

THE WORKER



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A barbaric system which has outlasted its time

CAPITALISM MUST GO

"Our Party does not subscribe to the view that world war necessarily brings revolution. I would prefer to put it the other way: revolution prevents world war", Reg Birch, Chairman of the Communist Party of Britain (Marxist-Leninist) said at the May Day meeting held at Conway Hall, London. Greeting workers all over the world, Reg Birch spoke of the international situation and the situation in Britain in respect to the great issues of war and revolution.

"Just now there is great clamour about the threat of World War III. In history's time it is overdue: it has been longer than a quarter of a century since the last. That does not make it inevitable but, unlike some, our Party does not subscribe to the view that world war necessarily brings revolution. I would prefer to put it the other way: revolution prevents world war. If you get revolution out of war, that is a bonus; but you have to be alive to conduct it."

It was true that in the First World War by 1917 the great Bolshevik Party had triumphed and the Russian workers had seized power having turned an imperialist war into the capture of power for the working class and having contributed to the establishment throughout the world of communist parties. In the Second World War, a world saved by the Red Army's blood and the loss of so many young, the fat old men seized power in the Soviet Union and the revisionists came into their own. Soviet imperialism was born. And many of those communist parties founded after the Bolshevik revolution fell by the way side.

"We do not need any warnings about that. Nor do we share the view that, in some automatic way, out of chaos comes progress. We say instead: progress will create chaos, for the capitalists. That is our business. We must put them in disarray."

If we listen to much that is said about the 1st, 2nd and 3rd worlds, we are invited to believe that the 3rd world, some homogeneous unit of progressive, liberation-seeking peoples, will join the 2nd world, capitalists and imperialists but not so much so, and cooperating together face the 1st world of super powers, Soviet imperialism and US imperialism. Is that likely? Can we believe that capitalism will ever join anybody on the path of progress?

"We do not need anyone telling us that the Common Market is good for us. You try telling

that to people in the streets around here. Or that NATO with its neo-Nazis and Yankee generals is an effective barrier against the imperialist powers. We do not need people telling us beware of the enemy at the gate, arm and be ready, stand shoulder to shoulder with the bourgeois army against the Soviet. Of course we have to defend. But remembering Franco and Spain we cannot forget the Fifth Column inside our country either. We do not require war mongers to frighten us. We have a war to fight here and that is what we must do."

Reg Birch asked if there was, in fact, some homogeneous mass called the third world, all on a single path of progress struggling for liberation and socialism. "Is it so? Are they all of such a development? I wish it were so."

When we consider the question of world war we have to remember those wars made by the so-called 1st and 2nd worlds on the so-called 3rd world. "We can only say we have not had war since the Second World War if we conveniently forget Malaya, if we conveniently forget Korea and Vietnam, all ingredients of potential world war. Especially if we forget the war waged by British imperialism in Ireland. But we cannot forget any of those things: A propos Ireland our Party remembers its brave demo in 1969 with the demand 'British Troops out of Ireland!' and the running arguments we had all the way from the Park to Trafalgar Square!"

In Africa, in Latin America, in the Middle East, wherever Marxism is not in command, there is much confusion. And the EEC?

"Nowhere can we see a homogeneous unit joined together, free in purpose and striding forward - except in Albania and in China. That is the world we are talking about."

"And what about here? We communists have no need to be the Theoreticians, great, clever

people. We are not required to be the mentors of the working class - only of it. They alone will resolve the question of their own freedom. They alone are the revolutionary force. The task of our Party, which is of the working class and in it, is to accelerate that movement. We are proud as a Party of what has been achieved already. We are sad only about our inadequacies, our lack of impact that is so necessary today.

"We have yet to smash social democracy. And soon they will seek to put us in a great quandary Mr. Callaghan says there will be an election in '78. Shall we have Callaghan? Shall we have Thatcher? What kind of a choice is that? The very idea of putting crosses on bits of paper is an insult to our literacy."

"Let us talk of what we know - our place of work. We know the battles that have gone on where we have been and where we have watched others - agonising battles. The bulk of the struggles you have witnessed recently in economic terms have been Vicar of Bray battles, chopping and changing as they went along. Let us consider also one of the best battles that workers have ever joined together in, based on a principle, the Trico women's battle for equal pay. Black and White together, only asking: Are you with us or against us? Straight, simple, classic thinking, indomitable, unbeatable."

