

THE WORKER



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ONLY SOCIALISM CAN SAVE BRITAIN

NO SOCIALISM WITHOUT REVOLUTION

Labour Party Conference

The Labour Party Conference is over. It took place at a time of crisis for capitalism and for the working class. Hence it is also a time of crisis for social democracy, which mirrors the contradiction between these two opposing forces and seeks always to unite them.

Wilson called it the most unified conference ever, yet nothing could stifle the voices of dissent and opposition to Labour's onslaught on the working class. This again is but to say that the Labour Party Conference is a reflection of capitalism's present crisis and the accelerated development of the corporate state. Yet within the Labour Party such dissent is doomed to remain what it is, dissent, since the game is played according to the rules of social-democracy. In the final analysis

the Labour Party is a party for the preservation of capitalism and nothing can alter this basic fact.

To those in the Labour Party who claim they are for revolution, we say: If you are honest, you will leave that Party, and join us, for we are the only Party for revolution. To those in the Labour Party who would have socialism piecemeal, by reform we say: If you honestly wish to fight against the attacks on our living standards and organisations on our housing and health, on our education, who honestly wish to combat the wholesale destruction of skills and industries in Britain now occurring, you must leave the party and take your place in the class struggle alongside us, the CPB(ML).

To those who are not of the

Labour Party but who yet vote for it, we demand an ideological rejection, an end to support for them. We demand an end to appeals, to petitions, to begging favours from this Labour Government. Strength must be found where it truly resides, in the mass of workers motivated to defend gains made and advance to revolution.

All those who support in any way that party of deceit must see that whatever their own good intentions, they succeed only in bolstering social democracy and have no good effect whatsoever. We must cut ourselves away from the spider's web of social democracy and accept the revolutionary ideology of Marxism-Leninism. The task now is to defend the gains of centuries of struggle and advance to revolution.

Capitalism is bankrupt -- economically, politically and morally. It only survives with the connivance of the working class and the name of that connivance is social democracy.

That is what the social democratic Labour Party Conference was all about -- persuading the working class to shut its eyes and allow the decrepit, corrupt and thoroughly unjust capitalist system to stagger on at our expense, thus preventing any move toward revolution and, therefore, toward socialism.

When we say that the working class must go over from defence to attack, we mean that the working class must fight and that every fight must be turned into revolutionary struggle. Only through revolution can there be socialism.

Free Collective Bargaining

The Labour Government is trying to put a £6 halter around the necks of workers staggering up the steep incline of inflation. We must not allow ourselves to be tricked into fighting about whether to accept only part or the whole of the £6 or, indeed, any other figure a stooge like Jones may think of. We must volunteer no deterioration at all in our living standards to keep capitalism alive. Since capitalism, unlike socialism in China, cannot even guarantee existing living conditions, let alone improved conditions, that fight to hold what we have already won is a fight to destroy capitalism. It is revolutionary.

For Better Social Services

The Labour Government is making sweeping cuts in social expenditure on education, housing and health. Capitalism can no longer afford the social services won by workers in struggle. Therefore the fight against cuts is revolutionary.

The Right to Work

The Labour Government tries to buy off working class anger at mass unemployment with offering back about one fifteenth of the jobs it has taken from us in capitalism's interest. We will not haggle over what rate of unemployment is acceptable. We fight for the right to work. And since neither capitalism nor a capitalist government can possibly admit that right, the fight is revolutionary.

Workers' State Power

The Labour Government tries to fool us off with the empty pretence of a say in our own future with various phoney 'workers' participation' schemes. We will be content with nothing short of working class state power because we will only have a say in our own destiny when the employing class no longer has any say in it at all. That struggle for real control of our future is the essence of revolution.

Self Reliant Britain

The Labour Government tries to remedy the defects of capitalism, like the flight of capital itself, by extensions of state corporatism.

But as long as Britain is at the mercy of international monopoly-capitalism with which our own monopoly-capitalists always collaborate at the nation's expense, this kind of domestic intervention cannot bolster up Britain's economy.

We demand the national regeneration of the country through the liberation of all the wealth-creative skills, arts and knowledge of British workers to develop our own resources in self-reliance. Self-reliant development established in the teeth of international capitalism is revolutionary.

