

THE WORKER



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BRITAIN'S WEALTH IS ITS PEOPLE

LABOUR GOVT AND IMF

Britain has not lost the capacity to labour and produce wealth, Reg Birch, Chairman of the Communist Party of Britain (Marxist-Leninist) said in London on December 3rd. Speaking to an audience at the Bellman Bookshop Reg Birch ridiculed the notion that Britain was bankrupt and sustained by other countries.

The capitalists certainly do not believe that Britain is finished. West German and US capital prefer this country to any other for investment. It was rubbish to believe that the British working class was weak and not very skilled and not able to compete, if that was to be the game.

The myth that Britain is not self-supporting is part of an ideological indoctrination that has gone on for a long period of time.

What is needed is to revitalise the basic industries, industries which capitalism always neglects.

All the resources are present in Britain, more than any nation in the whole world. The most valuable resource is people. The people can achieve anything. The first task is to take care of people.

The full speech reads:

If we are to talk of what we have to do, we need to know what is and what could be - Britain today and Britain tomorrow. If we take the people of Britain, either class, capitalists or workers, they don't know where they are or where they'll be tomorrow. Tomorrow be-

longs to the people. But it can only do so if the people understand the present state of society and, understanding it, change it. This change for the working people of Britain can only mean the liquidation of the opposing class.

The battle between the classes is permanent but certain features of it are new. Britain is supposedly suffering from a malaise, a sickness. According to capitalism it has lost its capacity to produce wealth; it is not self-supporting; it runs back and forth with a begging bowl. In this highly industrialised society it supposedly takes one worker to labour and support another which is not all that different from an agricultural society of the past. We have to dispel the notion that Britain is being sustained by 'friendly' capitalist countries. This is a confidence trick upon the mind.

The decline is visible to all. When I go abroad on trade union business, as if I were an "ambassador for British capitalism", I am given a booklet to counter talk about the "English sickness" by showing that West German and US capitalists prefer Britain as an investment opportunity. Having complained for decades about the damage of strikes to Britain's economy, the Government now juggles with statistics and arrives at the conclusion that there are not so many strikes after all. They only feel they've overdone it a bit. (continued on page 3)

NOT DAVID AND GOLIATH but SODOM AND GOMORRAH To judge from some reports in the media, the Labour Government is fighting a hard battle to ward off the non-specific but somehow quite horrendous conditions the IMF is trying to "impose" on it. The details of this tremendous conflict are of course hidden, like the meal being cooked in the kitchen, but now and then heavy hints drift down to us mere mortals.

The confusing thing about it all is that even the dim and contorted truths that do emerge seem to indicate that the IMF and the Labour Government, not to say the CBI, the Bank of England, and the City, all have exactly the same plan: namely to intensify the policies of cuts and unemployment we have already.

So why all the sound and fury? The aim of course is to convince us that "our" Labour Government has struggled valiantly but, unfortunately, has been forced by these ogres from outside, the IMF (where are the Zurich gnomes of yesteryear?), to agree to certain proposals. That the Government is only concerned with serving the interests of British capitalism and that British capitalism is as much a part of the IMF as any other country, and indeed more so than most, is completely ignored.

How to save Britain

Liverpool meeting

A successful public meeting was held in Liverpool on December 10th by the local branch of the CPB(M-L). Workers listened to a description of how British industry was and is being destroyed and discussed how it was to be saved.

It was pointed out that one must be clear when we say "Save Britain" that we mean save Britain for us and for socialism.

The meeting concluded that our class are afraid of their own capability as much as of losing their jobs. The mythical economic recovery was recognised as an attempt by our bosses to mislead and deceive our class.

Our only choice was revolution and the meeting resolved that we should call on our class to say "No" to collaboration, compromise and reform. Today we must fight every cut, in order that we may preserve our skills and industries to build socialism.

Devolution today Separation tomorrow Annexation the next

The call for devolution is a call to dismember Britain and its working class. It is as much an attack on the working class as unemployment, destroying industry and skill, and wage restraint. It is the other side of the coin to the Common Market with its European parliament and commissions. The aim is to dismantle the British nation, its industry and working class, and to trample upon its independence and sovereignty.

Devolution today, separation tomorrow, annexation the next. This is the logic of divisive 'nationalism'.