"Ford stewards say they will not have the social contract again. But then they apologise for their temerity by saying that it was necessary for phases one and two. If it was necessary then, why should we not have another ten? Indeed why should we not carry the arguments so many workers have been taken in by to their logical conclusion? We know that capitalism is in a pickle. We know that the social democrats in the name of the Labour Government do a better job of conning the working class than the Tories do. So why don't we all go to work for a year for now and make capitalism under a Labour Government really profitable again?"

"There is no substitute in this land for the trade union machinery that exists, so laboriously constructed with such great sacrifice within the trade union movement. In that area of struggle where

such primitive weapons are required there is not a better one. We do not want parallelism. We want our membership to seize that which has been made by them and run it, instead of being told what to do. Run it for ourselves."

"The Scottish TUC yaps that it wants the social contract. Now the Welsh TUC. Soon with devotion we will no doubt have the Cornish TUC and the London one all over again. Healey tells us that we must not lose the fruits of our sacrifice. The fruits of his sacrifice would be nothing but a bad taste in our mouths. 'We must have some flexibility' he says 'and we must take care of differentials'. Well, if you fall for it, then you deserve it. You have got to see in your own place of work that it does not happen."

"We want no social contract. We are not even asking for a return to 'free collective bargaining'. It is too costly. We simply say: we've had enough of the lot of you. What we require now is revolution. We don't need a social contract; we do need socialism."

"We can see now the strength of our working class even in its frustration. It is a disciplined army. It has to be. 'It is a workers' army. It is not allowed the privilege of saying I'm in favour of gradualism. I'm in favour of

propping up capitalism. We cannot say I'll contract out of the social contract: it's all right for you. We cannot wish the factory down the road to have bad conditions but we'll go on strike over ours. There cannot be rat shops anywhere."

"We will not even get involved in the argument about whether getting rid of the social contract means the weakest going to the wall. As if everybody does not know that nothing succeeds like success and lower paid wages are based on higher. For everyone to run as fast as he can is the only way for us all."

"In this lag of our function, our job is to remember the heritage which out of class relationships and struggle is ours as Marxists. All Marx ever wrote was learned from class conflict. It was we the working class in this world, and first in Britain, who were the inspirers of all that theory and all that reason. We have the job to say: there is no easy road, there is not a gradual road, there is no a civilised road - not when you are dealing with barbarians. Capitalism is barbaric. It has outlasted its time. It must go. That is the task of our Party, it is your job too, all of you, wherever you are, to struggle for the emancipation of the working class in this land."

British troops out

When in June, 1974, the Ulster Workers Council called its gangs out to prevent Irish workers from going to work a small group of engineering workers defied the threats and abuse and bravely marched through the streets of Belfast to their place of work. Today thousands of workers, the whole working class of northern Ireland is defying the loyalist gangs. This second time round the UWC and the other loyalist organisations are unable to intimidate the working class. The isolation of the loyalist groups is complete. The so-called strike is but a take-over bid by a mafia like gang.

The British government has responded to the loyalist campaign by sending an extra 1,200 troops to make up a total of

15,200. Their object is to protect the UWC and the other loyalists. For when the working class is prepared to defy the threats and intimidations of the loyalists, they are ready to smash them and they surely would if it were not for the presence of the British occupying troops.

British troops have no role other than to foster division and keep Ireland divided. There is not a task of separating warring factions but of igniting and keeping alive old and superstitious divisions. There is not a task of fighting 'terrorism' but of ensuring the survival of its own image, the loyalist gangster and the provisional murderer. BRITISH TROOPS OUT OF IRELAND!

WORKER INTERVIEW- strike at Port Talbot

OUR Worker Correspondent interviewed one of the strike leaders of the electricians' fight at the Port Talbot steel works for increased pay for skilled work in the new ore preparation plant - a claim which was first submitted two years ago.

Q. As this is a legitimate claim why is your union, the EETU, not paying you strike pay?

A. Originally the claim was made on behalf of a small number of our members but we are now claiming the increased payments for every electrician in the works.

Q. What has been the union's reaction to this?

A. Our union is bound by the social contract. Our officials tell us that the claim is in breach of the contract and as such cannot be backed.