Politics and Economics are One

The specious separation of economics and politics by which the organised working class could get on with economic struggle and leave the politics to somebody else, to the Labour Party, has resulted in the politics of the Labour Government of which, in fact, serve somebody else -- not workers but capitalists. The combination of economic struggle with working class politics through the mediation of the working class's own revolutionary party, the CPB(ML), is itself revolutionary.

Two Classes

In the revolutionary situation in Britain there are only two classes, capitalists and workers, whose interests are irreconcilable -- a them-or-us situation. The alternatives for workers are either allowing capitalism to survive or fighting for socialism, either voting for one or other of the capitalist parties or organising around the working class's own revolutionary Party to smash capitalism.



Enver Hoxha, the Albanian Socialist leader, with young workers of the Korga district. Liberation war and revolutionary victory in this European country cleared the way for workers state power and a socialist society in which there is no unemployment, no inflation, no taxation, declining prices and a steady rise in real wages year after year.

RALLY FOR EDUCATION

On Tuesday, October 21st, the Council for Educational Advance is organising a mass "Rally for Education" at Central Hall Westminster, 7 p.m. The rally, together with an associated lobby of Parliament, marks the opening of a national campaign for more spending on education.

The rally has won the support of a number of trade unions and throughout the country local union branches have been summoning workers to the struggle for education.

In Brent, for example, motorcades are organized for the Saturday preceding the rally in the major shopping centres. The public will be informed of the cuts in Brent and throughout the country by leaflets from the Brent Trades Council.

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Unemployment on

Merseyside

One in eight people on Merseyside are out of work. There are 78,937 unemployed, of which 15,000 are school-leavers. Recently in Liverpool, 400 girls applied for just one job: that of a clerk in a travel agency. At one Inner-city Employment Office in Liverpool there were 8500 people on the register in August 1974; just twelve months later, there are 11,500. From this one office alone, £200,000 per week is paid out in "dole" - from workers' taxes, raised by force to give bare subsistence and no dignity to fellow workers tossed onto the scrapheap by ailing capitalism. The unemployment rate on Merseyside is twice the national average. In Kirkby, it's 20 per cent of the population; that's one in every five people. The general minimum level of unemployment is higher on Merseyside than anywhere else.

And yet, Merseyside is a Labour Government Special Development Area, where employers receive £10 per week Temporary Employment Subsidy for every person they delay from the sack.

The cold reality of the 80,000 on the dole shows the hollowness of these grand titles. The Labour Government hypocritically diverts a dribble of finance to the area in a bid to camouflage the situation in which 10,000 more Merseysiders lose their jobs each month.

The problem of unemployment stems not from governments, whether Labour, Tory, Liberal or even coalition. Remember Labour's horror when the "Million Mark" was reached in 1972 when the Tories held Parliament? Now the total unemployed is 1½ million. Unemployment is a weapon of capitalism. Employers on Merseyside have been ruthlessly cutting back on numbers employed for years: two-thirds of the labour force in shipbuilding has been lost; one-quarter of the electrical engineering trade, while the Port of Liverpool has 'lost' over half its labour force and miles of dockland in Liverpool is unused and rotting. Yet the cry from the bosses is that workers must be lost because there are too many of them, and demand for the things they produce is insufficient: e.g. Thorn TV tubes; Courtaulds; the CEGB, who are threatening to close Clarence Dock power station; Ford; Vauxhall, who conned 2000 workers into voluntary redundancy and even then put the remainder on short time; and Triumph. Another bosses' lament is that there are too many workers and they're not working hard enough, or striking too often - this bleat comes from Cammell



Liverpool dock area at the time of the 1970 strike.

Lairds, the shipbuilders; from the Shotton Steelworks (threatened with complete closure as part of British Steel's 'rationalisation') and from Plessey.

The Plessey example is typical of capitalist casuistry and deserves closer examination. The crazy situation here is paralleled in the rest of Merseyside and in the country as a whole.

At Plessey, management have constantly appealed to the workforce for increased cooperation and efficiency. They are desperate to reduce the high level of stock currently on the Edge Lane site, arguing that people's general lack of the will to work (unwillingness to speed up for the same wages) is equivalent to suicide, because unless current orders are met on time, future orders will not be won, and redundancies must follow.