The industrial revolution killed nationalism in Britain. Its orgy of exploitation was celebrated equally in the east end of Glasgow as in the east end of London. Scottish nationalism and feudalism finally died at the massacre at Culloden. The rising British bourgeoisie was establishing its dominion over the whole land and would brook no resistance, as, too, in the Highland Clearances (mainly of Scots by Scots). The Highlanders, potential urban proletarians, in resisting the incursions of the new national capitalist state, were used as cannon fodder by the declining nobility. Thus evicted and demoralised, they swelled the central belt of Scotland with its squalid slums and concentrated industry, or emigrated. The romantic notion of "Scottishness" then imposed was more a product of Sir Walter Scott's brain than anything else. Rather, several distinct cultures are apparent, with Glasgow having more affinity with Newcastle than with Edinburgh. Today these cultures are despised and used by the nationalists and exploited and cheapened by commercial interests.

From this point struggles of workers in Scotland were a component part of those of the British working class as a whole. From the bloodily suppressed (and provoked) armed uprising in 1820 in the west of Scotland to the Clyde shop stewards movement and the 40 Hour strikes of 1919 (when Churchill ordered tanks to stand by) the feeling was predominantly anti-bourgeois, not parochial. A good example of national class solidarity occurred in the wake of the Peterloo massacre when a wave of protest demonstrations swept Scotland, with much expression of the brotherhood of the working

class. British capitalism had united Scotland, Wales and England into one economic and political whole and was united in attacking and exploiting the working class. The formation of trades unions, both in illegality and after, is a vivid illustration of workers feeling of belonging to one class, whether one lived in Scotland, Wales or England. From the Coopers of Glasgow, the Grand National Union of Spinners, the Grand Consolidated Trade Union, to the first TU delegate conference called by Glasgow Trades Council in 1864, a feeling of national class solidarity was engendered. Uneven development and impoverishment throughout Britain there was; today the attack is equally fierce on all (for a period prior to 1914 unemployment was heaviest in London and least in Scotland) - but divisive nationalism in the working class, no.

Today, capitalism in absolute decline requires a compliant, disunited working class, its consciousness of its own existence and destiny blunted by squabbles over "Assemblies", the resolve shown in such struggles as Plesseys, UCS, channelled into illusions of parliament, this time at Edinburgh. If nationalism in Britain died with the industrial revolution the resurrection of its spectre today should be regarded by our class with hostility.

In Scotland it is seen as a lifeline by some capitalists locally whose fortunes declined as the British Empire declined. Moreover it is seen as a githorse by international monopoly capitalism, to whom the SNP has offered a virtual free rein in investment and control. Already, outside Canada, US investment is greatest in Scotland. The US multinationals are the main robbers of the oil: for the capital thus generated is sent overseas to wherever the most profit is to be made. Three-quarters of firms employing over 5000 workers are controlled by foreign capital. The Scottish Council for Development and Industry virtually advocates a native Scottish capitalist class establishing its own economic power and super-structure. The Scottish CBI advocates "Industrial Devolution". The concentration of the power to use oil potential for investment in the hands of Scottish industrialists and financiers has inspired them to devolve, become a class in their own right, not merely an adjunct of the British ruling class. "Devolution" is their escape route. However, in this they are deluded. For these native capitalists are so dependent on the multinationals that they cannot exercise any autonomy over their economic base. In a declining Britain, in debt and its mineral resources mortgaged to international capital, these fringe capitalists are under the financial control of the multinationals.

(continued on page 4)

Reunification railway completed in socialist Vietnam

In a few days the Vietnam Workers Party will begin its fourth Congress. Our Party - the Communist Party of Britain (Marxist-Leninist) - sends its warmest fraternal greetings to all comrades in united socialist Vietnam on the occasion of this great event.

For many throughout the land, workers and peasants, students and soldiers, cadres and housewives have been studying documents and considering the three main revolutionary tasks facing the people. In the first place is the need to advance the socialist relations of production. While North Vietnam has been socialist for more than twenty years the south was, till very recently, an outright colony of the United States with all the horrors of a colonial economy compounded by years of military occupation and fascist brutality. That within barely 18 months since liberation collectivised agriculture and co-operative industrial units should have taken root in what was the happy hunting ground of speculators and compradors shows that the people are showing the same determination to liberate themselves economically as they did during the years of the war of liberation.

