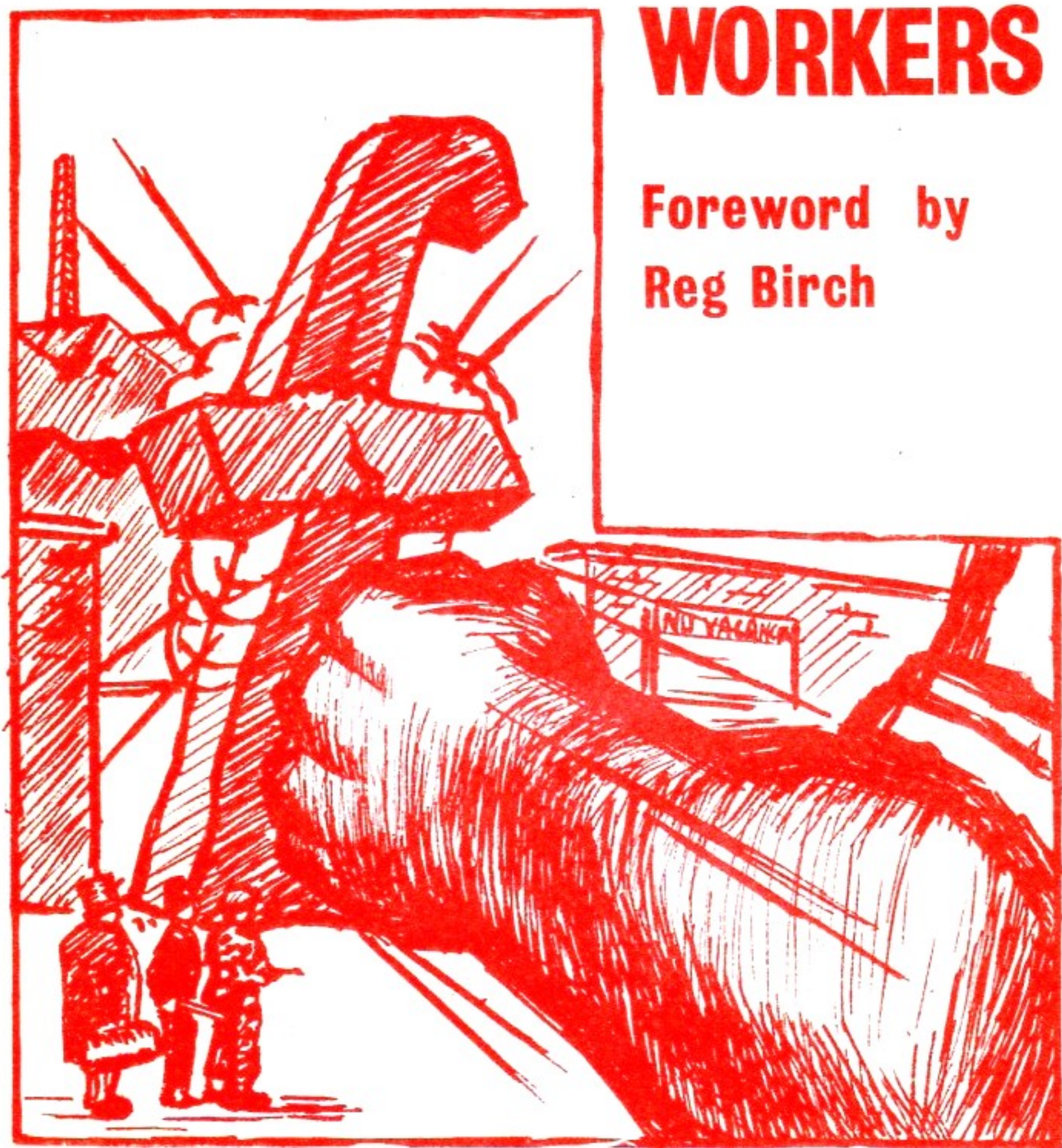


# UNEMPLOYMENT

## WAR AGAINST THE

## WORKERS

Foreword by  
Reg Birch



Publication of the  
COMMUNIST PARTY OF BRITAIN (MARXIST-LENINIST)

5p



## P R E F A C E

"The only war we wish to prepare for is civil war".