This argument must be measured against a deliberate rundown in Strowger equipment (the main product at Edge Lane). Post Office cuts determine that very few replacement orders are likely anyway. Plessey were caught on the hop when they did not change their product quickly enough in response to the GPO's switch to electronic equipment. They hoped to clean up on the overseas markets; the decline there has really shaken them. Now they want the workers to pay for their mistakes.

One of their tactics has been to 'soften up' the workforce by means of divisive productivity schemes: the earnings of high-flying groups have been restricted, while "make-up" pay has been injected into the earnings of the lower-paid. Not surprising to find "no will to work" under these circumstances.

However, the workforce, both staff and hourly paid are realising that to serve Plessey's interests does not serve their own. They are awake to the attempted divisions within their ranks and a strong movement is developing to resist these and attack the real enemy.

Now, Plessey are threatening 2000 redundancies and short-time working, to be effective immediately, with the prospect of even more sackings to come. 950 redundancies are planned for the staff at Edge Lane: these workers have, as a prelude to struggle, declared the redundancies unacceptable - just as any worker finds it unacceptable to pay for capitalist mistakes with his job.

The professed determination of the Plessey white-collar workers to protect their jobs reflects a militancy which THE WORKER has frequently reported. As local government is ordered by central government to cut expenditure, teachers, nursery nurses, health-service workers, planners, administrators etc. are all threatened with redundancy, a polite term for the sack. Selling their labour power in order to live, white collar workers are victims of the same capitalism as industrial workers. The Plessey example serves once more: both sections of the workforce must unite and fight to resist shakeout; the instilling of fear for one's livelihood that leads to discipline and docility. The fight is against redundancy, against natural waste - every man or woman who leaves their job or retires must be replaced, or the school-leavers will stay on the streets indefinitely. A struggle won means a stronger workforce and to fight successfully for replacements will make the struggle against swinging redundancies so much more likely of success.

Defence of one's job and attack on the bosses' right to dispense with us as so many dots on the balance sheet is part of the struggle to control our future. The battle is for the right to work. If capitalism cannot give us that right, and it cannot, the fight is to get rid of capitalism.

The problem on Merseyside is big but it's only as big as capitalism. The fight for higher wages, a shorter working week and more holidays is not a diversion from the resistance to unemployment but a strategy of attack in the war of class survival.

SPAIN AND BRITISH WORKERS

Since 1936 when Franco and his Fascist clique defeated the democratically elected government of Spain, trade unionists of long standing have had a rooted objection to take their holidays in such a country, where the working class is so oppressed and so many of our own working class lads died serving in the International Brigade.

They were defeated not only by Franco but also by the combined weight that Hitler and Mussolini gave in aid to Franco, it was in fact a dress rehearsal for the Second World War.

The call by the International Transport Workers Federation for a 48 hour blocking of all Spanish ships and aircraft and goods, was a move in the right direction to support the working class in Spain.

That the British working class responded so poorly is part of a much deeper malaise, whereby ideology and principle are going by the board.

The Press has gone to great lengths to report the support for Franco, and to report the activities of so-called terrorists. The crime of the Press is not so much what it has reported, as what it hasn't reported in so far as the working class in Spain is concerned.

The opposition to Fascism especially by the Basque nation calling for the right of self-determination, demonstrations of workers in all parts of Spain in spite of the threat of mass arrests, the general reaction against the sheer inhumanity that prevails, should be recognised and applauded by the British working class.

LETTER TO THE CP OF SPAIN (ML)

The following message was sent by the Central Committee of the CPB(ML) at its meeting in London on September 27th to the Communist Party of Spain (ML).

Comrades:

Our heartfelt sorrow at the barbarous executions of 5 patriots by the Franco regime.

It is incredible that 30 years after the victory of the peoples of the world in the great anti-fascist war which defeated Hitler and his gang and in our age of revolution and national liberation that the fascists of Spain can still continue their savage oppression of the peoples of Spain.

For those of us who came to political consciousness during the heroic resistance of the Spanish working class to save the Republic nearly 40 years ago, and for those who have joined our ranks since then the struggle for liberation which is now erupting in Spain brings encouragement. We know how difficult are the obstacles in your path but armed with the scientific socialism of Marxism-Leninism the workers, peasants and other strata of Spain, of all nationalities, will be able to end for ever the nightmare of reaction which has been exploiting them for centuries.

