profit in a competitive system. It is this tendency which has led to monopolisation in an effort to bolster up profits by price fixing and to the export of capital to countries where labour is cheaper and profits higher. But all this merely postponed the effects of the law of falling profitability, and there are no new unexploited lands for capitalism to expand into.

Capitalist destruction

We have reached a situation in the older capitalist countries in which it is more profitable to destroy than to grow or construct. Wheat is burnt before harvest and mountains of butter and beef are piled up to maintain prices and therefore profits. All this in a world where undernourishment and starvation are endemic. In Britain, the oldest capitalist country of all, the process has gone so far that we are seeing a self-destructive attack on the very productive base on which the whole economy ultimately rests.

The very measures taken by capitalist governments to deal with capitalism's contradictions are themselves contradictory. Massive unemployment and rigid wage-fixing are introduced to maintain a high rate of profit; but the destruction of skills this involves means that many profitable factories have to close down because of a shortage of skilled labour — with two million out of work. Profit derives ultimately from surplus value, the unpaid labour of workers on the job; but the very unemployment which drives down wages in the interest of profits also reduces the number of workers from whom surplus value can be extracted.

Left to itself there is only one direction in which these contradictions can lead capitalism — to fascism and war. Fascism tries to solve the problem for the capitalist class by destroying the workers' collective bargaining power and turning them back into slaves no longer allowed to sell their labour power at anything like its true value. War is not only an instrument to be used against trade rivals for the purpose of annexing sources of raw materials and cheap labour: it also kills off surplus workers in the homeland who in their unemployed millions might otherwise make trouble.

All these contradictions which have been mentioned are simply reflections of the main class contradiction which is the essence of capitalism, the contradiction between the capitalist class and the working class, between exploiters and exploited. Capitalism ends because any exploitative system generates class conflict which sooner or later destroys it. We have to make it sooner in order to pre-empt the degeneration into fascism and war by working class revolution and the establishment of the dictatorship of the proletariat.

Only from a socialist summit can the world once more begin to seem a hopeful and happy place for us and our children to inhabit.

The growth of employment agencies reflects poor level of organisation

THE RAPID growth of the employment agencies which send out temporary staff to firms is a measure of the weakness of trade union organisation in these areas. Agencies such as Alfred Marks and Brook Street Bureau feast upon the armies of unemployed, providing firms wishing to avoid the Employment Protection Act with temporary workers who have no job security whatsoever; neither do they receive sickness pay or pension provision.

There is no published pay structure that allows temporary workers to establish whether they

The desperate shortage of hospital beds makes for an 'Emergencies only' service

EVERY day between four and five o'clock in the afternoon the admissions offices in general hospitals up and down the country are busy assessing the 'bed state' — the number of empty beds — in preparation for the night and the following day.

A typical bed state reveals by four o'clock all the male medical beds are full, and a man has just been admitted to casualty with severe chest pains. He goes into the last Coronary Unit bed, and the other patients in the unit are assessed — could one of them come off the monitor if another coronary case was admitted during the night?

There are seven empty beds on the male surgical wards: they could be used for non-infectious medical admissions, although five of them are booked for admissions tomorrow, and two of them are marked three star, urgent, one a definite cancer case and one a suspected cancer. There are two female medical beds empty, and a side room which will have to be used if there's an infectious medical admission, male or female, overnight.

So the night staff start their shifts with fingers crossed. By

half past ten there are problems. The casualty department has been busy, and the medical and surgical registrars have had to admit three men on the surgical wards — there are only four male beds left now. Another hospital in the District is telephoned — can they cover for male medical tonight? Just for EBS admissions, they say, we'll keep open to ambulances as long as we can.

They are able to provide cover, so the Emergency Bed Service, which coordinates and refers to the appropriate hospital requests from GPs for their patients to be admitted to hospital, is telephoned: sorry, we'll have to close to male medical admissions until further notice. Yes, we've managed to get another hospital to cover us...