Q. What has been your response to this?

A. We claim that there has been a change in status - an increase in skill which has to be rewarded. This is not in breach of the contract. If top officials can have their jobs re-defined so they can get more, I see no reason why we can't.

Q. Aren't you attempting to use the change in status of a few of your workers as a means of getting round the contract instead of confronting the contract head on?

A. The contract is a mill stone round our necks. Not only is it interfering with our rights to negotiate our wages with the bosses, but it is limiting the support we are getting from other unions. The dockers at Swansea for example were asked to block steel coil brought into keep the tin works we usually supply operating. The response was that we, like they are bound by the social contract and they could not help us break it.

Q. The current edition of the Worker says "Any attempt by skilled workers to avoid the consequences of the social contract for themselves while not opposing the social contract itself on behalf of the whole organised working class can only end in confusion and frustration". What is your comment on this?

A. I suppose you could say our experience bears this out.

Readymix drivers out on week-long stoppage

THE Readymix drivers' branch of the TGWU held a week long stoppage during April in support of their claim for a 75 per cent increase in rates which have not risen since 1973, since when the drivers costs have risen by 200 per cent. It should be pointed out that the drivers are classed as self-employed which means they are paid by the yardage of concrete delivered. They purchase the lorries from the companies, financed by loans arranged, in the main by the same company. However, they are only allowed to purchase the cab and chassis -

the revolving drum in which the concrete is stored remains the property of the company for whom they are delivering (catch 22).

At one time members of an owner drivers association, they are now organising themselves into a branch within the TGWU building group. They have come to realise that although they are classed as self-employed their relationship to the company for which they deliver is no different from any other worker. That they are now organised will add greatly to the strength of organised labour in the industry.

Call made for national tunnelling stoppage

AT a meeting held in Coventry TGWU tunnel miners' branch regional representatives called for a nationwide strike unless civil engineering contractors, Miller Buckley, agree to accept the miners' branch unemployment

IN BRIEF

COMMENTATORS are making sensationalist political observations about the miners, who played such a large part in bringing down the Tory Government in 1974 and who, they claim, voted in a Tory MP at Ashfield.

But is this the case? The Labour vote dropped by 16,000 compared with the 1974 general election. The Tory vote only increased by 7,000 and 4,000 votes in that increase probably came from the drop in the Liberal vote.

What the Ashfield by-election really means is that 16,000 workers who voted for Labour in 1974 refused to support the Labour Government this time and some 3000 workers may have been so confused and demoralised by the present situation as to think that the choice between two capitalist parties might still have some significance.

list as the main source of recruitment.

The list operates so that those who have been longest out of work get offered the first jobs. It is also designed to prevent companies operating a 'blacklist' and to ensure that only experienced tunnel operatives are employed. The Secretary of the London miners' branch has told the Company that the union has no objection if it rejects operatives from the list providing it can show that the applicant was unsuitable, in which case they would quite a happily send other lads along.

It has become increasingly obvious that the employers are holding back work in an attempt to undermine the tunnel miners' organisation. At the Lilley Waddington Contract, St. Pauls, the tunnellers on the job have been locked out for some months as a result of their attempts to get work for unemployed members. The Company requested longer working shifts, but the men refused and asked for shorter shifts in order to get some of the 200 men on the branch's unemployment list into work. Their action and solidarity is giving a lead to the rest of the industry in the fight to improve organisation and fight unemployment.

AUEW .. for democratic amalgamation

THE DEBATES which have been taking place at AUEW (Engineering Section) National Committee and AUEW National Conference on the future of the four sections of the present amalgamation, have refocused attention on the importance of this issue for all engineering workers.

Although the aim of one union and one rule book for engineering has been an historic ideal and a continuation of the process of amalgamation which has characterised the development of the AEU, the present situation is fraught with difficulties.

With its two previous rejections of amalgamation proposals ES National Committee has sought correctly to defend two cardinal democratic principles that are embodied in the AEU rule book. The first of these has been the importance of Rule 14. Ever since 1850 when 60 delegates met from 7 separate societies to found the ASE, this provision has made the engin-

eers' union unique in its democracy. It has been the guarantee of accountability of Executive Council to the whole membership via a rank and file policy-making national committee - a small working body - not a mass conference - composed of 52 lay delegates working at the trade. They are elected annually by Divisional Committees, themselves elected by District Committees, who in turn are rooted in the membership of the branches. The defence of this process of control has been the inherited responsibility of all subsequent generations - and throughout the history of the union, with each successive amalgamation, the membership played a full role to see that what was retained was the basic democracy handed down for so long. Thus it was that as the membership grew with each amalgamation, so too did the control of the union by the members.