The ideology of Bolshevism which guided the people of Russia under the leadership of Stalin and the Soviet Party to victory in 1945, the same ideology applied to the special conditions of China by Mao and the Chinese Party which led to victory for the millions of China in 1949 and very recently the same principles of Marxism-Leninism which led the heroic people of Vietnam to vanquish the US imperialists, is for all of us in Europe to use correctly to fight our struggle against capitalism and the remnants of feudalism.

We stand with you, dear brothers and sisters, in your long and hard fight, united in the greatest cause for the working class of the world - socialism.

The Building Industry

Unemployment in the construction industry is estimated to be 168,000, with the prospects of further lay-offs imminent because of the Government's cuts in public expenditure.

This is at a time when housing lists grow longer in almost all parts of the country. In London alone the waiting list grew from 152,000 in 1965 to 208,000 in 1972, and the population of London actually fell during this period.

There are 919 million bricks stockpiled in the country, and 11,000 workers in the brickmaking industry are registered unemployed. Surely no situation can emphasise the absurdity of capitalism, more than this and show the absolute necessity of a planned socialist economy. It might be expected that employers would lay off men with the shortest length of employment in order to save on redundancy payments, but in fact they are laying off men who will only work for another ten to fifteen years, so that if the industry picks up again they will not be left with a workforce with only a few years

of work left in them, as happened after the last slump. Obviously employers have learned a lesson from previous experiences. The question remains, have the workers?

It appears not. Organised sites all over the country continue to work seven days a week and overtime permits continue to be issued. At the same time the social democrats in the unions involved ask the question: "We know there must be cuts in public expenditure, but why us?" As if to imply that it is alright to cut back on the Health Service or Education, but not them. The question that should be asked is this: Are those who so disgracefully turned their backs on the Shrewsbury Pickets now going to turn a blind eye on their own work mates. Or will they take their rightful place in the ranks of the organised working class, side by side with their comrades in other industries, and fight the cuts, rejecting completely all of capitalism's vicious attacks.

THE LAW VERSUS AUEW

The decision of the Executive Council of the AUEW in the light of the ruling of the High Court, to go ahead with the election for Executive Council for Division 4 means that once again our union has allowed the Courts to set aside a democratically-taken decision. This is the third time over the past months that the High Courts have ruled against our union. First members should be asking what kind of Trade Unionist takes

his union to Court. We should also be asking why our union who led the fight against the Industrial Relations Act, refused to recognise the Court, and through this refusal, culminating in the action taken by the whole membership, destroyed this infamous Act. How can it be that in so short a time we allow the Courts to overthrow democratically taken decisions. This is a retrograde and dangerous step. Have we now reached a

position where an EC member, a National Committee delegate, or for that matter any member may bring his or her Solicitor to union meetings, in case they do not agree with decisions taken. We do in our Union have a procedure to settle any dispute between members, we also have a democracy which must be defended at all times, against attacks from within, and by the employing class.

The Decline in UK Manufacturing

WORKERS TO THE ATTACK

The general view that British industry, particularly the manufacturing industry, has been starved of investment and, as a result, faces 'irreversible decline' has been supported by the Director General of the National Economic Development Office who quotes figures on the extent of the contraction.

Manufacturing output in 1964 was 34 per cent of the gross domestic product and by 1974 had dropped to only 28 per cent. During the same period 'operating profit' declined from 10 per cent to only 6 per cent.

It is this which has led Wedgewood Benn and the Labour 'left' to propose the direction of vast sums from pension and insurance funds into industry, an increase in the finance at the disposal of the National Enterprise Board, greater use of planning agreements and the Industry Bill and more government support for firms in trouble -- a large dose of government intervention amounting to an extension of state corporatism.

Wilson does not disagree with these proposals but points out that if such sums are going to be channelled into industry there must be corresponding cuts in 'non-productive public expenditure'.

Others in the Government, like Shirley Williams, argue that it is wrong-headed to concentrate on producing more manufactured goods if there is not enough demand to absorb them. Moreover such concentration on one sector of the economy could result in

Democracy Asleep

Worker No. 14 reported moves to use the secret ballot in an attempt to overturn decisions made at the NUJ Annual Delegates Meeting (ADM) is the annual policy-making body of the union.). Following the success of this attack on ADM in July, what remained of the democratic process in the NUJ was in tattered shreds.

