

THE WORKER



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CPB(ML) - FOR AN INDEPENDENT BRITAIN

Editorial

EEC Steel

British steel production fell during May to its lowest level since 1972 reflecting a serious contraction in demand for steel throughout British industry. Figures released by the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) (published in the Financial Times 6, 6, 75,) showed that in the fourth quarter of 1974 capital investment by manufacturers fell on average in real terms by about 8 per cent. The DTI also forecast that manufacturing companies will have invested 15 per cent less in 1975 than in 1974. In the ministry's words "... the extent of this fall implies a steeply falling trend through 1975 at a rate not previously experienced..." and in 1976 investment is expected to be "... of the same order as in 1975."

This recession has serious consequences - especially for those who work in steel. Every industrial process involves steel - the backbone of any industrial economy. On June 11 the Brussels Commission under Article 46 of the Treaty of Rome (under which the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC) was established) ordered a 15 per cent cutback in steel production during the next two months in all member countries.

This in Euro terminology is designed to "... facilitate the establishment of equilibrium between production and the current depressed level of demand..." - In other words enforced closure and slump.

Grants to the British Steel Corporation prior to the referendum designed by Brussels to show the 'generosity' of the ECSC, are now to be followed by a further grant of £53,000 - not of course to save jobs - but as redundancy payment for BSC workers sacked as a result of the cutbacks. £15,400 will go to Shotton in Flintshire and £38,000 to the Whitehead works, Newport.

As the ECSC orders further cutbacks steelworkers face attacks and even more redundancies - not only from the British Steel Corporation and the Government, but from the united capitalist steel policy of the European Superstate.

THE CPB(ML) - FOR THE LIBERATION, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND DEFENCE OF BRITAIN

Wilson has pledged that Britain will now "play a full and constructive part in all European Community policies and activities". But in the acceptance of the EEC the Labour Government speaks only for Capitalism.

Capitalists "go into Europe" by joining other capitalists in exploiting a Euro labour force, by investing their profits in whichever of the Nine gives them the biggest and quickest returns, by throwing hundreds of thousands out of work in Britain in the process of exploiting less well-organised workers elsewhere, by running with US imperialism as the scavengers battering on that superpower's capitalist kills.

British workers can only "go into Europe" as wage slaves deprived of work here and therefore forced to seek jobs abroad - and thus to be separated from their work mates in the organised labour movement which is their only strength and protection.

Profits know no nationality, no boundaries. The greed for profits which turned Britain imperialist and enslaved other nations is now bent on destroying Britain itself as a nation. The working class cannot go anywhere else - except it be led away in bondage. British capital goes where it can, joins whom it may. We remain here in our island home which we must defend against all invaders, whether they come in military or financial guise.

Nationalism is older than capitalism. It is the essential genius of working people who in a particular place over a considerable period of time have developed their peculiar skills and arts for the enrichment of life both materially and spiritually. The bourgeoisie used this nationalism to build their capitalist nation state - just as they used working people to defeat feudalism and then disenfranchised them.

Now that the bourgeoisie have no further use for British nationalism it is for us workers who have developed it down the centuries to liberate it, to liberate that spirit of Britain which is the genius, skill, courage, intelligence and initiative of the working people of Britain.

An affront to workers

The recent TUC confidential document on wages and salaries is an abrogation of the very basis of trade unionism. That the function of a trade union is the protection and improvement of its members' wages is to be turned upside down by union leaders and the TUC. Their excuse is the present rate of price inflation and the spectre of higher unemployment in the future. The TUC document subscribes to the view that wage rises are responsible for inflation and hence calls for wage settlements to be "significantly below the going rate of increases in prices".

The argument that wage rises cause price increases is an old one that was refuted both in theory and practice over a century ago. An increase in workers' wages has the effect of reducing the profits of the capitalists. To assume that prices must rise to compensate for such reduction in profits is to assume that profits are sacrosanct and must never fall.

As for unemployment, it was precisely the very low wages that went hand in hand with high rates of unemployment in the thirties.

It has been a strength of the working class that statements by its "leaders" and laws of parliament are defied and defeated.

But this has led to the dangerous complacency of the working class that no matter what union leaders say and plan, the TUC proposes and accepts, or the government legislates, workers can always fight and win wage claims one way or another. Hence the vote at last year's TUC conference to accept the social contract. Hence the vote on the Common Market. Hence Jack Jones can call for wage restraint and a ban on strikes while at the same time members of the Transport and General are on strike. Today, this arrogant attitude of our class has become its greatest weakness.