But in that kind of war if the capitalist class has not truly reached the point of exhaustion, if the great majority of the proletariat is not prepared for armed uprising, if for them the time to begin the war has not arrived, it is the duty of the party of the working class to use and involve all forms of struggle, the task of working in the unions, the duty of engaging in economic and political strikes with all workers, the need for a long period of education of us all, party and working class as a whole, gathering strength, preparing for the final overthrow of capitalism.

This pamphlet, "Unemployment, War Against the Worker", is part explanation of the civil war against the working class by capitalism, for if revolution connotes violence (and it does) it is proper to note the counter-revolutionary violence of capitalism which is very violent indeed.

Unemployment is a violence committed by capitalism against the working class. It brings, as we all know, economic distress, malnutrition, family disruption, separation, starvation and above all demoralisation. It is one of the many forms of "civil" violence practised and permitted and endemic to capitalism. In Ireland we see it in its most exposed form, contrived economic pressure on a colony, artificial division North and South, and in each area divide, rule and now war economic, political and military armed struggle.

In its present quandary capitalism is creating a new section of the army of unemployed. Not only the traditional complement, the manual worker, the tradesman, the casual worker, but thousands and thousands of white collar, technicians, students and school leavers swell the army. These must never be disunited from those employed nor yet within themselves.

The Engineering Employers Federation has, it appears, come to learn that we cannot be divided.

"It has now become clear that, given the present circumstances, there is probably no socially, politically, and economically acceptable level of unemployment that will in itself bring wage inflation under control." This statement, taken from their reply to the wage claim, shows that they have learned that wage demands follow inflation not the reverse, that unemployment, whether deliberately contrived or the kind endemic to capitalism, will not contain workers' struggle.

Of course capitalism produces unemployment. Of course the only answer to unemployment is employment. Of course security and full employment are not possible under capitalism. Of course the answer is destroy capitalism and build socialism. Of course this is only possible with revolution, and the fight for the right to work is a necessary stage - part of education toward that end. In interim we must not run away, make "left" noises, call for ultimate actions without joining in this the contemporary battle.

Nor should workers be diverted by such false slogans as 'Workers control' - under capitalism no doubt, meaning also control of unemployment by effecting dismissals, or "work or maintenance". No, the fight immediate is for no dismissals, no redundancy, no 'natural wastage', against closure and for the right to work.

Everywhere we must oppose unemployment, speed-up, extension of hours by overtime, so-called rationalisation, and mergers which mean closures.

The feature already dominating the scene of this struggle where workers take a class position and make their decision 'Occupation' is correct.

The struggle will take all forms and must be encouraged everywhere, but always no sackings - Right to Work, let it ebb and flow and we shall learn.

The fight for employment is the fight for dignity without which we cannot advance to higher forms of struggle, and implicit in this arena of struggle must come and will be learned the lesson there is no end save the end of capitalism.

The crisis and contradictions of capitalism here in Britain today set the scene for universal struggle for our class: join the battle and accelerate the development to higher forms of political struggle.

When the employers say "... given the present circumstances", they are wishful to change those circumstances, to produce demoralisation within our ranks as a preliminary for fascist measures. Be prepared, for the contrary must and will be the case. Such areas of struggle are a great teacher, the uniter, from which shall grow a stronger working class, a stronger revolutionary party, our party.

Everywhere there is much to do, much to learn, and much to gain for the working class, the revolutionary force. We must be immersed in the people, of the people, in their struggle.

February, 1972

Reg Birch

## UNEMPLOYMENT – WAR AGAINST THE WORKERS

For the past 25 years it has been regarded as something like blasphemy to talk of the possible return to the conditions of the thirties, with over two million unemployed and all the poverty and misery involved for the unemployed workers and their families.

Economists and politicians of all sorts have with their talk of workers and employer co-operation in expanding the economy sought to engender the notion that capitalism can continue to expand economically without fear of a return to mass unemployment. They have argued that it is economically unlikely and socially unacceptable. "The workers will never stand for a return to the thirties", "this generation will never put up with what their fathers put up with" are common enough expression of workers' readiness to fight against unemployment but with a million unemployed it has become urgently necessary to consider how this present position has come about and how we translate intention to defeat unemployment into reality.