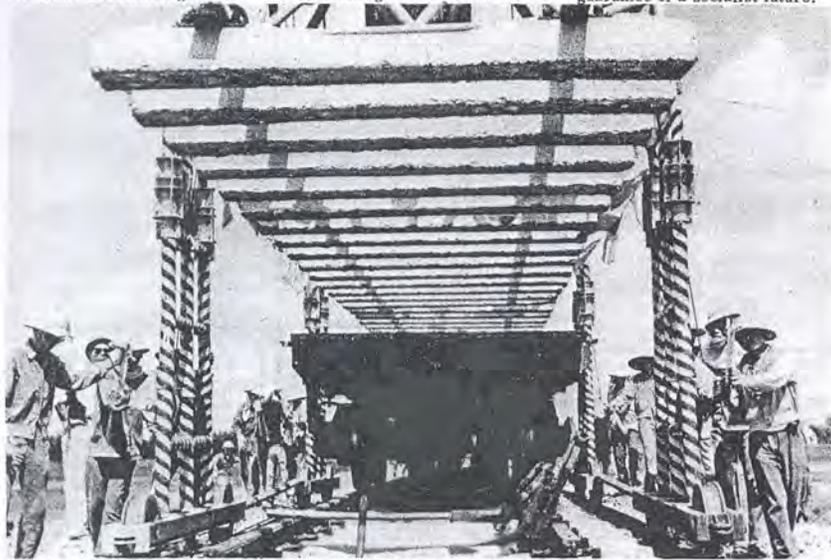
A socialist economy requires scientific and technological ad-

vance. Again the initiative and inventiveness that enabled the Vietnamese to defeat the ultra-modern American military machine are being used to create a modern balanced economy in which the abundant natural and human resources of the country will be utilised to raise not only the living standards of the Vietnamese people but of other countries, as well. Vietnam, the scene of the most vicious colonial war of all time in which every conceivable kind of defoliant and poisonous chemical was showered on the people and their land, is now actually exporting food grains to neighbouring lands. War devastation and colonial backwardness are being overcome in an amazingly short period of time.

There can be no socialist construction without a cultural revolution in ideology and attitude. People must love socialism and be prepared to work for collective ends and not for themselves. The Vietnamese could have decided to sit back and enjoy a brief respite after decades of bitter struggle and the most rigorous discipline and sacrifice. Instead they chose to remember the dream of their beloved "Uncle Ho", that independence and reunification would be meaningless without social-

ism. To create socialist human beings is the aim of the fourth Congress and the avenues of education and culture. The rehabilitation of prostitutes and drug addicts, both groups as much victims of American aggression as those maimed in the bombing has been no less a triumph for the Congress to celebrate than the completion of Reunification Railway, the main line linking Saigon and Hanoi. This task, which involved not only some 1500 miles of track but the rebuilding of innumerable bridges and embankments destroyed during the war, was the result of the dedication of thousands of villagers and workers who were determined to finish it before Congress.

The people of Vietnam fought for independence as now they have to fight for socialism. The USA thinks that by using its veto in the Security Council and by continuing its usual dirty tricks with infiltrators and saboteurs it can overthrow socialist Vietnam. They obviously refuse to learn the lessons taught them by the workers and peasants of Vietnam who kicked them and their puppets out to establish a socialist state - the dictatorship of the proletariat - the only guarantee of a socialist future.



Completion of the reunification railway - symbol of the iron unity of Vietnam.

Liberation does not depend on conferences

The nationalist movement in Rhodesia (or Zimbabwe) has become a fundamental and immediate threat to the continuation of the white minority regime. It is this threat which is recognised by the holding of the Geneva conference. The Smith regime and its allies - overt or covert - recognise that at all costs the growing military strength must be diverted into channels less dangerous to their survival. Kissinger himself has on a number of occasions stated - (somewhat impatiently for those who have not already worked it out) that unless concessions towards majority rule are made now - the threat from nationalism may become one of total revolution. The conference is therefore

a reflection of the strength and success to date of the nationalist movement. Yet there are great dangers - for the whole purpose of the conference in the minds of its sponsors is, by concessions to mere electoral demands, to defuse the growth of military strength deployed for real liberation. As the conference adjourns amidst much negative speculation as to its success to date and its potential achievement in the future, it is as well to remember this - that it is not the conference that will determine the fate of the people of Zimbabwe. They will decide it on the battlefield with guns; and, under Marxist leadership, it will be a revolutionary war as well as a war of liberation.

China supports liberation

On the first of December, the Chinese delegation at the United Nations expressed its opposition to an international convention against the taking of hostages.

The Chinese Government has consistently disapproved of such acts as aerial hijacking, taking of hostages, assassination and kidnapping "for countless historical facts have proved that revolutionary struggle is a mass struggle and that victory can be won only by mobilising and relying on the masses." However, they go on to say: "We must point out that imperialism, colonialism, racism and zionism often capitalise on these erroneous acts on the part of a handful of persons to smear and attack the revolutionary struggle for liberation waged by the oppressed nations and peoples. This is impermissible and intolerable."

Workers' participation and the dictatorship of the proletariat

The final draft of the report by the Bullock Committee on Industrial Democracy in the private sector will be completed and signed by the members of the Committee in a few days time and the report will be published about mid-January.