The second key point has been defence of the same prin-

ciple of accountability that requires regular election and re-election of all officials.

Despite the correct stand of National Committee on both these issues however, the search for unity from the present federated structure must continue with renewed urgency. Notwithstanding the rank opportunism and manoeuvre, which, with scant regard for the AEU rule book, has motivated some of the plans to date, not all the proposals of EC have been bad. The avowed aim to create one family within the labour movement for all engineering workers has been correct. If nothing else therefore, the attitude of National Committee has led to a revision of those plans and hopefully to further proposals which are more in harmony with the democratic approach to problems which has always justified itself in the turbulent history of the AEU.

Time is not on the side of engineering workers however, and the whole issue now demands more than the equivocation of, on one hand, rejection of revised terms recommended by EC (without, at the same time appearing to be against amalgamation in principle) - and, on the other hand, in the same breath, instructing Executive Council to "... pursue amalgamation ... as a matter of urgency." Not least in importance here is the spectacle of other less democratic unions, seeking to make inroads into and eroding the prerogative of the AUEW as the leading force in engineering and kindred trades. There should be no illusion that surrender of that position would ultimately be to the detriment of all workers.

Delegates stated that if we calculated our wages under the current cost accounting method favoured by Fords, we should be demanding about another £50 a week more!

Discussion on the shorter working week and time-and-a-half for all holidays centred on the need to give full support to our negotiating committee, who had submitted these three items in the 1976 claim. Delegates said that the question of the shorter working week was not only of concern to Ford employees but would have a profound effect in eliminating the chronic unemployment situation in the United Kingdom.

The key thing for us all was to end the situation whereby our working conditions were determined at Downing Street, by the Government of the day. Trades Unions had been established to defend and improve the welfare of their members but for some years now they had failed to do this.

The time had now come for us to claim our proper entitlement for our efforts and neither the Government nor the TUC should be allowed to interfere in our legitimate claim.

Ford workers on their target for 1977

SHOP STEWARDS from Ford plants throughout the country met recently to consider the issues affecting all hourly-paid workers - toolmakers, electricians, foundrymen, sprayers, drivers, welders and assemblers. The following charter was agreed on as the basis of a 'wages and conditions' application later this year, with the intention of uniting all Ford workers around a single claim.

"This Conference clearly states its position in relation to wage restraint. Previously the Ford workers accepted the Social Contract as a contribution to the country's economic difficulties. That sacrifice made by the Trade Unions throughout the country was never intended as a permanent policy of wage restraint.

"We therefore now call for and will fight for free collective bargaining from August 1st, 1977 to effectively reflate the economy."

The conference also called for a minimum wage increase of 15 per cent, recognition of skills and a 2½ hour reduction in the working week for all workers.

A speaker pointed out that whilst we had seen a continuing slide in our buying power, Ford gross profits had grown from 14.1 million pounds in 1975 to 121.6 million pounds in 1976. And whilst we had been exhorted to keep our wages down, Henry Ford II had increased his wages

Humberside

RECENTLY Humberside County Council made fourteen of its office cleaning staff redundant. The women immediately handed their keys into management. It took caretakers an average of five hours each to lock every office door, filling cabinet and cupboard for the night. Next day, the caretakers refused to break the women's action. Management called in the police who used some choice words to say what they thought about this extra work. The Council, faced with the women's solidarity and uncooperative policemen cancelled the redundancies immediately.

Govt cuts science

JUST AS the cuts in education belie the government's claim that there will be any genuine economic recovery, so too do the recent announcements of cuts in the government science budget given recently by the Advisory Board for Research Councils.

The projected 1977-78 budget of £249 million represents a cut in real terms of 3 per cent over the 1976-77 budget. Within this reduced budget engineering research will increase 60 per cent at the expense of other scientific fields such as medical research and nuclear physics. Although this may seem a logical

rationalisation in favour of those sciences making a more direct contribution to the economy, it is merely a cosmetic attempt to make the cuts seem more acceptable, as much scientific research makes an indirect contribution to the economy.