Let there be no illusion that the social contract has been a success. We can draw no comfort from the fact that its guidelines on wage settlement have been broken on so many occasions. The social contract is not a set of percentages and indices: it is an ideology. Its purpose is to win the minds and not just deprive the pockets of the working class. This has been such a success that its Mark II is now being worked out.

Ireland one nation

New pamphlet to be published shortly by the CPB (M-L):

Investment prospects.. chicken and egg

The latest Department of Industry survey of investment intentions in respect of the manufacturing industry shows a decline for the current year of 15 per cent.

Since a smaller reduction in investment in manufacturing resulted in unemployment of just under one million, a cut back in capital spending of this order can only be reflected in massive redundancies over the whole field of British industry.

The capitalists' own explanation for this drastic decline is that "sandwiched between militant pay

demands and choking Government controls" industry just isn't profitable enough to attract investment. On the other hand, an industry starved of investment is hardly likely to be competitive and an uncompetitive industry isn't profitable either. It's like the futile argument about which came first, the chicken or the egg.

The truth of the matter is that this depressing forecast is simply the measure of the failure of British capitalism and the reason why British capitalists wanted to get into Europe, as a way of getting out of Britain! Some of the very firms,

like Litton's, which are closing down factories here, are busily opening up new ones on the Continent.

The voice of capitalism which comes out of Europe is music in the ears of Britain's incompetent capitalist class. The bank for International Settlements in Basle issued a grim warning on June 9th, that Britain will have to stop living beyond its means and workers will have to bear the burden. "As sure as fate, real consumption in Britain is going to have to be curtailed and the mass of labour will be obliged to shoulder its share of the cut."

The highest rise ever in the cost of living - 4.2 per cent for the month of May is being used by Healey to justify "severe action in the coming weeks to impose stringent guidelines for the next wage round".

But it was Healey's budget which was responsible for the largest part of this rise. In other words, Healey puts up prices to claw back money which workers have fought for to preserve their standard of living, and then uses that very rise in prices to demand stricter control of wages.

FIGHT FOR EDUCATION



UNDER ATTACK BY THE LABOUR GOVERNMENT

On the Industrial Front

Wage freeze

The real problem for capitalism and the government is how to con the working class into voluntarily putting a freeze on itself instead of doing it by statutory methods.

The strength of the working class lies in the fact that it is able to put the Government and capitalism in this dilemma. Workers will have to be on their guard from now on and inform their managements that any attempt to introduce a wage freeze will be met with action.

Railways

That the NUR Executive have so clearly called for strike action on June 23rd is because they recognise that militancy pays.

It has been proved to them by the miners and the ASLEF.

The present necessity for the railwaymen is to get support from the miners, the postmen and electricity supply industry workers and the printing unions, which would mean newspapers being distributed only in their own local areas.

The railwaymen find themselves going into action at a very difficult time when the Government may make a determined attempt to control wages in the public sector.

The postmen have promised backing that would severely disrupt the postal service if the strike goes ahead. There would be no movement of coal to power stations.

The AUEW Executive has already instructed its members in Railway Workshops not to do repair work normally performed by NUR workshop members and it is this sort of action and support that would give the necessary backing for the NUR to be successful in their claim.

G and MWU

The Union's annual conference in Aberdeen unanimously accepted recommendations that the General Council and the National Executive Committee should be merged into a new body to be called the Executive Council with increased representation by members working at their trade.

By a unanimous vote a motion was passed calling on trade unionists in the electricity, gas and water industries to make sure that their services are continued to factories where "sit-ins" or "work-ins" are taking place.

The conference was told that increasingly managements were trying to cut off services to those factories that are in dispute.

ICI

Six thousand production workers at ICI's Wilton plant are voting on a shop stewards' recommendation to strike unless the company improves its offer, averaging 26 per cent, on a national claim covering 57,000 workers, of 55 per cent.

A further 5,000 production workers at ICI's building complex on Teeside are being urged to ban overtime from Monday by the stewards.

At Doncaster 250 men have gone on strike.

At Trafford Park Manchester 45 craftsmen have threatened to strike.

ICI workers are well aware of the obscene amount of wealth that this monopoly makes in a year and are determined to wrest some of it from a recalcitrant employer.

An employer's spokesman at the London Headquarters said he could not recall an outbreak on this scale during national negotiations in past years.