Meanwhile another ambulance draws up outside casualty, and tomorrow, when a man who has been on the waiting list for several months rings up to confirm that he can come in for treatment for a 'non-urgent' but painful condition we will have to tell him no bed is available.

If the situation gets worse the hospital may have to close to ambulances. And this is happen-

ing more and more frequently. On one day earlier this year more than a quarter of the 59 accident and emergency departments in London were restricting admissions or were actually closed. The strain increases for the ambulance service, who have to ferry patients to alternative hospitals, and the delay incurred in the longer journey may be crucial for the patient's survival.

While cuts mean not enough beds, they can also mean empty beds and not enough staff. At Northwick Park Hospital in London patients are having to wait as long as ten months for 'non-urgent' appointments with orthopaedic teams to cope with the workload, but due to restrictions on public spending there are only two teams. And orthopaedic surgery is one area where British developments lead the world, particularly in joint replacement surgery.

The thirtieth anniversary of the National Health Service must not be allowed to mark the beginning of a new service, 'Emergencies Only'. The strength of the working class which gave birth to the NHS must defend that achievement.

After successful annual conference college lecturerers make a good start in pursuit of grade merger claim

LAST week College Lecturers from the National Association of Teachers in Further and Higher Education (NATFHE) began to move into action over their interim claim for the merger of the two lowest teaching grades in Further Education, Lecturer I and Lecturer II.

This has been a bone of contention among lecturers for some time and has been union policy for over two years. However, for the first time, the NATFHE Conference in June this year decided to highlight and isolate this particular demand in the form of an interim claim in response to frustration from the membership, and in order to preserve unity in

the profession. Management representatives were left in no doubt of the feelings of NATFHE members on this issue as they entered the negotiations. They were met with an impressive array of banners and a leaflet which outlined the injustice of the present situation.

"It is largely a matter of chance whether people are Lecturer I or II. It is not related to levels of responsibility. It is not even related to the category of work done by individual teachers. What logic is there in having separate scales?"

Conference decisions and lobbying, however, should not be seen as the culmination but rather

as the beginning of the campaign. The National Executive has called for one day strikes in September and the membership should build on this lead, and on the lobby and intensify the fight in the coming academic year.

Members will have an opportunity to put forward new ideas for the struggle at the Special National Council Meeting in October when the whole campaign can be carried further. Given the right tactics, NATFHE can win this battle and make serious inroads into the Government's policy of lowering teachers' living standards and career prospects, as part of their attempt to destroy education.



While NATFHE met with management to discuss the union's claim to improve lecturers' pay and conditions, college lecturers turned out to demonstrate their willingness to act.

From bad to worse at British Steel When are we going to say 'No'?

OVER the last decade British Steel output has fallen by a quarter, from 17 million tonnes to 12 million and imports of steel have trebled from 1 to 3 million tonnes. As British-produced steel falls to some 55 per cent of the home market, capitalism's attack on our industry is spearheaded by the Nationalised industries. The aim is to incorporate our class and at the same time smash our organised capacity to resist.

Addressing the Iron and Steel Trades Conference at the end of June, Sir Charles Villiers said "Become competitive or either on the bough." Fine: let's have new plant and we'll see a new spring. But along comes Varley: "To continue with major expansion schemes in the face of increasing over-capacity due to low world demand would only increase corporation losses." So all over again we're to be the nineteenth century handloom weavers scrabbling to compete with the machine age by sheer sweat, are we? What a prospect.

Along with the loss of £443m., league tables of profitable plants (manipulated where necessary) are announced. It's the same tactic as with coal: to soften up prior to closure. They trump up delays, and cancel or stall new investment. At Port Talbot there was a lockout at the employers' convenience at the time of the '77 electricians' strike - now we're expected to cheer as £835m. worth of vital

new plant is shelved and in its place we get £80m. barely to keep ticking over. EEC manning standards were accepted as a component part of the current pay deal: as output stagnates, we are tied to redundancy - if we accept that too.