But following the results of the same ballot, announced last week, it is clear that over the defence of democracy in the union however defined - the membership of the union is quietly going to sleep with a self-administered anaesthetic.

The result of the ballot was a distinct rejection of the ADM decisions to promote the fight for the closed shop, and at root a broadside attack on the principle of a delegate policy-making meeting in itself - by those who bothered to fill in and post a ballot paper in the first place. By a majority of about 1000, the 7000-8000 who voted (less than 30 per cent of the union) took a gigantic step towards the destruction of democracy in the union, under the banner of the 'defence of democracy' and the 'freedom of the press'.

But the most overwhelming vote was the other 70-75 per cent, the vote of pure apathy, the more than 21,000 who did not see fit to lift a finger, and for whom even this conscious exercise of will is apparently an infringement of personal liberty.

Taken together, the repudiation of ADM, and the overwhelming lack of interest by the majority of the membership, spell a long and difficult struggle ahead. We now have to put together the remnants of the branch-based democratic

much greater unemployment of labour and the instruments of production in other sectors like the construction industry. It is said that the measures for tackling inflation will also solve the problem of depressed investment in manufacturing.

What is being left out of the argument is the working class and its defensive class struggle. Capital naturally flees from any economic arena where workers are well enough organised to prevent profits from eating too deeply into their standard of living. The export of capital from Britain seeking easier profits abroad is a measure of the general willingness to fight of the British labour movement, the 'English disease' as it has been called. The flight of capital from the manufacturing industry is a specific tribute to the success in defence of the engineers' guerrilla tactics in

taking on employers factory by factory.

Anti-trade union legislation like "In Place of Strife" and the Industrial Relations Act were attempts by capitalism to remedy this situation by destroying the organised working class's capacity for defensive struggle.

But if the working class leaves the matter at that, relying on their defensive strength which has driven capital from the very sectors of the economy essential to Britain's industrial health, they will be worse off than their fellow workers on the Continent who were not able to put up nearly so much of a fight.

There is no answer to growing unemployment and cuts in wages but for the workers of Britain to go over from defence to attack. They have to carry the fight to the class enemy and smash his capacity to destroy Britain in the search for profit.

Thatcher's Coal to Newcastle

That special relationship between British and American imperialism has recently undergone new developments with Margaret Thatcher flying to the USA and a team of US businessmen flying to Britain.

Thatcher attempted to improve her "international stature" by lecturing to the Yanks, of all people, on the merits of free enterprise and the meagre Britain was in. The Americans, of course, were duly impressed. It remains only for this Tory leader to increase her "international stature" to match up to what President Ford thinks of her. This may not prove so easy.

Meanwhile, a posse of US businessmen were winging their way over here on a free "investment mission" -- free for them that is, it cost us £100,000. These representatives of a corrupt and decadent imperialism, with an unemployment rate even higher than ours, who have turned wastefulness into a national virtue, were not entirely satisfied with what they saw. "The people of England," declared one US capitalist, "have got to learn that they must demand less and produce more. (This is a lesson they would dearly like their own working class to learn too.) One of the businessmen compared Britain with an alcoholic needing a cure. All these pleasant comments were lapped up by our own bourgeois press who have long been peddling the same ideas themselves. After we have given our 'year for Britain', maybe we'll have to give a 'year for America'.

So Britain is now the alcoholic and US imperialism the friendly social worker! But the cure lies neither in doses of Yankee investment to make us even more subservient to America nor in "free" enterprise which has always cost workers dear, for the sickness is capitalism itself.

Bombs: Who is Responsible?

Large-scale bombing of pubs and shopping places is once again being carried out by the gangsters in Northern Ireland. It only adds to the suffering of the Irish people at the hands of British colonialism. Such acts are given sustenance only by the occupation of that part of Ireland by British troops.

The isolation of these gangs from the Irish people is only matched by their identification with British imperialism, ideologically and tactically:

The forceful division of the north from Eire and the maintenance of a Catholic/Protestant division by Britain is keeping those gangs operating. In a free united Ireland those criminals would be dealt with effectively.

process, break through the barriers of non-attendance, ignorance and lack of interest, to the informed mandating of next year's ADM delegates, and a return to the vital defence of the union and its right to organise.