Inter-Union offshore cttee

Workers engaged in North Sea Oil Production, members of 12 Trade Unions, are still carrying on their battle with both British and Foreign Employers to achieve recognition and negotiating rights.

They have blacked eight North Sea rigs owned by ODECO, an American Company. It is the most extensive boycott against a drilling contractor so far, and covers the supply of goods services, and repair facilities. Working at the same time for international unity in the struggles, the workers have approached the International Transport Federation who cover North European and Scandinavian supply bases, and they have agreed to support the blacking.

The blacking came into force after a crane driver on the rig "Ocean Victory", was demoted because of an allegation that he had failed to comply with a safety regulation, an accusation made after he had been elected as a Union Representative.

Bank of

International Settlement

More unwanted interference from abroad came today in an effort by capitalism abroad to give backing to capitalism at home.

The Bank of International Settlement told the British Labour Movement it will have to accept a drop in its real consumption as part of the cutback which the country is inexorably facing.

Fighting the cuts

A proposal for a mass lobby of Parliament in protest against cuts in education expenditure was given unanimous support by a conference organised by the SE region TUC.

The Inner London Teachers Association (NUT) has agreed that such a lobby should be accompanied by a half-day strike.

There is a growing groundswell against the cuts. Teachers are resisting redeployment. In Lambeth teachers have organised a "week of action" against the cuts.

Prentice slinks away

Prentice has slunk away from the Department of Education and Science. In office for only 16 months, he managed to preside over the most comprehensive and damaging cuts ever made in British education.

As MP for Newham, the area with the lowest education standards in England and Wales, he was

EEC threat to education

A major barrier to Common Market mobility of labour is the variation in education and qualification procedures from country to country. Already there are proposals to "harmonise" these procedures and we can expect attempts to transform the education system from end to end - from ordinary levels to higher degree. The "harmonisation" will almost certainly mean a uniformity at the lowest level.

We can expect two year courses and the "rationalisation" of teacher

education. The cheapest forms of education such as the Open University will be encouraged. "Euro-qualification" directives will necessitate further examinations in some professions. European "harmony" will involve rigorous control of course content, a challenge to the cherished flexibility of British education.

It is proclaimed that, "The community's research and development policy is naturally closely tied with its industrial policy". In other words the education budget will be a tight one.

The British system of grants to students is unique. The case against loans as opposed to grants has been argued and won. It may have to be argued again.

particularly suited to his role as axeman.

Prentice has handed over to a certain Mulley, formerly Minister of Transport. One of Mulley's first utterances was, "you have to remember that against the background of the economic situation there is no growth area anywhere". A new figurehead, but evidently the policy stands.

Humberside manoeuvres

Humberside teachers are up in arms at the attempts by local politicians to split their ranks. The Tory minority group on Humberside County Council got hold of, and circulated to all headteachers, a discussion document from the Southorpe

'Socialist' Education Association, a 'left-wing' Labour Group. The aim was to set the cat among the pigeons, with the Tories championing headmasters' authority, and the Labour Party the 'ordinary class teacher'. The only losers would have been the teachers themselves. Fortunately the plot has misfired.

Purporting to speak on behalf of the NUT, the Labour document calls upon socialist members of school governing bodies to 'undermine the undemocratic nature of schools', 'to challenge the right of teachers to take it upon themselves to make far-reaching decisions which affect the educa-

tion of children' and to 'resist headteachers' attempts to extend their empire'. Such a programme can have only one purpose - to divide teachers at a time when maximum unity, of both heads and class teachers, is needed against massive attacks by the State on education.

The Labour-controlled Humberside Education Authority has made great play of its new 'participatory' governing bodies which include parent, pupil, teacher and ancillary staff members. In practice this has led to much time wasting 'consultation' on names of schools, while the real decisions are made behind closed doors. Worse, union representatives are being asked to suggest items for 'cuts - school meals or books, staff or buildings. To their credit, teachers are refusing to choose their mode of execution.

The way to fight education cuts is not just to defend present standards, but to demand improvements. Cambridge students occupied the prestigious University Senate House just before a degree ritual, as part of their campaign for nursery facilities. Women students and staff with young children need nurseries and creches if they are to have equal opportunities with men to study and keep their jobs.

The June 3rd sit-in happened at a time of extensive cutbacks in University expenditure. The target was well-chosen and the students were united and disciplined, in contrast to the unprovoked violence of the University proctors (private police) and the arbitrariness of the 3 arrests made.

