

WORKERS'

Vol. 1

No. 2

1977.

"LET'S IGNORE HIM AND HOPE HE'LL GO AWAY."



NOTICEBOOK

20p

Monthly Publication of the C. W. M.

The success and value of this
WORKERS' NOTEBOOK depends on
you, the reader ...

We welcome articles, information,
letters, comments, and above all,
criticisms.

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the Communist Workers Movement,
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Leninist organisation which has
been formed with the intention of
uniting with other Marxist- Leninist
organisations and the working class
at large towards the formation of a
revolutionary working class party.

EDITORIAL



What a spectacle to see and hear Jack Jones and Hugh Scanlon - our so-called 'working class leaders' - at Longbridge last month...

You could have taken their statements straight out of the mouth of any boss..Not once did they support or defend the workers!

When the men on the floor said....We are suffering under the social contract....We are being stripped of our livelihoods....The social contract is a social con trick...., what did these gentlemen from the TUC say?

....We must support the social contract..We must keep wages down...This is the only way forward!

How often have we heard these lies from our own employers, the CBI, from the capitalist press, and from Government and opposition alike?

What is this social contract?

It keeps wages down...therefore workers hard up and struggling....

It permits redundancies and unemployment....

It accepts cuts in jobs, education, health, social services and housing....

It allows anti-union laws and policies....

And when workers fight against these, it requires the TUC to step in and keep workers under control....

This is what the social contract really means!

It is nothing more than an agreement between the TUC, the bosses, and the Government, to make even greater profit out of the working class...It is an attempt to stabilise capitalism, to make it survive, no matter what the cost.

How can this be in the interests of the working class?

How can this be the only way forward?

On the contrary, we are going backwards, into a depression that will look gigantic compared to the 30's....

SOCIAL SCABS

These so-called leaders - the Jones's, the Scanlons, the TUC, - are not working class leaders at all. On the contrary, they are leaders of the owners of wealth and industry. That is why they were at Longbridge - to protect British Leyland bosses and Eric Varley, representing the Labour Government! They live off the bosses and serve their interests....to the working class, they are social scabs!



And they are fooling less and less workers..
 The fight against the social contract is
 growing all the time...Fords, Vauxhalls,
 British Leyland, ASTMS, etc....etc...

This is correct and we in the Communist
 Workers Movement support them fully.

OUR WEAKNESS

But why is the struggle so split up, so
 lacking in major impact?

We have always, as a class, struggled
 against our own exploitation, and over the
 years it has taken many forms and involved
 many issues....

But we have never looked forward to a future
 when we wouldn't have to do this....

We have never consciously as a class taken a
 path to create our own future....

We have believed and hoped that by reforming
 the system through strength of purpose and
 struggle we would somehow improve our lot
 and build socialism...

We have never taken the step of saying....

'We must no longer prop up or save capitalism'

And this is where we keep falling down....

- 4 So long as we allow social scabs like Jones and Scanlon, or the TUC 'generals' to lead us, so long as we still retain some faith in the bosses and their system of capitalism, so long as we accept the labour party's phoney 'socialism', so long as we believe parliament and the state serve the people, the working class,.....then we are doomed to a life of struggle, difficulty and insecurity, as are our children.

WHAT WE WANT

We need to stand up and say....NO SOCIAL CONTRACT WITH CAPITALISM!

We are no longer prepared to live in the old way..

We want full employment!

We want the right to work guaranteed!

We want our factories to produce for our needs, not the profit of a handful of owners!

We want the factories to be owned by the people, to be run and be administered by the workers who create the products in them!

We want homes for our families, health and education as of right!

We want protection and security for the elderly!

We want politics that will defend and protect the interests of the working class; our own elected representatives from our shop-floors and residential areas, and a political apparatus that will ensure that this representation serves the needs of the people!

We want a legal system that will protect the poor, the sick, the elderly, the worker and his family!

We want a press and culture that will uplift and defend the interests of all workers!

We want, in fact, SOCIALISM!

All these exist in their own form under socialism in China and Albania...

We want, in fact, our own SOCIALISM!



But to achieve this, we must break with capitalism...but equally important, we need a leadership rooted among the mass of workers serving our needs.....

We need a workers party which will bring to all workers the knowledge, strength, and conviction, that we can break with the past and build a future according to our own wants...which will unite workers throughout the country in this common destiny...which will unite with workers and oppressed people in other lands, who are forced to fight as we do.....

More than ever before in our history, the working class needs its own revolutionary party. Why revolutionary? because there is no other way..

When the social contract fails, they will try compulsion through laws; and when the laws fail, they will use force...., the army if necessary and if it remains loyal.. They will never say.....

6 ' OK chaps, the factory is yours, we are sorry we've been exploiting you for centuries, you are the majority, you after all, create all the wealth of the land, so it should belong to you...'
On the contrary, they will fight to preserve their wealth and positions, and in times of particular crisis, this fight will become more vicious....

This is why revolution is needed...it is a historical necessity rather than our choice.. But without a revolutionary party and perspective, without the knowledge that no matter how hard the fight may be, we will win, we cannot succeed.

But revolution and leadership in building a revolutionary party is not a matter of small groups plotting to overthrow the system.. It is in all of our hand, all our class, where we work and live....its out there among the mass of our workers..

This is where leaders are born, and this is where leaders must be and serve.

It is only from this mass base and work that revolution is possible, that change is possible. It is the masses who make revolution, not individuals....and the ideology of revolution belongs to the masses.

In our small way, in common with many others, the Communist Workers Movement is striving to achieve this socialism, this revolutionary workers democracy.

* *

As a class, we are on the threshold of a new era, the era of British Socialism. We can achieve it, but we must fight for it and understand it, protect it and cherish it.... We have nothing to lose but our chains...

★ ★ ★

DO YOU KNOW.....?

that the number of miners seriously injured or killed rises each year..

In 1974, 48 miners were killed and 497 seriously injured....