These proposals for "a compromise between the rights of shareholders and the interests of 'worker directors' in determining the policies of Britain's 600 biggest companies" are a way of fobbing off the legitimate demands of workers for a greater say in the fate of industry in Britain which capitalism is in the process of destroying.

The report recommends reconstituted boards for these 600 companies which would be made up of two equal sections, those elected by trade union members and those who are shareholders, plus a third group, jointly chosen by these two sections. These single-tier boards to be introduced in all companies employing more than 2000 are supposed to reconcile the conflict of interests between capitalist owners who only want to make a profit and the workers who want to serve the needs of society in such a way as to provide a decent standard of living for themselves and their families. Such a resolution could only be possible to the extent that the 'worker directors' stopped thinking and acting like workers. Hobbes' dictum that sovereignty cannot be divided applies as much to a private company as to a whole nation.

But it would be a great mistake to think that the Bullock proposals have no other purpose than to throw dust in the eyes of workers demanding a say in their own industrial destiny. They are an attack on trade

unions as defensive organisations of the working class. For example, in those companies having more than one union, company level committees will be set up embracing all union members in the company and the union representatives on the board will be elected by and be accountable to, not their individual unions, but the new company committee. That means that in all the really large companies instead of unions of skilled workers defending members' standards there would be something like one enormous company union speaking with one voice - the employers'.

The Bullock Committee proposals for so-called 'workers' participation' have the same aim as the Industrial Relations Act but set about the job more insidiously. The only real workers' control is the dictatorship of the proletariat and in the struggle for it the working class must continue to use for its own revolutionary ends the trade union organisation it invented and developed to enable it to survive the capitalist era in order to initiate the era of socialism.

Footnote: Now that the ACAS has a draft code of practice on the Disclosure of Information to Trade Unions for Collective Bargaining, an association of British accountants has suggested that employers should train union negotiators on how to understand the information to be put at their disposal so that they can haggle more effectively with their employers! Perhaps employers could set up training facilities to initiate 'worker directors' into the intricacies of tax evasion, bogus bond floating, asset stripping, conversion of stocks to cover gambling debts and so forth.

Higher education in China is not elitist

By a member of the recent CPB(M-L) delegation to China.

Until the Revolution, education in China was for a rich elite. Since 1949, and notably in the Cultural Revolution, that situation has been completely transformed. Education is universal, and much thought is given to its form and content, not least in post-school education.

In Nanking, for example, we were told that students no longer go straight from school to higher education. They get practical work experience, and are then approved by their workmates for more education. These are the worker-peasant-soldier students. They often take their new skills back to their original workplace.

Education is not isolated and elitist, but is run on an "open door" policy. Colleges have links with industry and agriculture, and may even run factories and farms.

In Shanghai, with 16 universities and 31,000 full-time students, higher education reaches out into the factories and communes. There are short-term courses for 80,000 students

from outlying areas, helping them to learn the techniques for building a socialist countryside. The Shanghai universities also try to break down the differences between the quality of education in the big city, with all its facilities, and the countryside. They help rural colleges with teaching materials, and run correspondence courses. Also in the rural areas are the May 7th Agricultural Colleges.

Another date, July 21st, marks a directive from Mao Tsetung about education in industry. The July 21st universities are organised inside the factories, providing political and vocational study. The Shanghai Machine Tool Factory rotates its workforce so that they can attend the university, and maintains a research group of 200 workers. In these ways education is enabled to be a widespread and continuing process.

Politics is important everywhere, both as a subject for study, and as an important factor in how colleges are run, who they are run for, and who attends them. The emphasis is on developing both political consciousness and vocational skills.

The laws of the profits

Back in 1975, when in the midst of crisis the enormous profits of banks, oil companies and the multinationals like ICI began to seem obscene, the Sandilands Committee of Inquiry suggested ways of re-defining profits so they would not be quite so embarrassing for the system.

This is basically what has now been launched by the Accounting Standards Committee as a new inflation accounting system known as "current cost accounting". What the system does under cover of stock replacement and machine depreciation in inflationary conditions is to make it possible for companies to appear to have made far less profit than on the old basis of accounting. For example, a return on capital in British industry over the last decade of 11.2 per cent would come out by the new system at only 3.9 per cent.

Of course, more is involved than just a question of masking inordinate profits from the public view. In so far as the Government has expressed full approval of the new system, it can be assumed that it will be used as the basis of tax assessment with enormous reductions in what the companies have to pay. To appreciate what this means it is as though you or I should be able to say to the Department of Inland Revenue: since rising rents, rates and prices, while wages remained frozen, meant no savings during the past year we shall pay no income tax!