Meanwhile, in another sphere of scientific research the University Grants Commission has stated their concern about the deterioration of research capabilities in the universities.

And if the rumours of still more postgraduate tuition fee increases in the pipeline are true, a further decline in the budget's real value is inevitable.

China and America .. two diametrically different ways of dealing with energy

THE GREAT energy debate has now been fuelled by the apocalyptic statements emanating from that Messiah across the water, President Carter. Where America leads, the rest of the world is supposed to follow blithely in awe and respect. Now energy, an essential part of transforming nature to serve man, is to be looked on not as something to be used, but only "conserved". Conserved, of course, for capitalism.

For decades the production of oil in America has been rigorously controlled while the American oil monopolies of Exxon, Texaco and the rest have been busy draining oil from all over the world to import to the USA and sell round the world to their immense profit. If the pre-1973 situation - the Arab boycott - had been allowed to continue, the end result would have been a world where the only oil was to be found in the United States.

Now the Americans realise that they can no longer go on expecting the rest of the world to denude itself of its natural resources for its sake. Now other countries seek to conserve their oil. Now America decides the time is ripe to cut down on its own consumption.

Energy in America is wasted on such a vast scale that the glaring light focused on the "gas guzzlers" serves only to hide from view the fact that, in a country where most objects are manufactured solely to become obsolete in a few years, very little energy goes into producing anything worthwhile and lasting.

In China they are proud of their achievements in producing energy. Their oilfield in Taching is the apple of the nation's eye. They seek to improve production. They do not feel guilty about us-

ing energy because their oil, coal and gas all go towards constructing a decent society. They have no gas guzzlers because they have a proper public transport system.

The Taching oilfield received a big impetus to improve and expand production in 1960 when the revisionist Soviet Union attempted to use an oil embargo to bring China to its knees, to try to force her to follow in its revisionist steps. So its development is a part of China's self-reliant approach and is linked intimately with the question of national independence. The workers in the oilfield are conscious of their role in contributing to the modernization of all sides of China's national life, be it agriculture, industry, or national defence.

The imperialist USA also seeks with its so-called conservation plans to lessen reliance on other countries. But it also seeks to take from those countries as much as it can! Independence is for America, but for no-one else. While we in Britain allow American companies like Phillips, Texaco, Conoco, Amoco and Exxon to bleed the North Sea dry for a mess of pottage, Carter wants to withhold plutonium from the rest of the world.

America has shown the world very little of a positive nature in the short time it has cast its shadow over us, but now it serves as a prime example of that lesson which the socialist countries have learnt - that you can't conserve energy and at the same time conserve capitalism.



Taching oil field built under socialism in China.

May Day message to the Communist Party of Portugal (Reconstructed)

The Central Committee of the CPBML greets the rally being organised on the occasion of the Party's Congress and sends its warmest fraternal greetings.

These are testing days for the working class throughout Europe in its struggles against capitalism and the many incorrect ideologies which are trying to divert and distort the struggle ranging from revisionism and social reformism to counter-revolutionary trends which, while posing as ultra-left, are doing the work of the enemy.

In such a period, the Marxist-Leninist Party of any country has to strengthen its class links with its own mass, work hard to apply the science of Marxism to the concrete conditions of its own class struggles and be resolutely self-reliant. From the days of the great Bolshevik Revolution to the mighty victories of the Parties of China and Albania and, more recently, Vietnam, this cardinal truth has been self-evident.

In Western Europe those of us who have tried to build communist parties on Marxism-Leninism face many obstacles but we are convinced that through protracted struggle which is based on principled scientific socialism and not opportunistic slogans we shall, linked to the working class, overcome our enemies.

On the eve of May Day we wish you and the Portuguese working class our revolutionary fraternal feelings.

Reg Birch for the CC

Not Whitehall but Peoples War will free Zimbabwe

ONCE again British capitalism is trying to use cunning to break an armed liberation struggle. For the last few years the independence movement in Zimbabwe-Rhodesia - has been moving towards guerrilla war and not the fruitless and dangerous paths of constitutional negotiations. Recent guerrilla actions have been successful and produced panic in the ranks of Smith and his fascists who are busy recruiting mercenaries as well as raising the age of conscription all the time screaming hysterically to get the US imperialists to rescue "western civilization".

