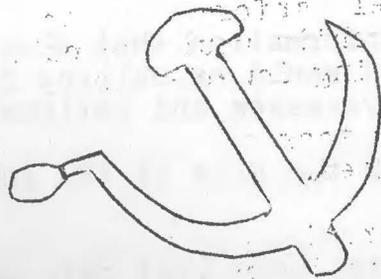


Finnsbury Communist

AN ANTI-REVISIONIST JOURNAL

Nº 363 APRIL 1995



BRING PRICES DOWN!

In March, shares in National Power & PowerGen were put on the market. Millions of speculators rushed to buy them. They were certain of a quick profit from selling them later on. So they thought.

No sooner had the speculators bought the shares, however, than Professor Stephen Littlechild, the electricity regulator, announced that electricity prices should come down. Lower electricity prices mean lower electricity profits and lower share prices. The speculators' hopes were dashed, even though they still made slight nominal profits.

The following letter appeared in the Morning Star on March 17th:-

"So there is a choice. Windfall profits for share speculators and fat cats. Or lower prices for electricity consumers. I know which I prefer.

Because of all the redundancies, BT, gas, water and electricity production costs have all gone down sharply. It is about time lower costs led to lower prices.

Pensioners' organisations, in particular, should bring pressure to bear on regulators like Professor Littlechild. If the regulators don't regulate prices downwards, they should be replaced."

The price of production is, approximately, equal to the cost of production plus an average profit. However, the privatised utilities, and big firms generally, have been having it both ways. They have been making workers redundant all over the place, thereby reducing production costs and, often, distribution costs as well. Prices have come down hardly at all. The big firms want to have their cake and eat it. They want to make maximum profits at everybody else's expense.

Prices should be slashed heavily all round. Profits would be reduced. Share prices would come down. The chairmen and chief executives who are on performance related pay and share options would all lose out.

Rigorous quality standards would need to be enforced. Otherwise the big firms would seek to recoup their position by lowering their standards of service to the public.

WHAT DID LABOUR SAY?

Labour energy spokesman, Jack Cunningham, "told MPs that ministers had

withheld information that electricity regulator Professor Stephen Littlechild would be calling for a price cut from purchasers of the remaining PowerGen and National Power shares" (Morning Star, 9/3/95).

Labour took the side of the share speculators who are a lot of parasites.

The parasites have lost out. And a good job, too. Whatever they have lost can be used to boost government spending or cut taxes.

In case Dr Cunningham does not know, the government sells National Savings Certificates. Occasionally it considers raising interest rates on new issues of these certificates. But if you go into a Post Office to buy the old low interest issue nobody will tell you that higher interest issues are on the way.

The Labour Party probably thinks that it has got the workers and the consumers in its pocket already. Now is the time to win over the speculators as well.

LEFTIES GET LOST. SAYS BLAIR

The original Clause Four of the Labour Party constitution pledged the party to "the common ownership of the means of production, distribution and exchange". This has generally been understood to mean widespread nationalisation with a place for the co-ops. But it could have meant workers running their own firms. It could even have meant wider public share ownership of joint stock companies. Even if common ownership means widespread nationalisation, this is irrelevant. What counts is which class holds state power.

Blair's new Clause Four stands for "a community in which power, wealth and opportunity are in the hands of the many not the few". As this mentions power it is, word for word, stronger than the old Clause Four. That is, if we did not know it was just a lot of waffle and eyewash.

The point is that Labour Lefties like "common ownership", meaning nationalisation. It makes them feel that they are socialists. Blair is telling the Left that he does not give a fig for their feelings.

Blair will get his way. He can ask the Lefties and their fellow travellers in the communist movement and the SWP "Where can you go?" The Lefties, who have as much political backbone as a can of worms, will knuckle under.

The Lefties, in defence of their spineless attitude, unceasingly point out that the Labour Party still has the support of the trade unions. Big deal. It is a lucky trade union branch where more than 5% of the nominal membership attends meetings.

DON'T FORGET KARL MARX

Karl Marx died at 2.30pm on 14th March 1883. Every year, commencing at this exact time, a ceremony of commemoration is held when flowers are placed on the memorial and speeches made. This does not mean that

tributes cannot be made at other times. This year, for example, a group of Chinese just beat the Highgate Cemetery East closing time of 4pm to pay their respects.