Housing in Leeds

The rule of 'knock down a slum and replace it with a worse one' appears to be becoming the norm of the day. Not only is the fact of the thousands of homeless or thousands living in slum conditions of vital importance to the working class, but so also is the question of what type of housing is built and provided in general. With cutbacks in all areas of local and national government expenditure, housing is being even more seriously affected.

Hunslet Grange is a massive concrete continuous system of flats in the South Leeds area. As the southern part of the city was demolished to make way for several motorway systems, and as the older engineering industries there declined, large numbers of back-to-back houses were demolished. To replace this lost community spirit, and to attempt to deal with the housing shortage, the City Council built Hunslet Grange.

The 1200 flat complex is surrounded on three sides by motorways, feeder roads, and dual carriageways. The grey concrete structure blends well into a background of factories, derelict ground and a major power station. Originally completed in total in late 1968, the buildings have had to be renovated several times. Firstly after the Rowan Point Flats explosion, the natural gas the flats had been provided with was removed, and electricity installed. Besides having high rents (due to go up yet again in October) expensive electricity bills were added. Secondly, continuous repairs have had to be made to the outer fabric as the concrete structure was continually cracked. Scaffolding was a common sight until very recently, and while one spot is sealed another opens. Due to inadequate ventilation, damp and condensation are now major problems in large numbers of flats. Many families have been moved out 'temporarily', while their flats are renovated. The City Council now keeps permanently empty flats

Fiddling the Figures

To reduce the numbers of unemployed overnight, forget to include housewives or anyone else not registered as such, then "seasonally adjust" the figures. This will have to miraculously effect of placing thousands of school leavers in jobs overnight. There may be no jobs in Britain's declining industries, but there are clearly vacancies for unscrupulous matron attendants who can help the capitalist slacken his belt.

The Association rejects Government interference in wage negotiation, and regards the flat rate principle as potentially dangerous and in opposition to long-standing Union policy. It regards the £6 limit as an acceptance of lower real earnings, and reaffirms the 1975 Conference policy of an improvement in living standards, "wherever possible" for teachers.

The Association calls on the NUT Executive to formulate its claim for April 1976 in accordance with Conference policy and having no regard for the Government's pay policy."

on the site so that families can be shifted around while this work continues. Coupled with new ceiling ventilators that are being installed, is the noise problem. Besides the noise within the buildings due to their design, major roads on all sides do not help. The flats have now only got double-glazing, but triple-glazing is now being installed. Windows cannot be opened, so ventilations depends on the new ventilators knocked through the wall!

The turnover of tenants from these 1-2-3-bedroomed flats is very high. Families, if they can, continually refuse to move there. Some who moved there temporarily still find themselves there four years later! Large areas have been rented off to Leeds University, who pack students in and charge rents per room, not per flat. The complex has few or no facilities. There are a couple of shops, one pub (two flats knocked together), no launderette, no health centre or civic centre.

The total lack of facilities brought large demonstration of tenants specifically over the need for a centre, in June 1974 with no result. Lack of adequate facilities for young children means the children will turn to anything around them - the so-called 'child proof rubbish bins' are play areas for many toddlers. And when the City Council walls about hooliganism and vandalism it cannot see that the major vandal lies in its own nest.

Hunslet Grange has been called many things, Bleak Street, Hunslet Alcatraz being its most popular. Besides the often waterlogged and rubbish strewn corridors and lifts, the total lack of community spirit after nearly 8 years is a 'triumph' for the developers. And when the 'sweet aroma' from the local sewage works drifts over the flats in summer, the tenants know exactly who to thank for such pleasures, from the stink of the sewage works to the stink of capitalist housing policies.

Such conditions are the result of policies which continually see Housing not as a right, but as a lever used by the working class against the ruling class. While workers demand the right to housing, the capitalists concede under pressure - on the surface, and then proceed to erect monstrosities of architecture to crush and entrap workers. These highly profitable concrete huts enable the Great Rent Robbery to be perpetuated year after year, guaranteeing an average 25 per cent slice of the wage packet back in rent to the landlord - private or state. Bad conditions, continual insecurity of tenure, the inability to control the yeas or nays of housing decision and policy, ever increasing rents, these and other problems will not be eradicated by further elections - national or local, nor by community politics appeals to make the system work. These and all other issues, be they health, education or employment relate to power. The political power of the working class. They can be solved only to the extent that the class uses that power in its own interests.