These extra profits of course will not be put back into extra investment here in Britain, but will only swell the flood of capital headed for sunnier climes.

This scaling down of what companies pay in taxation on profits, taken in conjunction with the decision to drop the wealth tax altogether (and now to go ahead with it in a half-hearted way as a 'social contract' sop for keeping up with the Joneses of this world), shows how seriously the Labour Government takes Callaghan's formula for dealing with unemployment and industrial contraction: "Profits have to come first."

Economic predictions

Bourgeois economics is an exact science. It exactly serves the interests of capitalists and no others. The difficulty about recent economic prediction is that capitalist interest demands that it do two incompatible things at once. It has to make the present situation look as gloomy as possible to justify all the cuts in jobs and services the working people are expected to endure.

Hence the Sunday Telegraph's Business Forecast of a current account balance of payments deficit next year, North Sea oil notwithstanding, as high as £1.4 billion. Officials of the 24-nation Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development are forecasting a world recession for the second half of 1977 and economic experts in the US have proclaimed that the nascent boom there is already turning into another slump.

At the same time, unless the situation can be presented as one of temporary difficulty with light at the end of the tunnel, working people might not be prepared to go on putting up with hardship. Therefore the prediction

Reg Birch's speech (continued)

Within the limits we have, let us analyse the present in order not to be ignorant about tomorrow. A study of 820 companies in Britain shows that pre-tax profits, after deducting wages and costs, runs into £197,000 for building firms, £300,000 for electrical engineering firms and £180,000 for engineering firms. In spite of the Government's running backwards and forwards "seeking aid", there was the skill to produce those profits in industry. We are told Britain has to export because it is not self-sufficient and has to import food. But food exports from Britain are to exceed £231m. What is the sense of this? It simply means that keen-witted traders find things to export either way to make profits, particularly with the opportunities provided by currency instability within the EEC.

How can there be these contradictions, that there are profits and yet massive loans, great unemployment and rapidly descending living standards? Profits and yet all manner of cuts, especially in those precious areas of health and education, so that the end product can only be illiteracy and malnutrition. That is what is in store for us unless we seek to change.

This is no sudden situation. Since the last great depression in 1931 there has been no development of basic industry. The basic industries are always neglected in capitalism, after an initial upsurge. Only the war halted this process in Britain for a time, and even then the engineering industry was using old machinery. Then the switch to other sources of quicker profits. But once you do that you bring about the destruction of a people. It is not whether capitalism is to do without a water industry, a coal industry or the railways, but whether the very foundation of our industrial society is to be swept away.

It was a canard that the burgeoning motor industry could replace what was being destroyed. The growth of the GNP in West Germany was held up as some kind of an ideal but it was simply that having its industrial base destroyed and starting anew with US and UK money there was an inevitable reversal in economic roles. The whole import and export of motor cars with their interchangeable parts also being imported and exported so that there is no such thing as a national car, is absurd. They are bulky things to export, but then if you let Latin Americans assemble them, you are in danger of turning more peasants into a proletariat.

We have to revitalise the basic industries. Railways, electricity, road transport are a subsidy to capitalism. We would revitalise them: agriculture, transport, engineering. They have been run down because of the profit to be skimmed elsewhere. We are in a situation where all those things we are best at are being run down because other things are more profitable. This means our people are being run down while capitalism will sojourn elsewhere. The EEC. The intention to invest in Europe is not like the Tsar running off with a tiara but a decamping with a bourgeois fort to sit in. With the breaking down of our own society through devolution, let it be remembered that there is also a parliament in Brussels.

How could they have done such things? How could they get away with it? Because of the acceptance of capitalism and the labour movement's idea of gradualism not revolution. For the labour move-

Other points made by Reg Birch

Why at this time is there so much talk about workers' participation? Does it not equate with the fact that when we raised the slogan about the right to work, they countered with retraining schemes and redundancy payments. When women fought for equal pay, they were fobbed off with the Equal Pay Act in order to deny it. Workers' participation is for the purpose of seeing to it that workers don't have real control. The only real workers' control is the dictatorship of the proletariat.

The trade unions are not revolutionary organisations. They have reached the end of their traditional role. The trade unions cannot do what they traditionally did - defend the standard of living of the working class. To demand that they take up their traditional role is itself the revolutionary act. To call for the very right to live, since others are determined that we shall die, is revolutionary.

We the people must do it. Just as once, in Russia, ten million said: you go to the war. Not us. So we have to say: you have to suffer cuts. Not us. What is true now is that it cannot be done by degrees.

Our first exposure has to be ourselves. Because we have accepted that we are less able than we used to be. The people have not lost the capacity for labour nor has their intellectual level declined.