The task now is to build on the success of this tactic and to extend the already broad support for the students' demands. Others can learn from this positive move in attacking education cuts.

Education in China

China is not a rich country. Twenty five years ago 8 out of 10 people were illiterate. The country badly needed doctors, scientists and technicians. One might have expected China to set up a few universities in the major cities to turn out these specialists after 5 or 6 years of higher education and leave the difficult problem of bringing education to the remote countryside until the country was far richer. Some Chinese, following Lin Shao-Chi's ideas, felt this was the only way.

Peasants fill the colleges

That there was another way was proved by the changes in education during and after the Cultural Revolution. Instead of concentrating on theory, universities and schools run their own factories and farms where students work and carry out research. The Shenyang Agricultural College split into five different colleges

in 1970, to bring education nearer the people. One of the colleges, Chaoyang, recruited local peasants for its agricultural courses, providing short and long courses to cater for as many as possible. A 52 year old cotton-grower, Wang, after courses at the college, helped his production team achieve record crops, and is now a consultant for the whole country. So many peasants applied for the courses that the classrooms could not take them all, so they brought stools and sat outside the windows.

Resources to the right places

10 million middle-school graduates have settled in the countryside to share their knowledge with the local peasants. 90 per cent of school-age children attend school, even if this means providing "mobile schools" on boats for river-dwelling fishermen's children, or teachers on horseback for herdsmen's children in the pasturelands.

Education is provided economically but on the principle of serving the whole people, not on the principle of saving as much money as possible.

Bristol University rent strike ends

Bristol University, among the first colleges to attempt a rent-strike in 1972, looked set to continue its present rent-strike over the summer vacation. For the moment however the strike has been defeated by an attack from the College Authorities, who threatened court action against rent strikers or their parents for payment of arrears. In the capitalist courts rent-strikers would not stand a chance. An orderly withdrawal was the order of the day.

The only defence against such attacks is our ability to take mass action and it must be admitted that the work has not been done to launch such an offensive at this time. However the College Authorities should consider exactly where they stand in the battle to defend education. The student body will return in October, with a clearer knowledge of how to fight and an increased determination to attack that system which seeks to destroy education.

Erratum

We apologise for the transposition of the pictures on page one and page four of the last issue.

Stable lads strike

The stable lads at Newmarket are still on strike to raise their basic pay by 20 per cent from £23.50 to £28.20 and to establish a 5½ day week, with overtime payment for week-end and holiday work. (At present this is not paid, and a lad may be sacked if he does not turn up on a Saturday or Sunday.)

The national press have advertised the trainers' offer of £3 widely - but this is for seven days. It is equivalent to an offer of £1.73 for a 5½ day week. The trainers are also refusing to honour a previous agreement to backdate the settlement to March.

The lads are learning that you can never trust such promises. Picketing of important races such as Ascot continues; support is coming from other Unions such as ABAS and ACTT as they are refusing television coverage and from the T & G members in breweries and soft drinks who are blacking the races.

Court Selects AUEW Delegates

In the case brought by an engineering worker who had been disqualified as an AUEW National Committee delegate, the judge ordered that both he and another disqualified delegate should attend the Union's national conference irrespective of the rules of the Union itself.

Furthermore, the Court ruled that the President of the AUEW could not give a casting vote even though this is a long standing custom, provided for at meetings of the Executive Council and even though the Standing Orders Committee of the National Committee meeting unanimously accepted the President's casting vote as valid. This practice has never been queried before either in the history of the Union or in law.

This assumption by the Court of the right to approve or disapprove of AUEW delegates is reminiscent of the action of the Industrial Relations Court in the

Goad case when the judge ruled that the Court could decide who was to be a member of the Union even if he had scabbed during a strike and had for long periods refused to pay dues.

At the time this decision and the fines against the AUEW which followed from it were seen as attempts to weaken and divide the Union which was leading the working-class fight against the Industrial Relations Act. In the result it was the Act and not the Union which was smashed.

It may be that the AUEW's uncompromising opposition to Britain's membership of the EEC is not unconnected with this latest judicial challenge to the Union's right to interpret its own rules and that this Court decision has to be regarded as the first attempt since the Referendum to interfere with British unions and make them more like those unions on the Continent which are not so much

defensive organisations of the working class as convenient organs of the capitalist state apparatus.