### EMPLOYERS' TACTICS

The notion that full employment, or as it has often been described "over-full employment" is here to stay has been deliberately engendered by those who have vested interests in disarming workers.

Workers have been persuaded that it is not loss of jobs they need to fear, that job security depended on increased productivity, and that through higher productivity ever higher standards of living would be achieved. The fact of unemployment figures being at times more than equated with registered job vacancies has had a disarming effect, many workers getting involved in productivity deals which, notwithstanding the no-redundancy clause, have had the effect of reducing jobs available. The 'natural wastage' arrangement simply means that when a man vacates the job for whatever reason that job is not filled. The same work or more is performed by fewer and fewer hands.

Many and varied have been the ways used by employers to get more work with less labour summed up in the term "productivity deal". The sale of the tea breaks is a typical confidence trick and it was effected largely during the period of the Labour Government wage freeze. It meant ideally the condition set down by the government that wage rise must be matched by productivity rise. The breaks, being

sold at a fixed permanent price, appreciate in value as wage rates go up. So the employer gets currently two hours more work per head per week, not at the current rate of pay but at the rate applying years ago.

In this period employers and their political and economist associates were to a considerable extent able to persuade workers that defensive measures aimed at preserving conditions and jobs were old fashioned and no longer necessary. These "restrictive practices" as employers termed them were a relic of the days of insecurity, were "backward looking" and no longer relevant to modern times.

Every "restrictive practice" ever devised was based on workers' experience. Knowing what to expect from the employer they organised and devised defensive measures. Piece workers agreed among themselves on a limit of piece work earnings. Controls on overtime were to ensure that some men could not work excessive hours while others were deprived of work. Tradesmen agreed lines of demarcation, each to do his own work and not that of another trade. A fitter would have a mate. All these and many more practices to protect the craft and the job have been assailed as no longer necessary. There is no industry that has not in some way over recent years been the subject of some form of productivity bargaining. There is no industry that in the same period did not produce its quota of redundancies resulting in the present high level of unemployment.

At least 300,000 redundancies were declared in 1971. These were not confined to particular industries or areas. Heavy engineering and office workers, machine tool makers and clothing workers, electric battery makers, foundrymen and workers in the computer, aircraft, electronic and shipbuilding and ship repairing industries - the list grows from month to month. All this has brought unemployment to the highest post war figure.

The growth of unemployment is not confined either to what have been termed special areas. In these special areas, Northern Ireland, Scotland, the North East and Wales the situation has grown worse. 10% of the working population are out of work in Northern Ireland and in Derry 20%. It used to be argued that many of the registered unemployed were not really unemployed but in transition between jobs. The level of unfilled vacancies was used to support this sunshine story. But now unfilled vacancies have diminished to such an extent as to have no relevance to the argument. In any case it never was much consolation to a Tyneside plater to know that there were several unfilled vacancies in London for pickle bottlers and biscuit packers, comforting as this was

to economists and statisticians.

It is a truism that unemployment breeds unemployment; given a high level it is more likely to get worse than to get better. It can be stated simply. The unemployed have less to spend than when they were drawing wages. Those who are working produce goods for spenders to buy, that is the market. If there is less money in the market because the dole has taken the place of the wage then less goods are bought and less will be produced, less workers required, more sacked and the market shrinks in terms of spending power still further. The puny efforts of the Tory Chancellor with his modest degree of reflation can have no effect. When making the tax cuts, ostensibly to make more money available to expand the market, he gave little away and most of that to the wealthy who did not need it anyway.

#### LABOUR AND TORY PARTNERS IN CRIME

We know that unemployment tends to gain momentum, but who gave it the first push? It is most important to examine this aspect when so-called militants entreat you to lobby your M. P. The Labour M. P. s adopted unemployment as an instrument of Labour Government policy. Their economic advisers proclaimed that a certain level of unemployment was essential. According to this "theory" all kinds of good and economically beneficial things would happen if we achieved a level of unemployment variously put around the half million mark, and positive steps were taken by the Wilson government to bring this about.