We have to say in factory, office or school: there is nothing right about shutting hospitals, closing schools, accepting the social contract and a declining standard of living. We have a right to work, to no unemployment. This means no contraction wherever you are - in mine, office or school. Don't get involved in faking 100,000 from here and putting them there. That is the sort of thing Robens, Beeching and the like did for capitalism. We do not run steel or the mines, but we work there and you are not shoving us out. We say the same thing in schools, hospitals or wherever we work.

We have only one way to survive. We have to work. This will lead to the seizure of power. We have allowed this unemployment to happen to us because we were not convinced of our right. We will not bother with arguments about do we need a shipbuilding industry or do we need railways nor if we give up a school here will they build a vacuum cleaner factory there.

of the National Institute of Economic and Social Research of a massive improvement in the current account of the balance of payments next year resulting in a large surplus! Indeed the Micawber-like figure of the Minister of State for Energy declares that "the huge value of our oil and gas riches,

some £300 billion, cover today's overseas debts many, many times over".

Workers had better ignore anything the bourgeois economists predict and base their course of action on the consistent predictions of representatives of their own class as when we pointed out in our Fourth

ment to take on this struggle now must lead to revolution and socialism - which denies its very origin. We have a farcical situation in which a wage freeze would be an improvement compared with the social contract! And what is it for - to survive today so that someone else can die tomorrow? The labour movement had a primitive function, to maintain wages, milk for the kids. To do that now means a direct confrontation with capitalism, means not gradualism but revolution. The situation in Britain is very reminiscent of the Weimar Republic before Hitler.

It is rubbish to believe that the British working class is weak, not very skilled, unable to hold its own and in need of being supported by 'friendly' capitalist countries, that we have to plead with the Japanese not to dump their goods here and put us out of business. All the 'wealth and skill are present here in the people - more than in any other nation in the world and that is no chauvinist boast.

It is obvious that revolution is inevitable or else counter-revolution under a care-taker social democracy. The only thing that holds us back is fear. If we consider: supposing we began to seize power tomorrow. How can we do that? With no arms. And all those other capitalist countries will descend on us. Such a dilemma of even worse dimensions faced the working class and the Bolshevik Party in Russia in 1917. We must not forget the great debt owed to the proletariat and peasants of Russia. Without their victory others would not have been able to do it, which is not to diminish what others have done but only to keep the chronology in mind. More than twenty countries waged war against a bankrupt Russia and their war of intervention failed. The decline of capitalism is a world crisis. If the workers of the world could respond then, do you think workers today would be any different if we began the first revolution in an industrialised country here in Britain? Do you think that the US or the USSR could attack us so easily? Would they dare turn their backs on their own workers?

The alternative is corporatism, fascism, counter-revolution. We cannot go back to a relatively democratic bourgeois rule with occasional crises. The idea that if we wait a little things will get better is rubbish. Not only have they run down the economy with no knowledge of what they have done, they have no idea of how to keep the crisis from deepening. Capitalism is not a science. It is a disease.

The impact of a move to revolution in this land will devastate capitalist thinking in other countries. It has to be us because we are the worst off and each day it will get still worse. Can we say that our kids will do it? Will you let your boy do it - when he will be bow-legged with rickets? We can do it because we have to do it. Remember "The British Working Class and Its Party"! Remember "Congress 1976"!

Don't be hypnotised by leftists running up and down screaming "We want a job". Don't be distracted by being urged to fight these cuts but not those. Don't believe we can disguise ourselves as social democrats or Scottish nationalists to creep under the door, to infiltrate the Labour Party and seize power so that we can then hand it over to the people. Only they can take it. If you are worried about armed might, remember that we make the arms. If you are afraid that a standing army will fall on us, remember that the bourgeoisie in two wars has not been able to depend on a standing army but had to turn to the people, to us.



The only real investment is investment in people. Take Albania with its oil and mineral wealth. It is because Albania invested in its people that its industry and agriculture are thriving. The question is not can we afford to build a new steel mill? The people can do anything. Wealth and its preservation is the people. We insist on surviving. Then we can have a steel mill, a shipbuilding industry or anything else. They cannot do it. Capitalist 'planning' is that with working people their only source of wealth they have 2.2 million unemployed!

You have to be brave and clever to be a worker - brave to go to work every day to keep your family, clever to screw even a half decent wage out of the employer. Workers are afraid of what would be if they seek change. People naturally prefer the existing thing they know to the "x" quantity of change. They wonder if they will muck it up. There is that humility there. But they have to do it. There is no one else.

An important part of the answer to the working class's reluctance to embark on revolution is the inadequacy of this Party. It is our fault also that the long heritage of social democracy has not been changed. We cannot change it simply in our own minds. We have to change it in converse with our mates. Such a change is not unknown. It has been done. Here it could be done very successfully indeed.