Workers can look in vain to the legal system for any support in their class struggles with employers: but let a disgruntled worker go to the courts for support against his union and the whole judicial paraphernalia is immediately at his disposal - and at the cost of the union!

IN BRIEF

US domination

President Ford's recent European trip has fully confirmed previous evidence of US support for EEC. In particular it demonstrated the power of the American government in Europe to clinch lucrative trade deals against potential EEC opposition. Whatever dreams European politicians may have at the moment about creating their own superpower in Europe, the United States continue to rule the roost

Social security

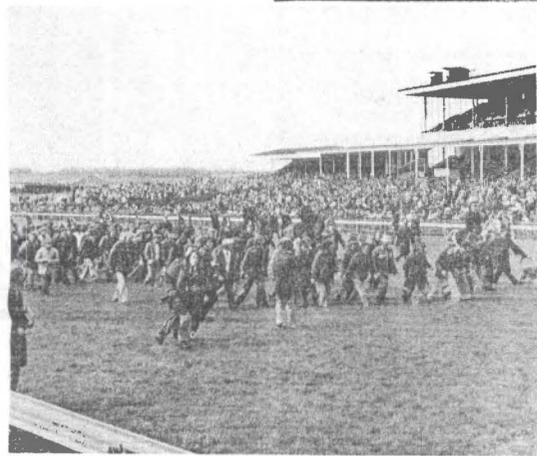
On their return to work after a strike, workers at two International Computer factories near Manchester found that social security payments were deducted from their wage packets. This is an application of the 1971 Social Security Act which was passed to hit at workers taking industrial action by starving their families.

Making the EEC socialist

Eric Heffer who was one of the most outspoken critics of joining the EEC said after the Referendum: "now let's get down to a full-blooded socialist programme for Europe". To pretend that the monopoly capitalist European Community can be made to follow a socialist programme is exactly like pretending that schemes for 'workers' participation' can tame capitalism at home and make it eat out of our hands.

EEC throwing stones

"Destroy one in ten commercial greenhouses in Britain" - that's the latest lunacy from the EEC Commission. And the UK must spend £2 million compensating greenhouse-owners who volunteer to have their greenhouses demolished!



Ireland one nation

EXTRACTS FROM PAMPHLET ON IRELAND

"Today the struggle is national liberation, freedom from the British yoke. There is but one cause in Ireland - a united Ireland without the foreign occupier." Having divided Ireland, British imperialism is determined to sustain its partition. It sends troops into northern Ireland when its puppet Ulster regime is threatened by the Irish mass movement. It fosters religious differences and ensures the continuance of a system of terror. Such terror stems from British troops, the loyalist fascist gangs and their counterpart, the provisionals who daily murder Irish men and women, children and babies without any compassion.

"For centuries the Irish working class has been plagued by the direct occupation by Britain and the indirect invasion by the Vatican. Each supplements the other causing misery for the Irish people.

"The way ahead is clear. If it was clear to Connolly and his Citizen Army in 1916, it must surely be clear in 1975. Those who today wave the union jack will be the first to desert that foreign flag just as the provisional extremists will sink into insignificance when confronted by the might of the Irish working class.

"Out with the invader, be it from Westminster or the Vatican, and all their servants resident, willing or unwitting.

"If the question of religion distinguishes progressive from reactionary in Ireland, here in Britain the question of British domination of Ireland distinguishes the genuine from the fraudulent left. On one side are all political parties except CPB(ML). That Britain should rule Ireland is never under dispute by the major spokesmen of British imperialism, Labour, Tory or anything else. As for those who claim to speak for the working class, the revisionist CPGB and the variety of Trotskyite organisations, all true sons of social democracy, they rally in defence of British imperialism at its hour of need and gave support for the sending of troops into northern Ireland.

"Our task in Britain is very clear; to demand the immediate and unconditional withdrawal of British troops from Ireland. However we disclaim it, we are part of the oppression of Irish workers. Only when we can effect the withdrawal of the troops, that Ireland may be one and free, may we the British working class truly fight for our freedom."

"IRELAND ONE NATION"

10p

Available shortly from Bellman Bookshop, 155 Fortress Road, NW5.

People's War in Southern Africa

In a few days, on June 25, will be the formal establishment of the independent republic of Mozambique. Led by their national liberation front, FRELIMO, the people of Mozambique, along with those in Angola and Guinea-Bissau, fought a protracted independence struggle to a successful conclusion. The overthrow of the Salazar dictatorship underlined the unity between the people of Portugal and those in its colonies.