In 1975, 64 miners were killed and 586 seriously injured....

And the Coal Board has the cheek to talk of its concern for the safety and well-being of the miners!

This is the price miners pay for all those productivity deals...To the mine owners and employers profit always comes before safety!

that there are people enjoying the high meat prices we have to pay....

Pre-tax profits from U.K. meat companies are up by over $\frac{3}{4}$ to £7.14 million!

(From the 'Investors Chronicle; 4.2.1977)

that about $\frac{1}{3}$ of the British Army of 167,000 is stationed in Germany at a cost of £600,000,000 per year!

HOME SLAVES!

The Brutality of

Home Sweatshops

There are about $\frac{1}{4}$ million home sweatworkers in Britain working long hours for miserable wages. Many of these home workers are employed in making clothes or painstakingly fiddly jobs, such as making pin holes and eye snap fasteners, lace, screwing nuts and bolts.....They are paid by the hour, many on a piecework basis by the gross!

MISERABLE WAGES

There are numerous examples of miserable wages.....

In 1968, in Luton , clothing home workers were forced to accept as little as 10p or 15p per hour:

In 1972, in Nottingham, home lace workers were getting as little as 7p an hour until they received a princely rise of 32.3%!

This meant they were now getting 9 $\frac{1}{2}$ p an hour!

In 1974, Langeaton Trades Council reported that it was not uncommon for homeworkers in the area to get £4.50 for a 40 hour week!

Pay ranged from 10p to 13p an hour.

In 1974, the Low Pay Unit Report cited the example of a worker who worked 60 hours a week, yet received only £13.80.....and another who also worked 60 hours yet received even less, £10.20!

As we said in a brief article in the first issue of 'Workers' Notebook', it is easy for the firms employing these home workers to get away with this brutal exploitation....

Everything is in the firm's favour - The workers are isolated, and don't know each other. Because they're on their own, yet desperate for any money, they're afraid to ask for more or fight back in case they lose the little they've got.

The firm has no responsibility towards them as workers, as employees. They often don't even appear registered on the firm's books.

NO SECURITY

The workers can make no claims against the firm if they have accidents in their homes with the limited machinery. They get no work, no wages, no lay-off pay and no social security benefit when the firm has a slack period.

Homeworkers are not defined as 'employees' for the purposes of the Redundancy Payments Act 1965; The Contracts of Employment Act 1972; Trade Union and Labour Relations Act 1974; Whole chunks of legislation (in those rare situations when the majority of workers might benefit) pass the home workers by.

Health and Safety at Work Act 1971.

According to the 1961 Factories Act the firm should register any homeworkers they employ with the Local Authority. But the meagre fine of £20 doesn't compare with the huge profit these firms make out of each home worker they employ each day!

The bosses of these firms callously take advantage of the situation in which many home workers find themselves.

The workers are usually at home because they have to be...either to look after children or older relatives, or they're old-age pensioners

desperately trying to supplement their tiny pension. They have no choice but to stay at home and the work offered is the only way they can earn anything.

The profit made out of homeworkers explains why these little sweatshops still exist in times of highly advanced technology and huge multi-national concerns.

Because of this profit motive and the needs of people confined at home to earn money, there sweatshops will exist so long as capitalism exists, and capitalism will exist so long as the working class allows it to..
Therefore we say to all workers....How much longer are we all going to tolerate this?

* * * * *



DEMOCRACY

We are told we live in a democracy; we are told it is a good and just system, one we must fight to preserve; we are told that democracy is the will of the majority, that to live in a democracy means we are free.... But is this true?

We, the majority -----

We workers are the majority in our society.. Are we free?

Our livelihoods depend on employment.

We do not own nor control this employment.

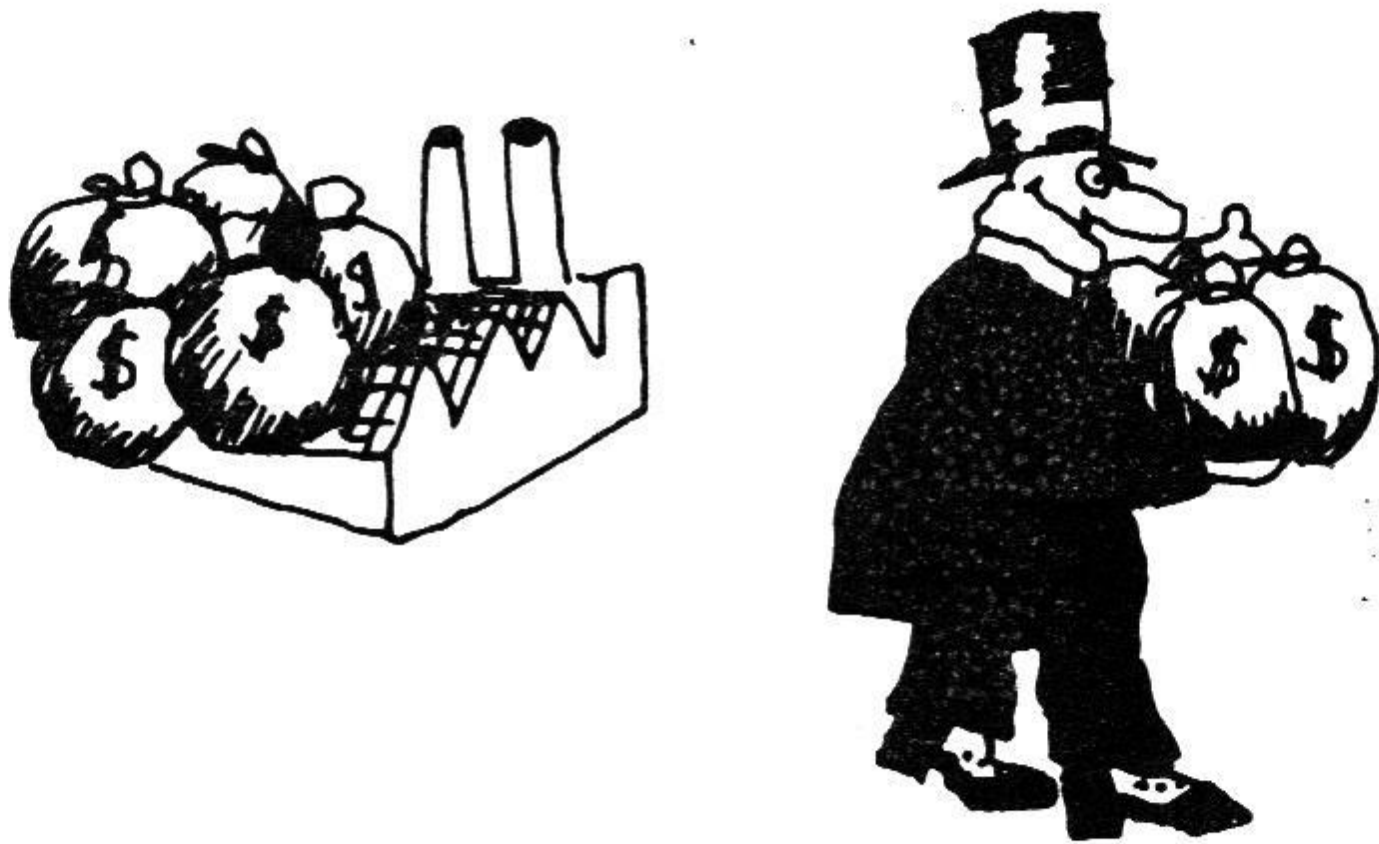
We are not allowed to decide what or how our skills should be employed, or how the profit from our labour should be shared.