In Zimbabwe right now this means executions, torture and all kinds of fascist measures.

After Kissinger's fiasco last

year when the USA tried to contrive some kind of settlement which would have safeguarded neocolonialism, it was left to Britain to do the trick. Its image, especially in the shape of a young energetic Labour Foreign Secretary, Dr David Owen, was held to be more appealing to the Africans. So he went on his lightning tour of southern Africa to show that Whitehall could deliver the goods. "A new timetable for Rhodesian independence" said The Times, as if Westminster and Whitehall still decide the destiny of other nations.

For all the platitudes about freedom and the right of nations to be independent that we have to endure at Labour Party conferences, when it comes to the crunch the British Government can be depended on to save British monopolies and their huge investments in Southern Africa, of course suitably camouflaged to salve social democratic and liberal consciences. At the recent Geneva Conference debate on the "Humanitarian Laws of War" which had a majority of governments voting for giving captured guerrilla soldiers P.O.W. status, the British delegate, Brigadier Sir David Hughes-Morgan, abstained, as there were, "too many ambiguities and blurred distinctions".

Well, there won't be any ambiguities about what happens in Zimbabwe. The people will show the British and the Smith regime that what really counts in the end is the might of the people, armed and strengthened with the right politics and prepared to fight for their freedom. All the hysteria about Russian imperialism ready to pounce on Africa, as no doubt it would like to, cannot make the people of Zimbabwe or any other country accept British and American colonialism. All imperialisms are paper tigers and all of them can be destroyed.

Albania — the most successful country in Europe

Pamphlet available from Bellman Bookshop, 155 Fortess Road, N.W.5. Price 20p.

Capitalism - East & West

GRIPPED by the world crisis of capitalism the new Russian bourgeoisie besides increasing the exploitation of the Soviet people is also trying to load a heavier burden on the East European countries. One of the main forms of this is to compel these countries to supply the manpower for the construction of projects in Soviet territory - particularly those where working conditions are the worst. For example, many thousands of Bulgarian workers are employed cutting wood in Komi, working at the paper cellulose factory in Archangel, the metallurgical combine at Kurek or on the Orenburg gas pipe line.

Unemployment in capitalist countries continues to increase and especially hit are youth. In the 23 capitalist countries which are members of the Organisation for Economic Collaboration and Development, the number of young people out of work has risen to over 7 million, and this in spite of the fact that many of these countries only count youth who have been in work and then discharged as unemployed. In Britain from 1971 to 1976 the number of unemployed among the youth of the country increased four fold.

Women can only achieve equality under Socialism

In Britain

THOUGHTFUL discussion took place at a recent meeting held at the Bellman Bookshop entitled 'Women - one half of the Working Class'. The question was raised, "can women achieve equality (with men) under capitalism?" The answer that emerged was that such equality as might be achieved could only be an equality of exploitation ever susceptible to the divisive tactics of the ruling class. Only under socialism can women really achieve the emancipation they strive for with the rest of their class.

In Albania

The following excerpts from a letter sent to Enver Hoxha by workers in the mountainous Lushaja district of Albania describe a review of 10 years' progress made in that district.

"Before, the girls who left the countryside for school were few, mainly because of parental backwardness. Today, we have many girls who after graduating from school work in agriculture, as teachers, nurses, midwives, agronomists etc.

"On the basis of the all-round work of the Party, women have become a great leading force in production; in the 3 agricultural co-operatives of our area, women now constitute 53-55 per cent of the workforce.

"The ever more active participation of women in the affairs of the co-operative has become a decisive factor in their further emancipation. She is having her say everywhere and always. Over 500 women have been elected to the various Party, state and

economic organs. The number of women in the Party Branch has likewise increased. Ten years ago in one district there was only one woman communist. Today 47 per cent of the Party are women."

Outlining how, on the basis of collective work, production of various crops had doubled or trebled, while income had trebled and overall output had doubled, the letter continues:

"Our achievements are a reflection of the qualitative leap we have made under the leadership of the Party, in all fields of socialist construction - but there is still no room for complacency."



Taxation.. who pays?