East Moors (Cardiff) - take the money and run; Ebbw Vale - same story. Shelton (Stoke on Trent) - same story but some voices raised. Bilston ... response? The ISTC threatens to raise one fist: telephone wires buzz - and behold, capitalism withdraws: a victory, for the moment. We have a six-month "cooling-off" period for consultation".

Participation - No!

This is the Achilles heel of our response. There have been forms of worker participation in the BSC since nationalisation. Both were welcomed largely from wishful thinking, to gain a peaceful inroad into capitalism - and from the first, both have been a miserable bastardisation of the militancy that made the best of the syndicalists of the '20s great class warriors. As each form of participation has been discredited in the eyes of the workers it was designed to enslave, a New Version has been put forward.

Just so today. Call a works council a "committee" - but make it "consultative only" and ensure

that it has no power to commit, besides three more tiers, if all that fails to dampen initiative! How much wool will cover all our eyes all the time?

At the 1977 Conference at Windermere a document was in discussion behind closed doors, with the aim "to get workers involved in large-scale structural changes needed over the next decade" especially to create an atmosphere to facilitate resolving "problems involving hard options". New consultative bodies are to get rid of that feeling that decisions are made behind closed doors!

When the closure means the death of a community and more closures mean the death of the working class, what price participation?

For the right to be heard in the formulation of these plans within budgets pre-set by international capitalism, trade unions are to hand over all autonomy - "binding on all". That is the unity of the trade-union movement, unanimity of a kind - but on the employers' terms. Whether such decisions involve consultation or not, and whether or not we have time to cool off, the result is the same. And it is unacceptable. We'll have none of it.

We say "No!" to capital's planned destruction of British Steel. Make Bilston the start of our fight - stop every closure. Every scrap of independent resistance builds the fight for socialism.

Oxon teachers against league tables

OXFORDSHIRE County Council's plans to publish a league table of exam results have provoked a concerted opposition from teachers in the county. All the teaching unions and associations, including the Secondary Heads Association, have surprised the council by the unanimity of their opposition and their readiness to refuse to furnish their schools' examination results for the purpose of published comparison.

They all recognise a part of the Council's intention, which is to set in motion a trend of selection to undermine the comprehensive system of education, but the main significance of the Council's move can only be properly understood in the context of falling rolls. As secondary rolls decline it will be the council's intention to consolidate the damaging cuts in educational provision it has already made by closing down one or more secondary schools.

How much more convenient for them will it be if it appears as if their decision is made for them by certain schools selecting themselves on the

basis of apparently low standards. Indeed such intentions have already been expressed clearly by one of the councillors who initiated the idea of a league table. He opposed the allocation of a sum of money to an Oxford school for the purpose of building much needed laboratory accommodation on the grounds

that the examination performance of the school hardly justified such expenditure.

Teachers must have clarity about this. To refuse to co-operate with the Council's scheme is good, but the only really successful action will be to show the same degree of unity and determination in opposing all school closures.

Youth programme gives opportunities to capitalism

WHOSE interests are best served by the Youth Opportunities Programme under the wing of the Manpower Services Commission?

Small businesses in Oxfordshire are in no doubt about their survival. About 215 young people in Oxfordshire have been taken out of the dole queue for six-month periods of "work experience" on allowances of £19.50 each from the government. Because the scheme does not cost them a penny, employers have been nat-

urally eager to take on as many as possible.

It has recently come to light that some firms have been taking on as many as three school leavers for work experience when they only needed one.

The Government itself has no doubts that political capital may be gained from the scheme.

For the little extra cost in handing out allowances rather than the dole, it is able both to pretend that it is seriously concerned about youth unemployment and at the same time use official statistics to make it appear as if the level of unemployment is not as bad as it really is.