The factories, the mines, the land, belong to a handful of employers, bankers and businessmen. They are free to do what they want with them. They decide in their search for profit whether the factory will be open, whether workers will be employed, what to do with our labour skills, and what we shall be paid.....And all the products of our labour they take as their own.

And after a hard weeks work for a crumb from the cake, we are still 'free' to face the rent or mortgage payments, the hire-purchase bills, the television rentals, the re-payment of loans, and the buying back of the goods we produced in the first place.

WHO CONTROLS ?

Our lives are controlled by the employers, the banks, the building societies, the various companies and landlords. They are free to own and manage our society and us, while we are 'free' to be controlled and manipulated. We pay in all senses of the word each day of our lives.



What about the law? Are we not free within the law?

LAW PROTECTS

The law stands for the protection of property. What property have we to defend?...a few belongings mortgaged to the building society, or owned by a hire-purchase company, which a thief may steal....

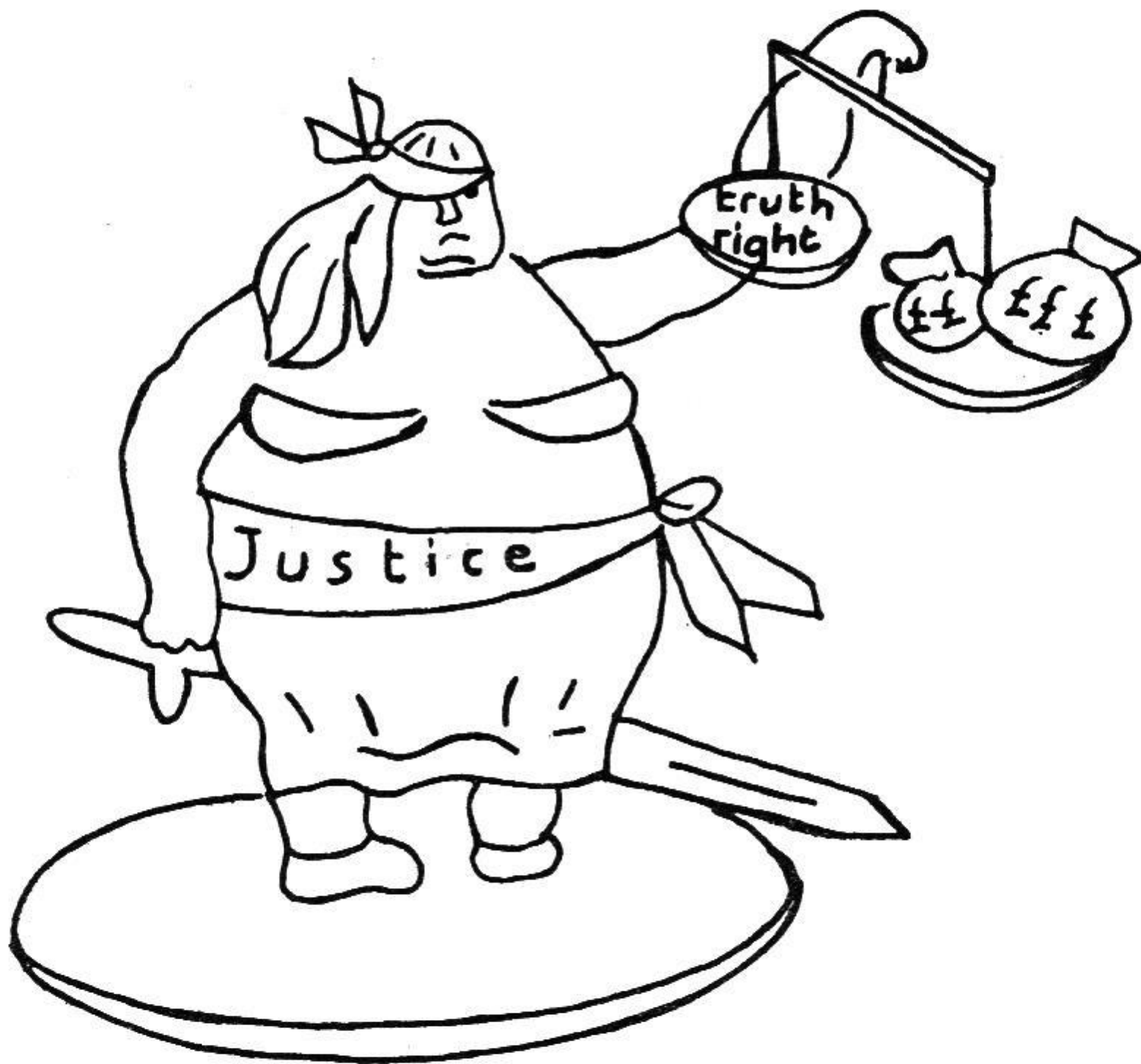
But not the employers..