Firstly, to overcome the resistance that had grown to the idea of unemployment and the refusal of so many major Unions to enter into redundancy agreements with the employers, they enacted the Redundancy Payments Act. This has played a major part in the acceptance by workers of the sack. It is understandable. Many workers could instance the fact that they were able to pick up a few hundred pounds and get another job without much difficulty. The government for its part was arguing that the redundancy payments facilitated the movement of workers from the economically unessential jobs to those jobs involving the export industry. In fact this was pure conjecture on their part. The real purpose was expressed in their own term. It was a "shake out", out of the factories onto the Labour Exchanges. The real purpose being of course to instill discipline into the workers and restrain wage demands. The employers made no bones about it even if their political hacks dressed it up. The "theory" goes some-

thing like this. With wages kept down profits would go up. These profits would provide more capital to invest in industry at the same time as inflation was brought under control; economic growth would result making us more competitive in foreign markets and prosperity for all. Except the unemployed of course. So apart from the fact that the capitalist system will produce unemployment in any case the Labour government took positive steps to speed up the process. They lay claim to be the champions now of the right to work. Their record belies this.

The present Tory government has not been slow to fasten the responsibility for the rise in unemployment on policies of the last Labour government, just as the last Labour government after promising economic miracles explained their inability to deliver the goods on "thirteen years of Tory misrule". The simple explanation for high unemployment according to Barber is wage inflation inherited from the Labour governments inability to control the Unions. This serves to excuse themselves for the plight of the economy and to justify anti-Trade Union law at one go.

## THE TRUTH ABOUT INFLATION

Since so much is being made of inflation as a cause of our ills and inflation is laid at the door of the workers it is worth considering some aspects of inflation. The economists, Labour and Tory, seek to persuade that this is brought about by workers getting higher wages without higher production causing prices to rise to balance out the higher wages. The higher wages, so the argument goes, force up industrial costs and the goods become increasingly uncompetitive, markets are lost and with them jobs and that is what unemployment is all about. This is as false as it is facile.

Firstly wages were not the factor which exerted pressure on prices to rise. The most spectacular price rises long before the so called inflationary wage movement began in the sixties were deliberately engineered by the Labour government. This is a simple fact which all should remember.

The 15% Imports Surcharge was a measure introduced by the Labour government ostensibly to reduce imports and help to redress the adverse balance of payments inherited from the Tories. As such it had little effect. What it certainly did achieve however was an immediate rise in all prices. The Tories promised to reduce prices



"at a stroke of the pen" and of course they have not. Increasing prices with the stroke of a pen is much simpler and this is what the surcharge did. All who sold goods containing any element, however small, of imported materials were permitted and encouraged to pass on the surcharge to the consumer. They needed no encouragement. In a matter of a week after the imposition of the surcharge 15% was whacked on prices of all goods related to import even though the goods in question were in this country and even in the shops in many cases long before the surcharge took effect. In any case there could never be any justification for a 15% increase in the retail prices as retail prices cover not only the material or article in question but also packaging, transport, advertising costs, profit, etc., none of which were subject to surcharge. Those whose goods contained no element of imported matter at all were not to be left out of this scramble for bunces so all prices went up. The economists saw no infamy in any of this. It was only when the workers took action to recover in the only way they know how that which had been stolen from their wage packets that the economists and politicians saw infamy.

The Selective Employment Tax was imposed on employers by the Labour government to bring about a reduction in the employment of non-productive workers so that these workers would then be obliged to seek, after being sacked, employment in productive industry and so boost production especially for exports. Another measure to deal with the imbalance of payments. All those subject to the tax however were encouraged to recover the cost by passing it on to the consumer. As with the 15% Imports Surcharge they needed no encouragement. The effects of this tax were vicious but also ludicrous. Many employers chose to reduce their non-productive labour to avoid paying the tax. To say that this displaced labour went naturally into productive work is absurd. Some were thrown on the dole. Some went into government training centres to be trained as drillers, turners, capstan operators etc. ; in the event they have become unemployed drillers, turners, capstan operators instead of unemployed hairdressers, waiters, shop assistants etc. It has been said sometime that the advantage of learning a trade is that when you are out of work you at least know what kind of work you are out of. Such was the effect, or one of the effects of this economic master plan. But it had other effects not the least being another boost to retail prices. Those paying the tax certainly passed it on. But with a vengeance. They not only recovered the tax from the consumer but made a handsome