A similar unity links the British working class and the people of Southern Africa in the British "sphere of influence" - in the countries of Zimbabwe (Rhodesia) Azania (South Africa) and Namibia (Southwest Africa). In all those countries liberation struggles at various stages of development have been going on against exploitation and the most ruthless repression which thinks nothing of shooting down striking workers and student demonstrations and which welds the most blatant racism ever seen anywhere in the world.

Since 1969 ZANU has built up a full-scale guerrilla type people's war based on a political programme which would mean real power for the great mass of people, impoverished peasants and labourers.

ZANU, for the first time in a British colony, was beginning to try out something different. It rejected constitutional negotiations and adopted people's war strategy. This was a danger not merely for Ian Smith, whose regime began to lean more and more on South Africa, but for the British ruling class, The Labour Government's intention, couched in its special verbiage of wanting to see "parity" and "one-man, one-vote", and that of the bourgeois, semi-colonial states like Zambia, is to destroy ZANU and the liberation struggle. In its place they are backing the mish-mash, politically confused hybrid created a few years ago - ANC. The recent events in Zambia leading to the killing of one of ZANU's leading men and the subsequent imprisonment by the Zambian government of hundreds

of ZANU people (many of their camps were in the Zambia-Rhodesian borders), are intended to destroy ZANU's structure, finances and political strength.

The Labour Government is once again much concerned about negotiation with Ian Smith, and Callaghan is despatching his man, Ennals, to Salisbury. Further, their particular black protégé, Joshua Nkomo, is once again in the thick of intrigue to put back the safe notions of the "parliamentary" way to freedom in the place of ZANU's people's war.

While all this play of negotiations and moderation go on in one colony, in another, Namibia (Southwest Africa), the Labour Government shows its other side by openly siding with South Africa. For years Namibia has been illegally occupied by South Africa, which violates every human right and every resolution of the United Nations on holding down the people brutally. Instead of helping

the nationalist organisation, SWAPO, Wilson and company seem to be accepting the South African fascists' so-called "detente" and "easing" of apartheid. In a recent debate in the Security Council, Britain showed where its true interest lies by vetoing, along with France and the USA, a resolution supported by 10 member states including many African and Asian countries, which wanted not merely to condemn South Africa but demand an arms embargo and sanctions against it.

Once again, for all the speeches made at Labour Party Conferences and by their supporters at trade union rallies the Labour Government has gone on record voicing its support for South Africa. Not only did it veto the UN resolution, but news which was leaked out only a few days later, shows how South Africa's military apparatus is going to be further linked with that of NATO.

LEST WE FORGET

Last month was the 30th anniversary of the victory over German fascism. Though the anti-fascist struggle was a world-wide conflict, the leading role was played by the Soviet Red Army under the guidance of Stalin and the Communist Party. The stumbling block to monopoly capital's designs to dominate the world via fascism was Russia. But it is no more.

How could it be that what Hitler and the Nazis could not achieve from without has been achieved from within? Khrushchev and Brezhnev in their plunderings of other nations' wealth and in their restoration of capitalism at home, have successfully aped all other imperialists. They have delivered the grossest insult to the millions upon millions who sacrificed their lives that all might live in peace and socialism.

Under the slogan "less men, more products", the revisionists have recently introduced the "Shchekino system". Like the "Taylor system" widely used by capitalists, especially in the US in the 19th and 20th century, it is designed to reduce men to mere machines by application of time and motion studies in order to get higher profits. This is the latest step in the re-establishment of capitalism.

The lesson from this tragedy is that capitalists will not relinquish power without a fierce struggle and then, even more dangerous, they will do all in their power, exploit all weaknesses to bring back their rotten system. Their greatest ally is lack of vigilance against their subversion, and the desire to take the easy way. The lesson has been well learnt in socialist China and Albania and it applies world-wide. Each communist, each socialist country, has to fight the tendency to forget the people and serve self.

What Stalin said of Germany: "Hitlers come and go but the German nation remains", is as true of the Soviet Union. The Russian people will re-establish the dictatorship of the proletariat once more.

REFORM OR REGRESSION ?

This new piece of legislation has been in operation since April 1st. Although heralded by the Government as a gigantic leap forward for safety in industry it now appears to be a very double-edged sword so far as workers are concerned.