They have all the property. And this is what the law really protects, not from the thief so much, as from us.

The law gives the employing class the rights and power to own, employ, and control.

It gives them the legal right to take from workers the products of our labour, to take from the producers all the things that are produced, and own them.

It gives legality to this, the biggest robbery of them all...And it is all part of 'civilisation'.



After hard years of bitter struggle, the working class won the right to strike, in law. But, more than 2 people standing together represents a 'breach of the peace' or an 'obstruction'.

If the picket gets too big or strong, it is broken up, by the law.

When we strike, the law comes in not to help human property which is being exploited but the factory, the property of the employer against us.

When 1½ million working men and women are made unemployed or redundant by the employers, where is the law to say.....
'You cannot do this!'

When Governments take away free milk from our children in schools...where is the law?

Free Speech ?

When newspapers owned by the big employers print vicious anti-working class news, views and propaganda, where is the law to protect us?

Rupert Murdoch, the millionaire owner of many newspapers has several million times more freedom of speech than an ordinary worker.

Oh yes, there are laws protecting against libel and slander, but this applies to individuals..and how many workers can afford the large cost and time involved in fighting cases through the 'courts'? Its hard enough to get legal aid when we're in trouble.

And then there are laws against the spreading of contraversial information.

From the Official Secrets Act to the Prevention of Terrorism Act, the state has a whole arsenal to silence the truth. When the Poulson case exposed the tip of an iceberg of corruption involving allegedly members of Parliament, the truth became muffled in an overcoat of so called 'parliamentary protection'.



Official
Secrets
Act

AGEE & HOSENBALL

There is a law against...."inciting disaffection among different classes of her majesty's subjects".

What does this mean?

Why is Enoch Powell not prosecuted under it for his rabid, racialist propaganda? Oh no! That is reserved, when needed, for working class leaders who might challenge the very nature of our society.

But we have the vote! We can change things. Can we?

VOTING FOR WHAT

This is what workers have believed for years.

This is how the Labour Party came into existence.

16 Has the Labour Party really changed things?
We have a Labour Government now.
Our trade union movement is under constant
attack...
The so called 'social contract' muffles
workers and keeps wages down...
At the same time unemployment increases,
as does inflation; housing programmes are
reduced while young families cannot get
houses; there are cuts in health, education
and social services...
And so on and so on....
All under a so-called 'labour' or even
worse 'socialist' in name Government!
And this betrayal has happened on each
occasion that a Labour Government has been
in office.
Parliament is no place for changing things.
It makes sure that the system works and
survives.

When we vote in elections we do not vote
as free men for the people we know will
serve us.
On the contrary, we are given candidates
and told to choose from them.
And we cannot even get rid of them if they
do not represent us. Look at the rumpus
over the removal of Reg Prentiss through
the legal internal party channels..
Even if we could put forward candidates
we really want, we haven't the time or the
money to oppose the 'establishment'
parties. We are working men and women.

THE FUTURE

Democracy as we know it can never be
anything but democracy for the few.
What we want is democracy for the majority,
working class democracy, proletarian
democracy....

TO THE SOUP LINE.



To be sung to the tune of "... Its a long way to Tipperary " :
Words by Joe Hill....

Bill Brown was just a working man,
like others of his kind,
He lost his job and tramped the streets
when work was hard to find.
The landlord put him on the stem,
the bankers kept his dough,
And Bill heard everybody sing,
no matter where he'd go:

Chorus

Its a long way down to the soupline,
its a long way to go.
Its a long way down to the soupline,
And the soup is thin I know.
Goodbye, good old pork chops,
Farewell beefsteak rare;
Its a long way down to the soupline,
But my soup is there.

So Bill and sixteen million men
responded to the call,
To force the hours of labour down
and thus make jobs for all.
They picketed the industries,
and won the four-hour day,
And organised a General Strike
so men don't have to say...

The workers own the factories now,
where jobs were once destroyed,
By big machines that filled the world
with hungry unemployed.
They all own homes, they're living well,
they're happy, free and strong.
But millionaires wear overalls,
and sing this little song...

WHAT IS



Capitalism is in crisis the world over. For the capitalist, too much is being produced to be profitable. While working people throughout the world need goods, they are unable to buy them.... Take the EEC 'mountain' of butter, for example, Rather than give it to the workers or sell it at very low prices, they store it or destroy it or sell it to Russia so as to create a shortage which will increase the price! Because of the crisis of overproduction, there have been cuts in production at home, reductions in consumption, and a fierce struggle for markets abroad....

In this way, the owners of wealth and industry hope to guarantee their profits....That we, the working class suffer with fewer jobs, higher prices, inflation and lower living standards, is irrelevant to the employers..

The British Electrical Industry has been trying to do this to be more competitive in the world market in their quest for greater profit.

Their plan has been to nationalise, reduce the workforce, and cut home consumption through cuts in public expenditure and taxation.

Mergers alone, within GEC caused 29,773 jobs to be lost between 1968 and 1971. But for the bosses, profits have gone up! This can be seen from the profit figures of GEC.....

HAPPENING IN THE ELECTRICAL INDUSTRY ?

Year	Number of Redundancies	Total number of Employees	Rate of profit per worker
1969	9,965	230,000	£213
1970	1,030	206,000	£ 281
1971	4,948	195,000	£323
1972	2,490	181,000	£424

The idea behind the cuts in public expenditure is to reduce consumption at home and release more resources for export...