profit from the exercise. Of course this was just plain good business practice in a competitive free enterprise society. It was when the workers who were soaked belatedly sought to recover that which had been stolen from them that the cry went up for controls on the Unions and shop stewards. The robbers determined to hang on to their loot naturally seek to hamper those who determine otherwise.

All of this must be borne in mind when politicians and economists rail against wage inflation. Wage movements have followed in the wake of the raids upon the wage packets. They have never preceded them. Whatever the effect of inflation on employment that is not the responsibility of workers. Neither will workers accept the consequences.

Putting the responsibility for the return to mass unemployment where it belongs, not on the workers who are exploited for profit, but on the capitalist system which exploits alike all workers, does not of itself solve the problem. But certain it is that for so long as workers are taken in by the parliamentary game, give credence to pre-election promises and post election alibis and excuses we shall never begin to find the solution. It is necessary therefore to seriously examine the facts of how unemployment arises instead of being led up the garden by politicians' double talk.

## THE NATURE OF CAPITALISM

Capitalism has only one function and that is to employ and exploit workers for profit. It is not particular about what it turns out in the way of merchandise, computers, aircraft, motors, fuel, ships or candyfloss, in fact many large financial enterprises have capital invested in a widely different range of goods; the common denominator is profit. Here lies the great contradiction. It would appear that if exploitation of labour is the source of its profits it cannot countenance labour not being exploited (unemployed) - but it does.

To exact the greatest amount of profit from workers more and more is the worker made the appendage of the machine and the machines become more costly as the employers vie with each other and their foreign counterparts for a greater share of the markets which depends on production costs being competitive. Thus the term technology has become synonymous with progress, something to be almost worshipped and to hold it in question regarded as latter day Luddism.

Technology is in fact the creation of the working class. It derives from the skill and the labour of workers whether they be employed in toolroom, drawing office, laboratory, model shops, experimental departments, production lines or classrooms. But the employing class owns it and appropriates the benefits for itself. The manner in which this technology is used in the form of ever more sophisticated machines and plant, the competition to be ahead in the never ending struggle for markets and hence profit has led to what goes along with increased technology, the growth of giant companies brought about by takeovers and mergers which concentrate capital in fewer hands and put more and more machinery behind fewer and fewer workers.

With the ever increasing cost of mechanised production goes a twin problem for the capitalist, that of more rapid obsolescence. Whereas in the 1940's capital equipment depreciated in 25 years, in the 1950's it was 15 years and in the 1960's 5 years. It follows that where capital equipment is more costly and will become obsolete in about 5 years its intensive use becomes all the more urgent for the capitalist. In other words he doesn't want it standing unused for two thirds of the day five days a week.

Full utilisation of capital equipment, whether that be machines, production lines or continuous process plant is therefore the order of the day. This takes various forms but all impose an increasing strain on the workers and disruption of domestic life.

It is not only full use of plant but full use of labour time. The workers' jobs have consequently become more arduous and less interesting as they are driven to keep pace with the machine or the process of production. It is no wonder that the employers prefer younger workers as in some industries workers are more or less burnt out in much less than twenty years. Lest this appear somewhat of an exaggeration let it be noted that where the labour process is most advanced sickness among workers is most prevalent. The "great" U.S.A. has had for many years a greater incidence of ulcers among industrial workers than in any other industrial nation. In the big factories of the U.S. old men are a rarity. This is becoming rapidly true also of most other advanced industrial nations including Britain. Full utilisation also involves a further burden upon the workers - stagger patterns of work and various shift work arrangements giving seven day, 24 hour cover.