THE Public Services which are being cut by the Government and the grants handed out to industry are bought and paid for by the working class through the taxation system. Despite the outcry that the tax burden on companies is too high, the share of company taxation in the gross receipts of the Inland Revenue have fallen dramatically over the past 25 years. In fact, in 1952 companies paid 25 per cent of the £4½ billion tax bill (just over £1 billion) while in 1975 this had fallen to 5 per cent of £34 billion - at £1.7 billion.

Even with the huge profits of 1976, company taxation is only £2.5 billion due to the numerous tax reliefs given in respect of investment and the inflated values of stocks as prices increase

These reliefs will remain until profits are measured in terms of inflated pound notes with the proposed new accounting system - by which profits will be measured after deducting the replacement cost of the item just sold. Then profits will be so reduced that company taxation will be held permanently at these low levels.

The recent Budget gave the biggest reliefs to companies, for while personal tax relief increased by £70, the level of profits taxed at a reduced rate increased by £10,000 - from £30,000 to £40,000.

Indeed, it has recently been pointed out that an increasing proportion of Corporation Tax can be avoided if the ownership

of a company is based overseas. An accountancy journal has stated. "Britain is becoming a nation owned and managed by absentee landlords". Another advantage to be gained from overseas management is that all major decisions are taken with no regard to Britain's needs - whether there be Bullock Committees or not.

That Britain is not unique in this situation can be clearly seen with the large numbers of parent companies based in Britain, whose sole function is to hold shares in whole conglomerates of companies operating everywhere from Alaska to Zambia. These companies make decisions with no regard to the national base of the operating companies, only to the driving force of profits. Careful planning by these owners of capital can easily avoid a divided freeze here or a price freeze there.

Food prices and workers

ALL over the world inflation is one sign of capitalism's absolute crisis.

From People's Voice, Newspaper of the Communist Party of New Zealand:

"It has been said that there are lies and statistics. We are reminded of this when we have the official retail price index thrust in our faces. The index is waved about when wage appeals are under consideration but its relation to the problem of survival for the working people is remote.

"The catch is that the index is based on a wide spectrum of commodities, which of course never all have price increases at the same time or the same rate.

"It may be that this week you can do without a new motor mower, a rifle, a length of sailcloth or without getting yourself cremated. Therefore you can't take advantage of the fact that the cost of these has not gone up.

But you can't dodge the increases on bread, milk, groceries, vegetables, meat - where practically every item has been touched by the skeleton hand.

It is worth noting in passing that food items form an infinitely greater proportion of the total expenses of the working man than they do for the wealthy sector of the population. As a result price increases such as we are knowing at the moment mean virtually nothing in the plush suburbs while they bring misery and even tragedy into the working class home.

"We learn now that the increase in food prices for the month averages out at 3.3 per cent. If the increase goes on at the same rate for the rest of the year what will be needed is no piddling nine or 12 per cent wage increase but a 50 per cent increase just to stand still.

"We are told that our meat is fetching good prices overseas now but who is getting the advantage of this? Not the working farmer. He has already lost the advantage of the devaluated NZ dollar in recent price rises. In England whatever the price tag on a 14-kilogram lamb cost of getting it to the English market from the farm gate is \$13.85, or about 53 per cent of the selling price.

What happens when the shipping companies and the meat works finally squeeze the last farmer off the land?

"When will inflation end? It won't. Capitalism, committed to its debt economy, is caught up in an unending inflationary spiral which it has to maintain now in order to survive though at the same time it will inevitably help destroy the system in the end."



Workers march against the Social Contract in London, April 1977. John Sturrock (Report)

Journalists advance

JOURNALISTS came close to taking a bold, revolutionary step at their annual conference in Ilkley last week. They were within just eight votes of rejecting the Social Contract outright.

As it was, they agreed to support a "planned" return to free collective bargaining - which is the back-door to a Phase Three Three of the Contract.

Many delegates were clearly upset at having to vote for the Contract after hearing the weight

of argument during an intense debate. Their votes were predetermined, however, by mandates from their branches. There can be little doubt that the message they carry back with them to their colleagues will reflect a very different view from that they had to support. It was a significant advance from the National Union of Journalists conference of twelve months ago, when delegates would not even entertain a debate on the Contract.