In order to cut expenditure in the Post Office, telephone charges have been increased by 300% in the last 4 years causing a drop in the demand for new telephone services, and a drastic reduction in postal services leading to a loss of 18,000 jobs within the Post Office and a further loss of 20,000 jobs in industries attached to the Post Office.

In the electrical industry such cuts are also causing redundancies. GEC Telecommunications have announced a total of about 7000 redundancies from its workforce of 28,000 due to cuts in Post Office orders.

But the bosses have again been... alone is to receive £22.4... subsidy amounting to 25%... 1975!

The Central Electric Generators... until a few years ago was... unable to supply enough elec... countries needs, is now not... orders until 1979!



34,000 people working in the industry face redundancy, especially if the government-proposed mergers are allowed to go through...

The policy of reviving capitalism through cuts in public spending, of cutting our wages and reducing home spending is, however, not working to the government's expectations....nor can it!

Competition from America, Germany, and Japan is fierce. They have a much more modern industry with greater capital investment..

Unless huge amounts of money and capital are put into our industries, and high employment created, then we are unlikely to be competitive in the world market. To do this means less immediate profit for the capitalists.

The government hands out boosts to industry, but it lines their pockets rather than expanding production, and since the capitalist produces for profit, they can only make the crisis worse and create more hardship for the working class....

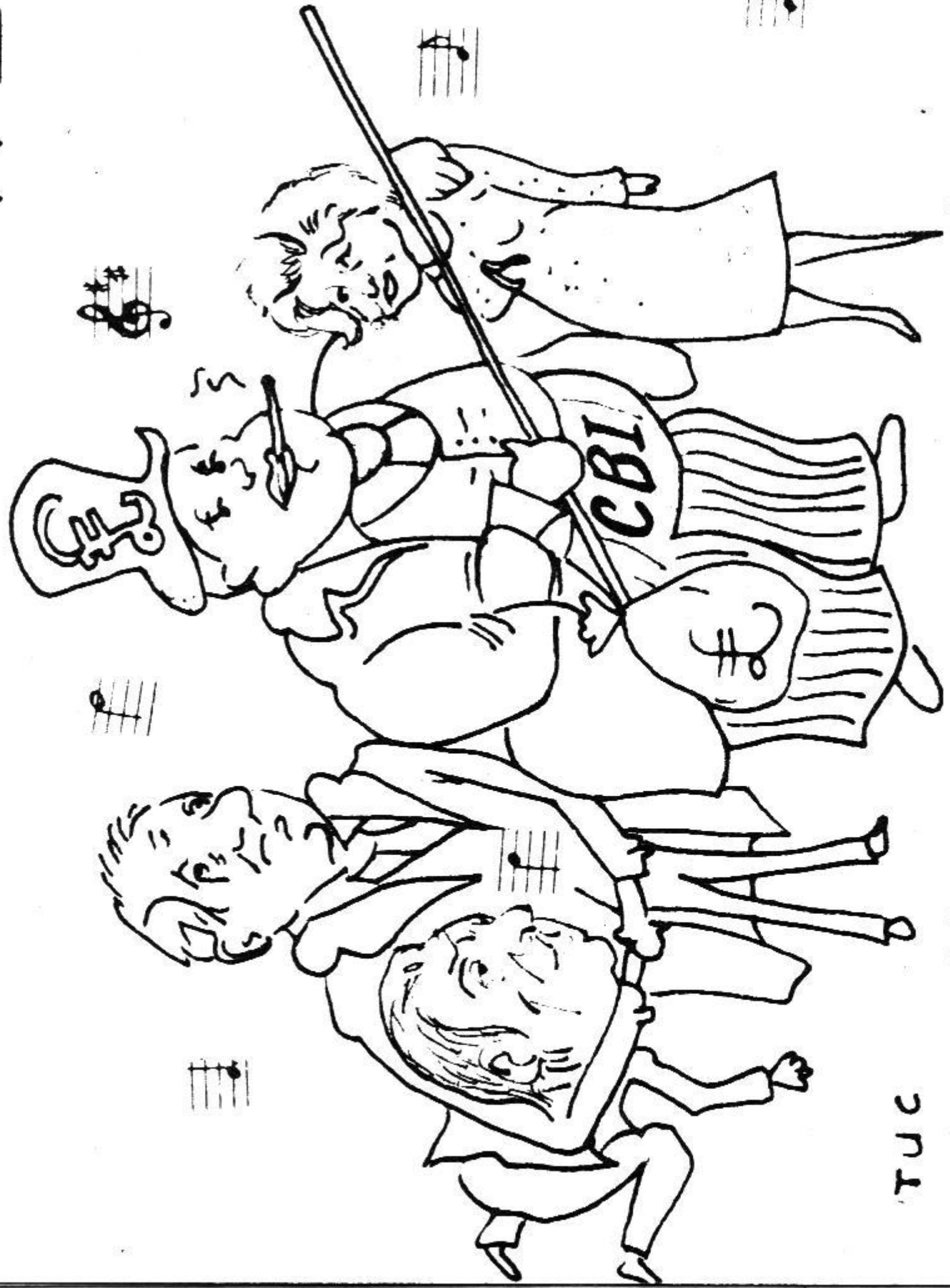
The Alternative

The alternative would be to link industry with the needs of the people at home. We need telephones, a better postal service, cheap heating for all, young and old, at home or in schools and factories. We already have workers, buildings, bricks for more buildings and materials.... This would provide jobs for all workers in the electrical industry in Britain....BUT, it would mean doing away with the system of production for profit in factories owned by a handful of individuals...It would mean an end to capitalism, and they will not allow this!

But we the working class, have a choice.... We can fight for the alternative of Socialism or sink in the marsh of capitalism!

* * *

THE CONSPIRACY OF WEALTH . . .



WHAT YOU LOT
NEED IS . . .