Basically the new Act has amalgamated all previous industrial safety laws under a new name. It has also amalgamated the various inspectorates (factories, mines, alkalin inspectorate etc.). As with industrial take-overs and mergers the same staff are organised in new bodies under new and rather pretentious names - the new titles disguise abuses to everyone concerned, and a dilution of public service. An essentially public relations body - the Health and Safety Commission (composed of Government, TUC and CBI representatives) has been set up to oversee the administration of the new law.

In theory the new Act is an advance for workers - Factory inspectors can now impose prohibition notices and improvement orders directly on employers without first having to go to a magistrate. Also codes of practice and standards, previously voluntary, can be made legally binding.

In practice, however, the opposite may be true - the whole Act is based on the philosophy of the Robens Committee, which held that industrial health and safety was an area of common interest between employers and workers with responsibility for it to be shared between management and unions - hence the legal obligation under the Act for trade unions to elect safety officials to sit with management etc.

This whole approach threatens to reverse many of the legal victories won by the Trade Union Movement in establishing employers' liability and responsibility for safety and health.

The employer instead of being under an absolute duty to make work safe (as was previously the case with say, fencing machinery) is now only obliged to do so in so far as is reasonably practicable.

The employee is to be made responsible for safety equipment and safety procedures.

The skilled man, for instance, can be deemed to have committed an offence if an apprentice in his charge commits a breach of regulations.

There is a definite shift in responsibility for safety under the Act on to the employee - with trade unionists being required to undertake the job of framing safety procedures and enforcing them.

The Act exposes workers to possible prosecution in many areas where management should take responsibility - fines of up to £400 or terms of imprisonment of up to two years can be imposed.

By setting down in statute form general duties previously interpreted by judges under common law the whole question of employers' liability can be opened up again to legal re-interpretation. At the present time the individual employee is not generally sued for contributory negligence, since he or she is deemed to be acting as an agent of the employer. Now, as in the past, employers will once again try to claim they are not responsible for the acts of their employees which lead to accident or injury.

Although as mentioned, the inspectors have new powers many have complained bitterly about the dilution of their pitifully under-staffed service. The inspectors (and also the Employment Medical Advisory Service) are valuable allies of all workers - not government stooges.

Now it is proposed under the specious rationale of 'specialisation' to abolish the old 'General Practitioner' approach in the inspectorate. The 100 District Offices are to be closed and are to be replaced by 18 Area Offices. Two pilot schemes to this effect in the North East and South West have confirmed many inspectors' worst fears. They spend all day travelling vast distances in their cars and hence visit fewer factories. The inspectorate still only numbers some 700 people and has to cover well over 200,000 factories and establishments. Inspectors in the Institute of Professional Civil Servants have already begun to move in defence of their service.

As with much apparently 'progressive' legislation the new Act attempts to preempt the growing struggle against industrial accidents, disease, pollution and poor working conditions. This fight continues despite the 'largesse' of the new law - in particular for the defence, if not the enlargement, of all the specialist industrial and occupational health services.

Because it places the value of its commodities far above the value (in human terms) of the people who produce them, capitalist industry cannot, and never will, ensure that work is healthy and safe. Only we can do that.

Nalگو claim

On June 9th, the first day of NALGO's Annual Conference week, delegates to the Local Government Group Meeting voted overwhelmingly to reject the employers' 1975 pay offer of 21.7 per cent less of £127 threshold payments and to recommend industrial action should the employers, at their next meeting with the union's national negotiators on June 16th, make an equally divisive and unacceptable offer.

During the history of the 1975 pay claim, lodged in March this year, the membership has not

failed to make its voice heard loud and clear. The original claim, drawn up by NALGO's national negotiators, called for the protection of members against inflation and parity with the Civil Service, but failed to specify a claim figure. At a Special Local Government Group meeting on April 10th, called by the membership, delegates voted resoundingly for the present claim figure of £10 per week flat rate increase plus 15 per cent to be incorporated into the original claim, and for the National Local Government Committee to recommend

NOTTINGHAM SURVEY

In Nottingham, only one in twenty employers is expecting to recruit labour in the coming months. Present unemployment stands at 10,000 (many of them skilled) and will increase. Despite this there has been widespread action by workers:

Textiles. Our largest local industry is in its worst recession since the war, with many workers thrown out of work and thousands made to work short-time.

Engineering. Many small firms have closed and the larger ones are threatened by the cutback in steel production (Stanton & Stavely) and by mergers and rationalisation (Beeston Boiler Co.).