Congress Statement at Easter this year: "Marx constantly predicted continual and absolute decline. Many said this was wrong since capitalism 'recovered' from one crisis after another. The recovery was always relative... no advantage accrued to the people once the ascendancy of

capitalist forces over feudal forces was absolute. From this moment of peak capitalism began its decline."

As far as other predictions are concerned you could get as helpful an assessment of what the future holds by consulting tea leaves - if we can still afford to drink it.

Workers take up the cuts battle

Education cuts: Scots must fight

The attack on education as applied to Scotland is intensifying. After Strathclyde's cut of £17m. from its education budget last year, an equal if not bigger cut is promised for next. If this is implemented it will mean over 2500 redundancies as well as cuts to educational supplies of 25 to 30 per cent. Cuts throughout Scotland could include the sackings of over 2000 non-teaching staff in Scotland, the closure of many community and youth centres and a reduction in nursery school staff. Already severely run down are remedial education, and subjects such as Classics, Spanish, German, Music, Applied Mechanics, Statistics, Anatomy, Physiology and Health. A direct danger to children's lives now exists: Strathclyde have decided to remove the men who guide children across busy roads at secondary schools, thus abolishing those "lollipop" crossings. Text books and school buildings are fast becoming outdated and shabby; instrumental music teaching is being cut back, as is the supply of technicians and other ancillary staff and no foreign language assistants are being employed in Strathclyde this year. Money for excursions, summer courses and leisure activities have been drastically reduced.

Following the example of Glasgow transport workers, Scottish teachers and others in education must invoke again their spirit of struggle displayed so

vigorously in the wages and conditions strikes of last year, the boycott of dining hall supervision in October which reduced a proposed increase in meal cost of 45p back to 15p; and the struggle of the school cleaners with the Highland Region Authority which resulted in the closure of several schools. They should take the example of the student teachers' occupations of eleven training colleges last term in opposition to the attack on education. If they do not fight vigorously they will lay themselves open to all sorts of attack.

Already the new contract adopted has cut holidays from 61 to 58 days per year. The divisive measure of reducing the retirement age of unpromoted teachers, so keenly pushed through parliament, to employ 400 qualified unemployed teachers is no less a part of the attack. Also a component part is the divide and rule proposal of the "Quarterly Economic Commentary" (Oct 76) of the Fraser of Allander Institute for Research on the Scottish Economy which proposes that lower paid workers in the public sector need not be made redundant if only the higher paid employees would accept salary cuts.

Hull teachers fight every cut

Faced with Humberside County Council's decision to make cuts of £2 million in the education budget next year, Hull Association of the NUT has declared its intention to fight every cut. The argument, put by those within the Union who would collaborate in ruining education,

that maintenance of the existing pupil-teacher ratio should be teachers' sole concern, was soundly rejected.

This is a significant decision, for Humberside's Labour Council makes much of the fact that it is willing to cut everything except jobs, while pointing to the Tories' threats of more savage cuts should they win the Council elections in May. Hull NUT has recognised that the best way to prepare for a future Tory avalanche is to fight the present Labour volcano.

Hull's task now is to convince other Associations in Humberside Division NUT that the way forward must be an offensive for education, not a collaboration which would make one concession after another on the road to destruction.

Birmingham-NUPE strikes

Public service employees in the West Midlands took action against the cuts at the beginning of December. NUPE activities involved over 1000 schools and hospitals: schools closed down and hospitals provided emergency services only.

The strike action was strongly supported; there was a big march in Birmingham, pickets were in evidence, and leaflets were given out. The strength of this practical action was backed up by statements of the need for tougher resistance to the government, and condemnation of the loss of 160,000 jobs in manufacturing industry each year since 1970, with less than one in three of these being replaced by other jobs in manufacturing.

Pit fight for survival

Seeking authority to introduce industrial sanctions if their union demand for early retirement is not met, the executive of the National Union of Miners has balloted the members. A necessary action when one considers the complete rejection by the National Coal Board of the miners' legitimate demand, softened only by platitudes of implementing early retirement some time in the distant future. The Labour Government reinforces the National Coal Board by saying the National Union of Miners' demand will breach the social contract. Only industrial action will change their twin obduracy.

The much-quoted fact that most of the other European countries have earlier retirement for miners than Britain only illustrates the callous attitude of the employer and state here; but there are far deeper implications behind the miners' demand than requests for parity with others

elsewhere. These implications must be appreciated by the whole class.