Cuts -
SIX OF THE BEST!

- JOB
- WAGES
- EDUCATION
- HEALTH
- HOUSING
- SOCIAL SERVICES

TUC

LABOUR PARTY

CONSERVATIVE PARTY

THE SOCIAL CON-TRICK

In 1976 Ministers in parliament received 'modest' increases in salaries!

Prime Minister.... £20,000 to £25,000

Lord Chancellor... £20,000 to £27,000

Cabinet member.... £13,000 to £18,000

Ministers of State..... £9,500 to £13,000

Parliamentary Secretaries of State..... £5,500 to £8,500

Attorney General.. £14,500 to £19,000

Leader of Opposition..... £9,500 to £14,000

(Figures from 1976 Keesing Archives...Report on Parliament.)

And we are forced to accept the 'social contract', the £6 limit, by these people.....!

In 1976.....

Barclays Bank profits were £198 million!
This is 39% up on 1975!

ICI profits were £540 million!
This is 68% up on 1975!

Lloyds Bank profits were £147 million!
This is their highest ever on record!

* * *

FIGHT FASCISM

2

The last issue of Workers' Notebook gave a brief survey of historical lessons to be learned from the growth of fascism in Italy and Germany. We specifically dealt with the growth of the fascist parties and their methods of terror and deception among the working class, in a period of economic crisis.

But what circumstance made it easier and in fact paved the way for them to come to power? What role did the other parties, in particular, the Social Democratic Party, play in allowing it to happen?

Social Democracy

At the end of the 1st World War, the kaiser was overthrown in Germany, and the working class was strong enough to win concessions, to the silent dismay of the owners of wealth and industry.....These included....
collective bargaining;
the 8-hour day;
shop-steward committees for every 50 workers on any shop floor.

The German Social Democratic Party, widely believed to be a workers party, came to power. It was to participate in government for the next 10 years.

It was these 10 years that witnessed the reduction of all advantages originally won by the workers, that witnessed a break-up of working-class militancy and organisation, and an increasing power of capital over the working class under the direction of this so-called 'workers party'.

The economic crisis provided opportunity for industrialists to proliferate... At the same time inflation reduced the real income of workers and pensioners to a level far below the 'bread-line'.

Industrialists such as Thyssen demanded a return to the 10 hour working day.... In the National Economic Council, Stinnes declared....."The preliminary conditions for any successful stabilisation is, in my opinion, that wage struggles and strikes be excluded for a long time. We must have the courage to say to the people...' For the present and for some time to come, you will have to work overtime without overtime payment'.."

The Coal owners in the Ruhr were granted 715 million gold Dm compensation for damages incurred during the period of passive resistance to the French..., and in practice, their claim for 'enforced' industrial peace was satisfied when the Social Democratic Party began to use repression against workers on strike. Troops and police were sent to put workers down.

In 1920, hundreds of people were shot in the Ruhr District.

In 1921, the government brought in gangs of strike breakers against the railway, gas, and electricity workers.

And so on.....

Collaboration

Throughout this period, the trade unions lost more and more their fighting capacity. They relied increasingly on state arbitration, as they trusted special 'labour courts' brought in by their so-called 'labour' party for the settlement of disputes. They lost more and more their independence and the trust of the workers.

The courts were a farce. Even when workers won claims, the employers would refuse to accept them...

The trade unions also began to advocate rationalisation of the economy, which worsened unemployment....and the conditions of the workers..

Between 1929 and 1932, average weekly wages fell from 42.20 to 21.06 DMs..;

the total wage bill for the employers fell from 47.5 Billion DMs to 25.7 billion DMs.

There were 8 million unemployed!

And unemployment benefits were cut...

The Social Democratic Party supported more and more right wing policies and made no effort to stop Hitler from organising and smashing up working class organisations. They gave the police free reign, and they in turn, gave Hitlers thugs free reign..

The working class, disillusioned and confused with 'Socialism' embodied as the Social Democratic Party were disarmed ideologically and physically, and despite the struggles and efforts of Communists and the revolutionary movement which fought against social democracy and upheld socialism, they were unable to prevent fascism from triumphing....at such bitter cost.



In Britain today, we face similar dangers. Where does the Labour Party stand concerning the economic crisis and the possible rise of fascism?

It says we must tighten our belts and save Britian from chaos..

It takes onto itself the task of persuading workers that capitalism can be saved by 'co-operation', by a more efficient running of industry, nationalised and private...

Money will be diverted from the public services into industry..It will .." in the immediate future give priority to industrial development over consumption or even our social objective.." How convenient for the owners of wealth and industry?

Unemployment will not fall...On the contrary, it will rise because streamlining and rationalisation will mean more redundancy. Take the railways as an example...The workforce fell from 600,000 in 1948 to 180,000 today! Or take British Leyland...Since the Government takeover of 51% of shareholdings, there have been massive redundancies!

Not only must unemployment rise, but there are also cuts in public spending, cuts in housing, education, health, social services, to go with it, this very process increasing unemployment in these sectors!

The crisis and our standards of living can only worsen...

But they go further, for they blame the crisis on the working class....low productivity, restrictive practices, overmanning, and disruption by industrial action....

This, our own so-called Labour Party!

And they ask us to accept a 'social contract' with capitalism!

They even go so far as to offer workers participation in their own exploitation! This after all is what the new proposals for worker participation on Boards will mean...

Collaboration

And the TUC is the main force for ensuring and implementing the betrayal of our class.

Take the so-called Employment Protection Act, hailed by Jack Jones as a advance in 'industrial democracy'.

Amongst other things, this act says.....

.....in case of redundancy the employer will have to consider and reply to any representation from the Union concerned..

Redundancies will not be stopped, but workers will be notified in advance. A Board will decide on redundancies with the participation of trade union representatives!

.....in the event of unfair dismissal, employers might have to pay compensation,

but no tribunal can force the employer to give the worker his job back. Of course all this assumes that workers as a whole have the time, money and opportunity to fight their dismissals through so-called tribunals or courts!