No one should be in any doubt about the nature of the Youth Opportunities Programme. It offers no opportunity to youth: after six months of second-class employment, they are back where they started. It does nothing to create jobs. Indeed, if employers are able to take on young workers without paying a penny, they are not going to go head over heels to create proper jobs with proper conditions and pay.

London Civil Servants against dispersal

LAST Thursday hundreds of civil servants demonstrated outside the Ministry of Defence against plans to disperse 5000 jobs to Glasgow. If the plans are proceeded with, the CPSA and SCPS, the civil service unions involved, intend to take action to stop wages being paid to the armed forces.

The attempt to move the jobs is the latest move in a long term plan to disperse government departments to other parts of the country. Originally described as a policy to decentralise departments away from London and to provide jobs in regions of declining industry there seemed to be some justification to it where efficiency of departments was not impaired and if civil servants were willing to move. However, in an era of massive unemployment it has become a perverse weapon in the hands of the government to apply a facelift to the jobless figures of the ugly unemployment blackspots producing in its wake new pockets of unemployment and new declining areas, such as parts of London. In the case of the Ministry of Defence, jobs would be taken from parts of southern and western England as well as from London, to be centralized in Glasgow - a centralization for its own sake, which would bring no gain in efficiency as well as

disrupting workers' lives.

More senseless still is the recently announced proposal to move the Health and Safety Executive (Factory Inspectorate) presently based at three sites in North London, Sheffield and Buxton to Bootle on Merseyside. Their laboratories which carry out research and provide back-up facilities to factory inspectors in the field require centralized facilities in London in order to maintain contact with other bodies and to have easy access to industry throughout the country. This threat to the efficiency of the service is compounded by perpetration of the deceit that the move will bring jobs to Merseyside. In fact most of the posts involved are of a specialist nature, which can only be filled on a national scale and only a small number of clerical jobs will be filled from Merseyside itself. The civil servants of the Ministry of Defence have taken the correct step in asserting the right to work where they live and should not be deterred from their struggle by the seeming inevitability of such moves. We should play no part in the Government's cosmetic schemes to make unemployment more acceptable by shuffling workers around the country.

Conference resolutions

Furniture and Allied London Association Trades meeting of Housing Estates

THE Fourth Biennial Conference of the Furniture, Timber and Allied Trades Union (FTAT) carried unanimously the following resolution:

"This Conference reaffirms the decision of the 1976 Conference which opposed the continuation of wage restraint in any form and affirmed its belief in free collective bargaining. Conference deplores the intervention of the Government in the form of threats of sanctions in recent negotiations which led to a reduction of wage levels that had been agreed with the Employers' Representatives. We applaud the stand taken by our union delegation at the British TUC 1976 and 1977, and fully endorse the actions undertaken by them. Conference calls upon the TUC to undertake an active campaign against any further interference by Government Departments to prevent Trade Unions from exercising their right of free collective bargaining."

"This Annual Conference notes with alarm the growing level of racism on housing estates and reaffirms its stand on fighting for a better life for all tenants on estates. This Conference calls upon the National Committee of the National Tenants Organisation to mount a campaign in the immediate future on estates, to illustrate the problems facing the tenants movement in this country, such as falling standards of repairs and maintenance due to falling budgets and cuts in public expenditure, and to campaign against the racist scapegoating of any tenant living on council estates. Racism will only split our ranks and act as counter-productive to a united tenants movement."

The resolution was passed overwhelmingly by the 200 or so tenant organisations present.

Bookshops

Bellman Bookshop, 155 Fortress Road, London NW5

Main Trend Books, 17 Midland Road, St. Philips, Bristol

Brighton Workers Bookshop, 37 Gloucester Road, Brighton

Northern Star Bookshop, 18A Leighton Street, Leeds

Basildon bookstall Tues Fri Sat Marketplace

Liverpool bookstall every Saturday at Paddies

Market, Great Homer Street, Liverpool

Hull Bookstall - Old Town Market, Saturdays 9.30-4.00

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