The growing class consciousness of journalists was revealed also in their decision not to cooperate with the introduction of new printing technology during the next year while a union committee investigates the situation. Furthermore the valiant twenty-week strike by 60 Kettering journalists was backed up by the decision to spread industrial action. Later in the week conference heard of a massive swing of support by other unions for the strike. One of the

reasons the newspaper has appeared during the strike has been the flow of copy from the national news agency - the Press Association. Delegates resolved to end this anomaly. PA journalists are to be instructed not to send news copy to strike-bound papers in future.

Avon schoolchildren take to the streets in their fight for a decent education

SINCE January of this year there has been a growing response from teachers and parents in Avon to the £2 million axing of Avon's education budget for next year, whereby 1000 teachers and non-teaching staff must go.

Hartcliffe Comprehensive, the third largest school in Britain, a split-site school with 2061 pupils, took up the fight further when it was learned that 8 staff were being cut, and that capitulation has dropped from £39,000 (2 years ago) to £27,000.

The NUT members took the initiative by putting a motion to a full general meeting of teaching and ancillary staff not to cover for school meals during the last week of the Spring term. This was passed by the great majority and duly upheld by all.

On the first day of the action feelings ran high among the pupils when they received no meals, and free meal children staged a sit-in. A state of near anarchy was averted only when the staff took it upon themselves the task of educating the pupils into why their own action was being taken and why pupils should take part with, not against the teach-

ers. Small groups were formed to discuss the effects of Avon's cuts in the school and pupils learned of the loss of 100 teaching hours from the sixth form timetable for next September, of poorer and poorer course choices for examination candidates thus depriving the pupils of their right to all round education, of worse facilities in technical subjects, worsening class sizes in remedial maths and reading, making a mockery of Weinstock's and those other captains of industry decrying the lack of literate technically trained pupils applying for jobs. Out of this real "great debate" in Hartcliffe came a mass meeting of parents, teachers and pupils where an action committee was formed, and a petition drawn up by the pupils who, however, were quick to catch on that there is no power in a petition. A sixth form girl delegate showed immense courage by going on to organise a pupils' demonstration march from the school to the city centre some 6 miles away. This took place on April 21st.

1200 pupils marched in a disciplined, united way, knowing

why they were marching, and adding to the tremendous voice of parents and children already gathered outside Avon House protesting about the "rising fives" decision which means a child cannot attend school till after his 5th birthday, while nurseries are closing too.

The Resources Committee Meeting did not rescind either the cuts or the rising fives decision in spite of angry scenes inside and outside the meeting.

Hartcliffe pupils are determined to keep up the fight and are hissing with other schools' action groups being formed by pupils and parents.

The Bristol Trades Council received the sixth form girl from Hartcliffe with enormous respect and sympathy. She addressed a meeting of well over 200 trade unionists and was greatly moved by their overwhelming support and on the spot donation of £85.

Parents, pupils and teachers are pooling their knowledge with the intention of winning. There is a great determination to fight for every child's future, from nursery age right up to sixth form.



Public Meetings

- All meetings will be held at the Bellman Bookshop, 155 Fortress Road London NW5 (Tufnell Park Tube) commencing at 7.30 p. m.
- Friday, May 13th "Down with Phase Three."
 - Friday, May 20th "What is real industrial democracy?"
 - Friday, May 27th "The City of London, financial centre of capitalism."
 - Friday, June 3rd ---no meeting planned---
 - Friday, June 10th "Save our public transport."
 - Friday, June 17th "North Sea Oil, capitalism's salvation?"
 - Friday, June 24th "Food mountains, want amidst plenty."
 - Friday, July 1st "The decline of apprenticeship and technical education."
 - Friday, July 8th "Socialism, not the Labour Party."
 - Friday, July 15th "Revolution, not World War."
- BRIGHTON Brighton Workers Bookshop, 37 Gloucester Rd
May 11th Education: What Future for Youth? 8.00 p. m.
- BRISTOL
May 20th "Fight now for the future"
Held at Main Trend Books, 17 Midland Road, Old Market, at 7.30 p. m.
- NEW ALBANIA SOCIETY
Saturday, June 12th "Industrial Development in Albania" Talk, Discussion, Refreshments, Held at Bellman Bookshop, 155 Fortress Road, NW5 at 7.30 p. m.

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