.....As regards the "guaranteed payment from the employer in case the workers are not provided with work on a normal working day"... it is not guaranteed anymore where this is caused by a dispute within the firm, or where the worker refuses to accept another job.

And this is an advance in industrial democracy!

What is happening is that the labour government with the collaboration of the TUC is gradually eroding all the gains and strength of the trade union movement. They are weakening our fighting capacity. At the same time they introduce selective new repressive measures...

...plans to reduce or tax social security benefits, to avoid paying any benefits to workers on official strike...etc...

...the extension of anti-terrorism laws which can now be applied to any person irrespective of whether is of whether he has anything to do with terrorism, and that may well mean you or me!

At the same time, extreme right wing organisations who stir up social and racial violence and set fire to coloured peoples' houses are at large, holding meetings, demonstrations, unhampered!

There are even private armies being allowed to organise themselves!

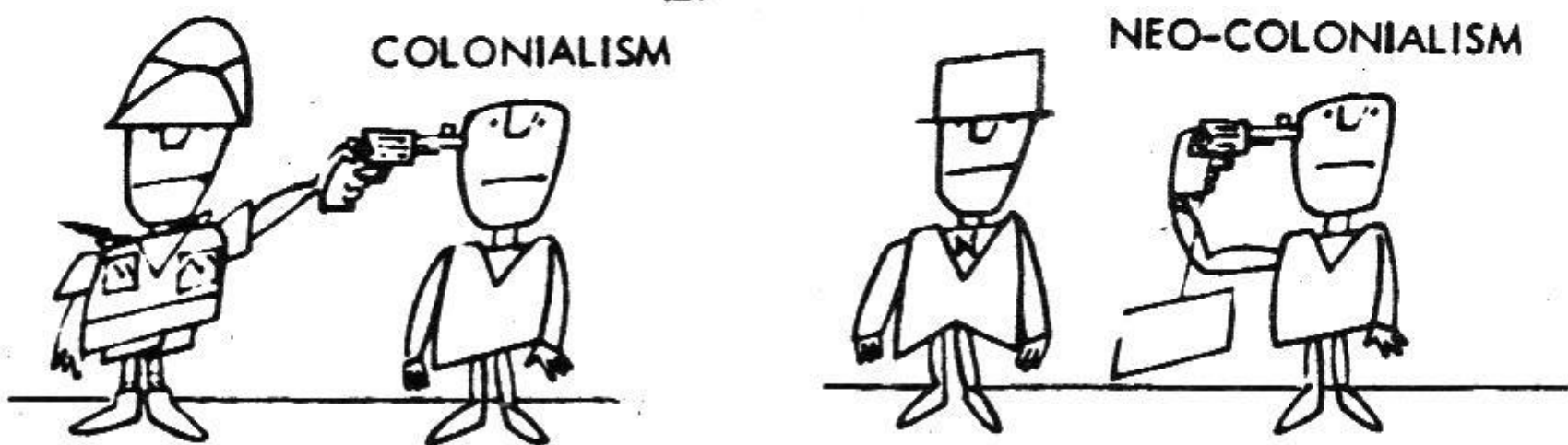
The Lessons

30 We are not saying that the labour party has become 'fascist'...This is absurd!
But we are saying that by making a pact with capitalism in crisis, by attacking and disarming the working class, the labour government is creating conditions which will make it easier for fascism to triumph.
This is the greatest danger...!
We can learn from the lessons of the past...

The German Social Democratic Party played the same role in the 30s.
We must not let it happen again!

* * * * *

INTERNATIONAL COMMENT





THAILAND

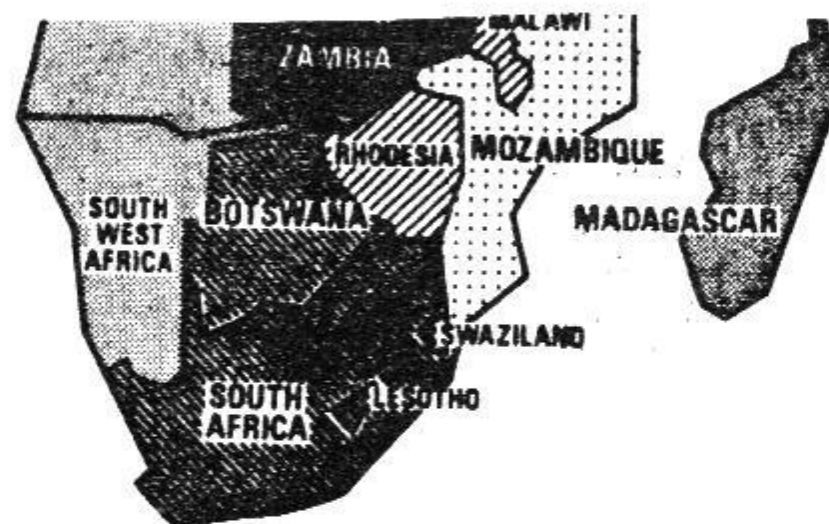
In Thailand, the National Liberation Struggle waged by the people has succeeded in liberating parts of the country.

In February, 1975, the Thai business journal 'The Investor' reported in the following way on....." how to tell a liberated area in Thailand ".....

" ...if rustlers disappear, gambling dies, hooligans reform and drug addicts kick the habit, if demand for books, paper and pencils, and toothpaste and soap suddenly increases; and if public sanitation and order improve, then the village is communist infested and should be destroyed."

SOUTH AFRICA

The Youth Revolt



When the youth of Soweto decided to stage a demonstration against the use of Afrikaans as the language of instruction in schools, they little realised the profound implications that would follow. The 'volcanoe' erupted on the morning of 16.6.76, and the 'lava' rapidly spread to all 4 corners of the country.