When the term "automation" was coined the social theorists of the capitalist system pontificated about the problems confronting the workers in the greater use of leisure time. In fact the problem is of

quite a different order. The fullest use of working time particularly in terms of shift work can be seen in a single example, that contained in a report of the effects of shift work as it affected German workers. It revealed that the ulcer rate among rotating shift workers was eight times as high as that of the fixed shift workers. Many other damaging effects were revealed, not the least concerning the domestic relations of shift workers.

## PRODUCTIVITY DEALS

To secure not only the full utilisation of plant but the most productive use of the working hours a new term was coined. Productivity. There is a difference between production and productivity. Broadly speaking production is a question of quantity. That can be achieved by longer hours of work. Productivity is a horse of a different colour. It means more production in the same or less hours with less workers. Hence the productivity deal.

It can be argued, quite sensibly of course, that there is nothing intrinsically wrong with a productivity deal inasmuch as any worker taking a job for a wage enters into a productivity deal, since the employer is not going to pay him for nothing. But the productivity deal as we have come to know it since the famous (or infamous) Fawley Plan has certain significance worth analysing. It is worth refreshing our minds about this plan.

Fawley is the Esso oil refinery in the Southampton area. The deal which was hailed by employers, the politicians, Labour and Tory, the Trade Union hierarchy and the press as the big advance in worker/employer relationship had at its centre one of the biggest wage advances of our time. An increase of some 40%. Every employer was quick to get on the band wagon, but of course at a cut price. The surrender of long cherished trade union customs as part of the deal was battered on left, right and centre. The fact had been established at Fawley that these were negotiable, whereas they had hitherto been regarded as sacrosanct. Craftsmen working together when necessary instead of each with a mate. Lines of demarkation dropped and craftsmen doing such part of each others work as they were capable of doing with consequent cutting of time lags where one trade handed over part of the job to the appropriate trade. Flexibility was the watchword and that is what the employers paid for. Increased productivity for increased pay. The economists who had preached the

bigger cake story held this up as the aim for all workers. Just as well the workers did not fall over themselves to follow suit. In the industry concerned shortly after the conclusion of the Fawley plan it was shown in surveys that the workers concerned at Fawleys were sixth down the table of earnings in their geographical area. In the Oil and Chemical industry they are at the present day at the bottom.

In the early days of productivity dealing which took many forms, from the sell-the-lot deal at Fawley to the limited deal involving the sale of tea breaks and washing time the workers' suspicions, later to be fully vindicated, insisted on a clause in such agreements stipulating that there would be no redundancy as a consequence of the deal. This was later modified to "no redundancy except by natural wastage" and later - full circle - redundancy as a condition of the deal. The Labour government assisted this development (much as they protest today as the self-appointed champions of the right to work) by means of their Redundancy Payments Act. In fact many employers, determined to get acceptance of a productivity deal involving the certainty of redundancy, offered far more redundancy pay than the Act demanded, with domestic redundancy payment agreements.

The overall effect of productivity deals can be seen in part by the following figures. Between 1963 and 1970 output in productive industry rose by 24%, output per worker by 31% and the national labour force dropped by 5%. All this to the delight of the "bigger cake" merchants. But what has happened to the displaced workers? The theory was that they would be absorbed into productive industry to their own advantage and to the advantage of all. So how do we come to have a million unemployed? To have said 5 years ago "if you work hard enough you will work yourself out of a job" was to be regarded as a social, political and economic backwoodsman. Who but the employers and their Parliamentary pimps would make that charge today? The whiz kids of T. U. C. along with the Labour Party were vocal in praising the benefits of productivity deals before the unemployment figures went past the half million mark.

The situation that has developed is not without its problems for the employers as well. It is true that the volume of profit is still very high. What concerns the capitalist however is profit expressed as a proportion of capital invested - that is, rate of profit, which is falling. To sustain profits more capital has to be put in, with the knowledge that it will return a lower yield. This is no surprise to Marxists as Karl Marx had this worked out more than a hundred years ago. Marx's

friend and collaborator Frederick Engels, in his book "Socialism - Utopian and Scientific", expressed this in the following terms:-

"Thus it comes about that the overwork of some becomes the preliminary condition for the idleness of others and that modern industry, which hunts after new customers over the whole world, forces the consumption of the masses at home down to a starvation minimum and in doing so destroys its own home market".