A Nation of Paupers

One excuse made for the working class' fail ure to fight uncompromisingly for the right to work is that, unlike in the thirties, being on the dole these days is no hardship. The bourgeois press tells us that, unemployed, you are often better off (through tax rebates and means tested benefits).

The truth is very different. After years of contributions, an unemployed worker receives only a pittance to hover above the poverty line. But after all, Britain is still the best welfare state in the world? Again untrue.

Britain's place in the EEC league table for welfare benefits is very near the bottom - only Ireland is worse. Things have deteriorated since the Beveridge Report in 1942 could say that "British provision for security, in adequacy of amount and in comprehensiveness, will stand comparison with that of any other country; few countries will stand comparison with Britain". Today, the National Health system is the only bit that other EEC countries

still envy, and the present cut back is fast eroding this superiority. The EEC Commission in Brussels receives many letters enquiring when social security benefits in Britain will go up to European standards. France and Belgium have substantial allowances for leave and maintenance of earnings during maternity, whereas Britain still has no statutory provision for this.

But EEC membership, far from promising higher standards, presents new dangers. Article 117 of the Treaty of Rome stresses that work performance is the main justification for improvement in living conditions. In Germany adequate unemployment and sickness benefits are given only to people with a 'good' work record.

Now will Britain receive golden hand-outs from the rest of the EEC. Economic slump and inflation have real improvements in security spending throughout the Nine. The Brussels Commission has given up its attempt to 'harmonize' various

social security systems, and will merely encourage member states to bring their payments up to a minimum level - a principle of Common Mediocrity.

Reduced welfare spending comes at a time when educational and health services are axed. These measure themselves produce unemployment - of teachers, nurses, steel workers. In turn the reduction of standard of living causes many of the social ills (from football hooliganism by unemployed youths to broken homes) that welfare spending, like a mud pie shoved into a burst dam, tries to patch up. While fishing for improvements in welfare provision, we should also recognise that to restrict our sights to mere defence is to accept permanent pauperism. Our aim should be to fight for a socialist Britain where all will have the right to work, to support their needs by labour, and all will be entitled to social services with dignity.

Siddeley and the placing of the orders instead with the US, West Germany and France - the inevitable 'experts' swearing that this latter course was preferable. This in a week when the feeblest of measures were announced to "ideal" with over 1½ million unemployed.

Central to the abandonment of Britain was entry to the EEC - shamefully supported by a rogue vote in June 1975. Since joining we have seen the exact opposite of what was promised by the ruling class. It has proved to be a club for all kinds of imperialists - best friend of revisionist Russia, selling it food at knock-down prices and closest ally of America, as in the military wing NATO plotting the return of fascism in Portugal. Far from promoting the brotherhood of men this unholy alliance promotes daily squabbles, be it about wine lakes or apple orchards. What it has meant for our country, that is for our class, is well known in terms of prices and 'jobs for the boys'.

Against this strategy of destruction, against the faceless millionaires, property speculators,

finance speculators, finance capitalists who produce nothing save wars, depressions, ill-health and inflation, stand the working class and its Party. The class, the custodian of mankind's advance, is the only guarantor of education, health and industry. It is the only guarantor of Britain's survival. Support for a Labour Government, a party to the abandonment of Britain is clearly a prostitution of the strength of the labour movement. Healey, at his party's conference, promised that "something pretty unpleasant" was inevitable. It is - for the ruling class. A working class true to its historical role will struggle for independence of its country from capitalism, which is independence from imperialism - out of EEC, out of Ireland. We make Connolly's moderate demand:

"Then send it aloft on the breeze boys,
That watchword the grandest we've known,
That Labour must rise from its knees boys,
And claim the broad earth as its own."



Bad news

The illusion that a "workers co-operative" could exist in this capitalist society has been finally burst by the recent events in the story of the five month old Scottish Daily News. When the millionaire publisher (and Labour Party man) Robert Maxwell backed the scheme, the workforce endorsed his plans and the leaders of the original "workers co-operative" attempt resigned saying that they had been conned. The 500 workers in the Glasgow plant were made redundant 14 months ago when the Scottish Daily Express was closed. Many of them invested large sums of money, even life savings in the "News" and submitted to pressures to work harder and earn less. They have agreed to contribute half a week's wages a month. And now Maxwell himself has resigned.