The mining work force in Britain is a rapidly ageing one. Unless mining can be made a more attractive industry to labour in, within a short space of time there will be a gross imbalance in the labour force and an absence of young miners. Early retirement, along with massive injections of investment to fund the necessary new plant and equipment, to pay for increased automation and better safety considerations: all these must be seen as integrated demands to save the mining industry as a viable industry for the future.

An industrial Britain requires a healthy energy system in which coal will play an important part. The present struggle for early retirement must be a fight to secure such an industry for the future.

Devolution (continued from page 1)

Scottish and Welsh "nationalism", Social Democracy and the others on the bandwagon are the traitors, "the parcel of rogues in a nation" who could so dismember the country and deliver it to the highest bidder. No wonder the SNP says "we deny as false the doctrines of the class war..." But this dream of coexistence will never become reality: we the working class will not live with them, nor collude in the splitting of our class, whether they have "nationalists" in "power" or out of it.

Funkhauser, a new US Consul in Scotland, formerly Kissinger's adviser on oil matters, experienced in European CIA activities and in "counter-subversion" in Vietnam, is quoted as saying that on the future of Scotland depends "the future of Western industrial life. Scotland is where the action is. It is towards Scotland that the forces are converging that will determine the outcome."

The "nationalists" are regarded as a compliant tool by these people and their hope is that the working class will create dreams based in the myths and paraphernalia of nationalism to replace the discredited fantasies of the Labour Party and Social Democracy, turning Britain into a client state.

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Telecomms

Following the pattern in other basic industries, our rulers under the cloak of the Post Office management have decided that £220m shall be cut from planned orders. It is estimated that this could mean a loss of between 15,000 and 20,000 jobs in the industry. It is also the beginning of the destruction of the communications system in this country. As we asked in a recent issue of THE WORKER: SHALL WE PERMIT IT?

Who else but our working class can save this and other industries? Our employers clearly have no desire to do so. Their reaction in Telecomms has been to apply to the Government for compensation to protect their profits from the effects of redundancy payments and to recoup money invested in machinery that will no longer be fully utilised. (Precious little has been invested here anyway.)

Workers in Telecomms must face up to the same questions

that others are asking elsewhere.

Do we need a Telecomms industry? Can an industrial country exist without one? Do you really believe that a Boom is coming? How can there be any recovery when our industry is being destroyed?

Let the answers to these questions be the basis of a struggle to save Telecomms. We all have a responsibility for our skills and respective industries. Only by saving them can we save Britain. The only answer to our misery is revolution. The immediate battle is for the right to work. If this right is denied, we have nothing; we are dead. Dare we live for today and see our children starve tomorrow because we grabbed for the golden carrot of redundancy pay?

Let us say to our employers: It's your Government; you take the cuts. Our lives depend on working, on production for need. We can live on what we produce. You can eat pound notes. We need Telecomms; so if you want cuts, let it be your own hands that get the chop!

Courtaulds

We have consistently warned of the deliberate destruction of our industry and the importance for our class to Save Britain. Courtaulds' closure plans exemplify but one of our many traditional industries that are being thrown on the scrap heap.

A meeting at national level between the TGWU and the management was swiftly followed up by a mass meeting at the Aintree knitting mill. After a prolonged discussion the workers decided to reject the company's proposals and themselves to research and present a list of counter-proposals. Facilities have been granted by the management to the shop stewards to carry out this exercise. The union is determined to save jobs.

A steward at Aintree told THE WORKER that, contrary to reports in the press, the workers had rejected the entire package - it was not simply a question of accepting a redundancy, but giving management full cooperation on an on-going basis. The workers were not prepared to do this, to give them a blank cheque, "We are fighting to save our jobs", he told us.

Every job, every industry that we fight for is a step further towards halting the rundown our bosses plan. If they wish to leave, let them go, but they shall not take our industry with them. The struggle within Courtaulds is developing: workers from Courtaulds' threatened Skelmersdale plant hired a train to picket the company's HQ in London on December 1st. Let this be the cue to all Courtaulds workers to say with one voice: "Hands off our industry".

PUBLIC MEETINGS

A new series of public meetings will be commencing at the Bellman Bookshop, 155, Fortess Road, London NW5, in the New Year.

Leeds
Friday, Jan 7th, 7.30 p.m. "Socialist Revolution - The Only Course For Britain" The Northern Star Bookshop 18a, Leighton Street, Off Great George Street, Leeds 1.

Glasgow
Saturday, Feb 5th, 2.30p.m. Report-back meeting by members of a CPB(M-L) delegation to Albania in Summer, 1976. Partick Burgh Hall, Room 1, 9 Burgh Hall Street, off Dumbarton Road. (Merklend St. Underground)