Therefore the Tory Government's "reflationary budget" of 1971, upon the results of which we are expected to wait with bated breath. The release of more spending power by tax reliefs, reduction of hire purchase restrictions etc. , is supposed to enable a reduced working population to take up the increased products of industry. But it won't work. Simply put it amounts to this. Industry will not work without profits. Profits come from the exploitation of workers. But they are increasingly doing without workers.

In other words the capitalists are killing the geese that lay the golden eggs. The question arises, are we prepared to go on being geese? If we follow the advice of the Tories we will wait and see what effect entry into the Common Market will have on our situation. We would have to wait because the most ardent marketeer doesn't know. But that does not stop the pro-marketeers holding out glittering prospects in a market as big as North America. But this is pure speculation based on no tangible evidence whatsoever. There is at least as much likelihood of markets being lost as gained since the dropping of tariff barriers must obviously cut both ways. Facts of economics apart, past promises and forecasts of capitalist politicians are an infallible guide to form. They have with unerring consistency always been wrong.

## NO EASY WAY OUT

The Labour Party and the phoney "left" have the solution summed up in two words: "Heath out". That simply means that we bring back the very people who did most to start the rot to stop it. It would be worse. The last Labour Government without an Industrial Relations Act was bad enough as evidenced by the fact that there were more industrial actions during their term than before or since. They can be trusted on all their past form to make the fullest use of their inheri-

tance from the Tories just as the Tories have been quick to exploit every anti-working class action of the Labour Government and build upon it. Every attack on the working class, whether it be the children's milk or health charges of all kinds, were instituted by Labour governments. Tories never miss an opportunity whenever under attack by Labour spokesmen to remind them that they are only continuing practices first instituted by the Labour governments. No, "Heath out" holds no future for the workers. Heath, or what he represents, has been put out more than once before only to get back again not because the working class loves the Tories but simply because they could stomach no more of Labour. The mass abstention vote at the last general election told its own story. It was the most truly progressive vote ever recorded in British politics in that it faced the reality, that there is no basic difference between the two parties. Those who expected better of a Labour government based on a Labour Party kept and financed almost entirely by the workers' Trade Unions were sadly disillusioned. Loyalty was never the strong suit of social democrats. Ramsay MacDonald was not unique. He was typical.

The 'Communist' Party of King Street calls for "a Labour government pledged to socialist policies". They are so divorced from the working class that they are apparently unaware of what every worker knows as a fact of life, that a politician's promise is worth less than a three pound note. Little attention need be given revisionist 'Communist' Party hogwash about "Left" Labour government except to note a few simple facts.

A Labour Party may take "Left" conference decisions but **they** are and never were or will be binding on any government. But even conference decisions have a very flimsy basis. When conference resolutions were passed by the block votes of right wing Trade Union leaders the right wing hailed this as the acme of democracy and the left wing denounced it as right wing dictatorship. When the reverse occurs, not due to any mass movement of the workers, but to the accession to office of a "left" official replacing in his union a "right", then the respective contenders reverse their previous attitudes to conference resolutions. But either way these resolutions are printed in a report and then put away to gather dust. They have certainly never carried any weight with those who ultimately take the decisions, but the pantomime goes on. Children enjoy pantomimes but are not taken in by them. It would be an affront to the younger generation to label the revisionists as infantile.

Parliament is an instrument of capitalist class rule. This holds true regardless of the incumbent in Downing Street. To say otherwise is a denial of all historical fact. Whichever party is set to treat the ill they use the same medicine, only varying to some degree the manner of administering it. Were their motives of the highest, and they are not, it would make no difference. The revisionists are simply crying to the Labour Party to take them in from the cold, to give them a few seats in parliament. At the last election their votes dropped more than that of any other party and they lost their deposit in every contest. They have no faith in the working class to solve their own problems. They seek therefore to be permitted by Labour to climb on their band wagon wherever it's headed.