Food Industry. Workers at a local canned food factory ordered to take an early holiday (fall-off in demand for food); and local Coop bakery closed resulting in loss of 200 jobs.

Shop Workers in Nottingham and Long Eaton fight successfully to defeat wage cuts. Coop shop workers' strike resulted in wage demand being met.

Brewery Workers. First strike action for 50 years after employers refuse to pay "a living wage".

Electricians recently ended a 13 week strike at Boots. The employers had refused to honour previous commitments.

Workers in state employment are no more secure from these attacks:

Railway men. National pay dispute. Local tactics result in cancellation of inter-city (London-Nottingham) services and disruption of maintenance work.

Industrial Civil Servants. Strike action at Chilwell Army Depot in support of wage claim

Dustbinmen at Beeston recently involved in strike action which resulted in successful reinstatement of three fellow-workers unjustly sacked.

Firemen continue to restrict work to emergency calls only in support of wage claim.

BELLMAN BOOKSHOP 155 FORTRESS ROAD LONDON NW5

PUBLIC MEETINGS

- Fri June 20th 7.30 pm: From National Liberation to Socialism
- Fri June 27th 7.30 pm: Exposure of Social Democracy.
- Fri July 4th 7.30 pm: The British Revolution

'THE WORKER'

THE WORKER,
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£2 per year (including postage)



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Bourgeois justice

A woman who was recently arrested on a charge of shoplifting, elected to be tried by jury. The jury unanimously acquitted her but the judge refused to order her costs to be reimbursed on the ground that she may have "brought suspicion on herself" and she was left with a legal bill of over £800 - a much more severe penalty than if she had been found guilty on a first offence. Worry about this crippling sum is believed to have contributed to her death.

Freedom of the press

The 'freedom of the press' bandwagon is gathering both speed and new passengers. Recently, NGA members printing 'The Director', the journal of the Institute of Directors, succeeded in forcing the withdrawal of an advertisement calling for funds to set up a new printing works without union labour. According to a leading article in the journal, this again raises the vital question of the 'freedom of the press' - defined here once again as the 'right to use scab labour'!

Not content to let the bandwagon roll, the TUC is panting after it with two placatory proposals: for a state-funded National Press Finance Corporation to take over newspaper printing plant, and greater 'worker participation' in the industry. The TUC once more gives voice not only to the illusion that there can be 'freedom of the

A woman's right to choose

A national campaign is being mounted to fight the latest piece of anti-working class legislation - The Abortion (Amendment) Bill 1975, a private member's bill, sponsored by Labour MP James White. Doctors and medical students have already successfully occupied BMA headquarters to gain support and the BMA has now taken up the cudgels of struggle. Social workers throughout the country have gained the support of their union NALGO in action to defend the rights of working class women who gained the abortion reform after many years of bitter struggle.

The bill has gone through its second reading in the House of Commons and if passed it will take away a woman's right to an abortion on the following grounds: rape victims, girls aged under 16, unmarried or unsupported mothers, women aged between 35 and 45, where the risk of having a handicapped child is greater because of age; women who would face serious financial difficulties if they had another child or a first child; women whose marriages for one reason or another are threatened by pregnancy.

This amendment bill will turn back the clock to the situation existing before the 1967 act, and will make most abortions illegal. It is a further attack on our NHS - doctors will be in a more precarious position than the average criminal, as their decisions in abortion cases could be scrutinised in court, where they will be assumed guilty of a crime unless they can prove to the contrary.

Social workers will not be able to discuss abortion with their clients but will no doubt be used further as the state's scapegoats when the number of battered babies increases

The capitalist class will still be able to have the discreet service of the private Harley Street physicians, but working class women will yet again be forced to return to the horrors of back street abortion.

The CPB(ML) fully supports working class women in the fight for the right to choose their future.

press' under capitalism, but also to the belief that the state is a state of the whole people, managing in our interest. Recent history has shown only too well, that the state takeover merely provides the means whereby the employing class can intensify those attacks it cannot make in other ways. The TUC waves the carrot of a 'say' in the running of affairs (what more than a 'say' in the contraction and rationalisation of one's own industry?) and an illusory separation of commercial considerations and the publication function. But has the recent experience of the co-operatively-owned Scottish Daily News shown any more than that under a system of survival by accumulation of profit, no enterprise can ignore the demands of the commercial interest and so risk the loss of their major source of revenue - advertising.