The main ceremony at 2.30pm was attended by 22 comrades, including representatives from China, Cuba, Vietnam, the Marx Memorial Library, the Morning Star, the Communist Party of Britain and the Communist Workers Party of Iran and two members of the Stalin Society.

The main address was given by Dr. Tony Chater, retiring editor of the Morning Star, who pointed out that the evils of capitalism still exist.

Mary Rosser, chairwoman of the Marx Memorial Library, remarked that she looked forward to the day when many more comrades will be present at the ceremony.

We agree with Mary. London is highly privileged to be the last resting place of Comrade Marx. There are no obstacles to comrades paying their own tributes in their own way.

Thursday, 14th March 1996, 2.30pm. Highgate East Cemetery. Make a note in your diary now.

Bring a bunch of flowers and a short speech, if you are a speaker.

NO FRIENDS FOR CHINA

The Society for Friendship with China is delighted with the response to its advert in the Morning Star offering free copies of Quotations from Chairman Mao Tsetung (The Little Red Book).

The SFC is less than delighted that not one of those writing in (including apparently members of the New Communist Party) said that they were friends of China.

The SFC invites membership from all who are prepared to demonstrate their friendship publicly through letters to the Press.

WHAT CAN THEY KNOW OF ERIC WHO ONLY ERIC KNOW

At the New Communist Party public meeting on February 23rd, a speaker from the floor complained that the New Worker would report only the speech of Eric Trevett, general secretary of the party. We did not mention this in March "Finsbury Communist". We wanted to give Andy Brooks, New Worker editor, a chance to mend his ways. Alas, Andy reported only Eric again.

Communist party general secretaries are a fine bunch of comrades. Each holds together a useful chunk of the movement. But haven't Eric and Andy ever heard the old saying "Marxism grows strong in the struggle against error". Publish the "erroneous" views, Andy. And then let everyone read Eric giving them the putdown.

WHEN PRISONER POWER GREW OUT OF THE BARREL OF A GUN

SAOIRSE campaigns for the immediate transfer of all Irish political prisoners to Ireland and their subsequent release on amnesty (Full details may be obtained from SAOIRSE, PO Box 7247, London E5 OHF).

The campaign was launched at a press conference at the House of Commons on 23rd March. Frank O'Neill was in the chair.

Very briefly, speakers maintained that, on direct instructions from the Home Office, the conditions of detention of Irish prisoners have recently deteriorated sharply.

A questioner asked if deterioration followed immediately on the IRA ceasefire. "Yes", said the chairperson. "Why?", asked another questioner. "You tell us" was the reply.

We are informed that great care was taken not to offend Irish prisoners before the IRA laid down their bombs and guns. Sinn Fein pressed the IRA to cease fire. The IRA complied. There is therefore no need for the government to be kind to Irish prisoners any more.

WHAT ABOUT THE "PEACE PROCESS"? The IRA were being a nuisance. They are no longer being a nuisance. End of peace process.

A LETTER TO THE CZECH PRESIDENT

President Václav Havel
Pražský Hrad
Prague 1
Czech Republic

Finsbury Communist Association
72 Compton Street
London E1V 0BN
England

31st March 1995

Dear President Havel,

We opposed the Soviet-led invasion and occupation of Czechoslovakia in 1968. We opposed the persecution of yourself, Charter 77 and other dissidents.

We are concerned to learn of your government's persecution of the KSCM (Communist Party of Bohemia and Moravia). In particular we are concerned with the attempt to evict the KSCM from its Prague headquarters.

Such vindictiveness gives the impression of a Russian type of political instability, a fear that the KSCM may return to power. This can hardly help the Czech republic to win much needed international support and investment.

In any case, it is wrong just as locking you up was wrong. Please use your influence to stop this persecution.

We do not expect that you will receive this letter. We have therefore taken the precaution of sending a copy to Postmark Praha trusting that they will reproduce it in full.

Yours sincerely

Printed and published by Finsbury Communist Association
72 Compton Street, London E1V 0BN