Among all the crackpot solutions for growing unemployment that of the Trotskyites and Labour "Lefts" expressed in the cry for more and more nationalisation is surely the most ludicrous. There is not a nationalised industry that has not chipped in more than its share of unemployment, or is not planning to do so. The nationalised coal industry for example. Between 1956 and 1968 average manpower fell from 700,000 to 350,000. Output per shift went up from 25 cwts. per man to 42 cwts. The nationalised Electricity Generation and Supply industry began plans in 1966 through an agreement involving employee co-operation, mobility and work study aimed at reducing the labour force in the industry by 50%. Despite the serious growth of unemployment which has occurred since 1967 this plan is still being pushed ahead with its aims almost completed. The Gas industry, Steel and the Post Office and especially the Railways, all play the productivity game with the same result as in private industry, the sack.

#### THE WAY FORWARD

With the introduction of the Redundancy Payments Act at a time when alternative jobs were not too difficult to find, except in the special areas of persistent unemployment, workers tended to go for the soft option. But a change is taking place, resistance to the sack is mounting. The first level of resistance develops around demands for no redundancies, a ban on overtime and a shorter working week. This is an important first step but not in itself sufficient to stop redundancy in most cases. Even so it is more positive of result than lobbying M. P. 's. The importance of the first steps is in the promoting of unity among the workers in action, a unity that is build up and strengthened as the em-



ployer seeks to divide and axe one section as a preliminary to axing the next. In this struggle the common slogan around which united action develops is the right to work. It is fundamental to our class interests and carries over the struggle to the offensive and on to a higher level. It exposes the system which give rise to it and has revolutionary overtones. It is our slogan and we must not be diverted from it by the sight of those who helped the employers to promote unemployment as an article of policy proclaiming the right to work as though it was their own discovery.

The struggle for the right to work has reached an important new stage in Scotland with U. C. S. and Plessey's, Alexandria. Here the workers see the right to work as the right to take over. U. C. S. is important as marking a turning point in the struggle for the right to work. Never mind that it has not achieved its aims. Never mind that it has been used as a stage for opportunists, Communist Party Revisionists and social democrats to further their aims which have nothing really to do with the right to work. U. C. S. led and certainly the example will be taken up with even more tenacity and audacity. This is borne out by the case of the Plessey Dumbarton factory. Plessey workers went a stage further than U. C. S. They have prevented the removal of costly machinery which was bought by the workers' money, by the taxpayers through the government "Development Area" handouts to capitalists. Such dispute over the right of ownership must develop the dispute over the right of rule.

Whatever illusions still exist among workers about the role of the State are bound to be shattered in the course of the struggle if it is conducted in a serious manner by the workers themselves and is not diverted by opportunists.

No capitalist is going to stand by while capitalists' goods and equipment are expropriated by the workers - that is precisely the implication of workers' takeover.

The right to work will never be legislated for by a parliament. It can only be won by workers in protracted struggle leading to the final takeover. Workers do not wish to exploit anyone. They only wish not to be exploited themselves.

What is the way forward for the working class then? None of the policies, slogans and gimmicks, "deflation", "reflation", "growth policies", "free enterprise", "nationalisation", "workers control", etc. have any relevance to the real problems of the working class. They have about as much real meaning as "hey presto".

What then? Our Party would be no better than those we condemn if we too held out some easy way, some slogan to slip easily off the tongue. There is only one road and that is revolution. The seizure of power by the workers so that they will never again be victims of an exploiting class but advance to Socialism.

To foretell how and in what circumstances this will be brought about would be mere crystal gazing. There is no time table, no blue print for revolution. It will assuredly develop and its development must be actively encouraged. The workers will move in the direction of revolution or become a prey to fascism. Our faith in the workers is well-founded in the history of the British working class struggle. We believe the workers will advance from struggle for concessions to struggle for power. This we believe is inevitable.

In all of this the existence of a strong Marxist-Leninist Party is essential. The workers will struggle, we know, with or without us, will rebel and revolt, with or without us. However, history has proven that the successful outcome, the firm establishment of workers' socialist power, dictatorship of the workers, is dependent upon the development of our Party, drawn from the best, most honest, clear sighted and courageous among working class leaders in struggle. This is the only assurance that revolution will triumph and workers' victory will be final.



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