Putting oneself to a capitalist's pocket in such a manner is a myopic retreat from struggle, let alone a guarantee of the right to work. This can never be bought only fought for in opposition to capitalism, not in cooperation with it.

Workers having to do the capitalists job for him and assure him of profits to keep their own jobs demonstrates more clearly than ever that they can't do without us but we can do very nicely without them.

Plesssey Nottingham

Nottingham, an area where only one in twenty employers is recruiting has been jolted by yet another blow from the ruling class.

Rally for Education

cont. from page 1

The NUJ book branch passed a motion supporting the rally and will send a delegation and banner.

The Government's threat to education is not an idle one. A WORKER correspondent writes from Oxford, a traditional seat of English learning.

For two consecutive years the standard of the education service in Oxfordshire has been severely cut. But an attack of quite a different order is planned for next year:-

"In July 1975 the Local Education Authority decided to limit growth to 3 per cent. The Chief Education Officer reported at the time that 'to maintain the education service at the existing standard would require a growth rate of 4.18

per cent in 1976/77', which means that the decision to limit growth to 3 per cent is an effective cut of £600,000. After two years' erosion of the so-called 'fringe-services', it is openly stated by the Authority, that cuts of this magnitude can only be achieved by a reduction of capitation and/or the staff/pupil ratio.

Now the Government has instructed local authorities to prepare standstill budgets for next year and plans to introduce sanctions against recalcitrant Councils by adjusting the rate-support grant. The conclusion is obvious. If a cut of 1.18 per cent can only be achieved by reducing capitation and the staff/pupil ratio, what will a cut of a further 3 per cent mean?"

The Fight for the Right to Learn

The recent events at the William Tyndale Junior School in Islington provide some valuable lessons, albeit negative ones, in how not to conduct a struggle. The capitalist press here seized on the ill-timed and diversionary actions of the striking teachers and used them to exploit artificial divisions at a time when the savage cuts in Education demand a unity among all sections of our class.

In the absence of unity, between parents and teachers, and the teachers and their union have given power to politically appointed school managers to interfere in the school in a manner totally against the interests of the children who attend there.

The basic issue which has caused conflict between parents and teachers and reduced the school roll to a dangerous low is that old bogey that education is 'middle class' and not catering to the needs of working class children.

To question whether literacy, numeracy and a good grounding in their own cultural heritage are appropriate skills for a working class which has fought to obtain Education as a right for all is dangerous ultra-leftism. In effect it achieves exactly what the ruling class is seeking to impose on us, a lowering of standards in all areas of life. Education being one of the crucial ones.

When a worker takes up a post in a factory producing washing

machines he doesn't start directing all his energies campaigning to have production switched to making X-ray equipment even though he might consider the latter more necessary. By such 'reformism'

In the context of a capitalist society he would only be serving to divert his fellow workers from the real struggle in hand. Likewise with teachers, their skills should be directed towards giving children the best possible educational experience to equip them for their later role as part of the work force of this country. The teachers' energies should be directed through their unions towards improving educational standards.

It will be all too easy for the government to effect an economy by closing down this school which the teachers have so thoughtlessly and in complete opposition to their unions advice, abandoned. This would mean a loss of nine teaching posts and a burden of extra children on already over crowded surrounding schools.

The task is clear. The teachers must call off their strike, reopen the school to normal working and seek to organise with the parents to prevent ill-motivated outside interference with the children's education. The one positive aspect in this confused situation has been the clear sightedness of the parents in demanding a decent education as a right for their children.

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| OCTOBER | 17: | "The Tragedy of Young Workers" |
| | 24: | "London Murder: The Destruction of a City" |
| | 31: | "Imperialism - The Dying Beast Laishes Out" |
| NOVEMBER | 7: | "The State of Counter-Revolution" |
| | 14: | "The Role of the Party of the British Working Class" |
| | 21: | To be announced |
| | 28: | Celebrating Albania's National Day. Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, Nr. Holborn Station. 7.30 p.m. |
| OCTOBER | 21: | "Attack the Attackers" Bridge Hotel Pub, near Highlevel Bridge, Newcastle. |

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