Its not clear why it all started in Soweto. Though one of the largest townships in the country with great social problems of poverty and a miserable existence, there are many areas equally bad and even worse. What is clear, however is that the issue of Afrikaans was only the stimulus. Behind it and underlying it is the whole struggle against desperate social and living conditions, against the brutal oppression of the apartheid system and all it represents. The list of grievances is endless. Even the protest against Afrikaans was not against the language as such, but the fact that the system forced them to learn in that language!

Student protest in South Africa is not new. What distinguishes this particular occasion from previous ones is that the whole event was triggered off by Primary and Secondary school pupils..The university students only became involved later...

At the start of the demonstrations, the pupils were in high spirits, disciplined and orderly. This is a common feature of the history of many protest movements in South Africa.

The order and discipline broke up when the police and special branch descended on the demonstrations. They charged into the crowds, firing teargas canisters. Before long, the well known anti-terrorism squad had made its presence felt. The struggle became bloody and bitter.

White students at the University of Witwatersrand came out in sympathy with the African pupils and marched through the centre of Johannesburg where they were joined by black workers. They were attacked by right wing thugs and plain clothes special branch policemen. Similar demonstrations of sympathy were held at the Universities of Rhodes and Cape Town.



34 The black universities followed suit....
(In South Africa, there are separate universities and schools for blacks and whites whites!)

But they, as usually happens, got worse treatment. Many were arrested en mass, and the universities were closed down for the year ... (This closure didn't affect the only black medical school in the country).

Initially, much of the struggle was confined to Johannesburg, but the focus soon shifted to Cape Town.

Here, Coloured residents, pupils and students at the University College of the Western Cape supported their black African counterparts to the full.

South Africans are broadly classified by the apartheid system into 4 groups....

Whites or Europeans, Africans, Asians, and Coloured people.

It has been customary for the South African ruling class to grant minor or marginal privileges to Coloureds and Asians and to try to use them as a buffer against black Africans. But as has so often happened, it didn't work on this occasion.

African and Coloured children converged onto the centre of Cape Town. The outcome of this and other demonstrations was again viscious and bloody, principally through the actions of the police and security forces..but the protest spread to involve more townships.

Who is behind this new period of revolt in South Africa?

Various exile groups have claimed that their so-called 'underground' forces were active and responsible...but this is far from the truth.



In 1969 a group of black students became disillusioned with the National Union of South African Students (NUSAS) and formed their own organisation, the South African Students Organisation (SASO). They believed that while NUSAS confined itself to the issues of academic freedom, university segregation couldn't be separated from the whole social fabric of South African society. They were not revolutionaries or Communists...they were even anti-communist at times...but they believed in African Nationalism as the way forward. Their aim was to bring together African, Asian and Coloured people against apartheid. They tried to get involved with the masses, for example, they embarked on an anti-illiteracy and anti-poverty programme, and were active in the Black Peoples' Convention, (BPC) , a movement embracing various ideological tendencies.

Subsequently, SASO became active in primary and secondary schools which resulted in the formation of the South African Students Movement (SASM) which in fact, spearheaded the present student struggle, out of spontaneous revolt.

Importance of the Struggle!

How significant has the struggle been?

One of the shortcomings of the youth struggle was a failure to adequately enlist the support of the working class. They naturally assumed that their parents would not sit by and allow their children to be massacred by the police. But matters were not that simple.

In traditional African society parents continue to exercise control over their children until they leave the family, for example, to get married. Therefore it was not unnatural for them to waver when they were called upon to come out on strike.. Moreover, employers were in league with the police and state. Wages are pitifully low, and workers desperately need every penny they can get. Tremendous pressure was put on them by threats of wage cuts and dismissals. Trade union organisation is still relatively weak and political organisation regrettably even weaker.

The police exploited the existing situation by playing parents off against the students and offering them protection. Moreover, they were also able to use migrant workers. The migrant workers are recruited from distant rural areas and only reside in the cities temporarily, usually in all-male hostels. They are essentially cut off from the main-stream of life in the townships. In addition, they are insecure and extremely difficult to organise due to the short duration of their contracts (6-12 months).

With the connivance of the police, which included direct assistance, these migrants viciously attacked the students.

But having said this, and in spite of the disadvantages, a considerable proportion of workers did in fact come out in support of the youth.

The ruling class in South Africa fears more than anything else the working class flexing its muscles. During the 1973-74 strikes, the authorities did not use such brutal methods to suppress the workers struggle.

These were semi-skilled workers who could not be sacked and easily replaced. That's why the army was called in to keep production going while the employers tried to reach some settlement with the workers..Of course there were arrests, but this is a daily feature of the brutality of life in South Africa. By contrast, more than 700 people have died in these present struggles..

THE WAY FORWARD

That the youth lacked a revolutionary Marxist-Leninist ideology is abundantly clear, but only those who believe in daydreams could expect students to bring about a revolution.

The vacuum that exists in South Africa can only be filled by a vanguard organisation of the working class, guided by Communist ideology...

It is only a revolutionary vanguard party that can guide the oppressed and exploited masses to national liberation..

And this is sadly lacking..

The road that lies ahead is arduous. The forces of the enemy are powerful, but not invincible. This struggle is one of many, and it shall not be forgotten!

Life under SOCIALISM...

Facts about CHINA

Today, after 28 years of building socialism...

.....There is no inflation in China.

For the past 26 years, prices of basic foods - rice, flour, oil, corn, salt, and sugar have not risen; the price of meat, poultry, fish, vegetables, fruit, tinned foods, milk, eggs, cake, biscuits, sweets and chocolates have actually dropped!

Before the 1949 revolution in China, China was known as..' the poor, sick, starving man of Asia '.....





So too have the prices of watches, bikes, radios, sewing machines, and television sets - things unheard of for the ordinary people in old pre-revolutionary China....

.....There is no unemployment.
All school leavers get jobs within 2-3 months of leaving school....

.....There is no income tax for the individual or family....

.....Men retire at 60, women at 55;
Miners at 50; You get 70% of your wages as pension from the state....

.....800 million-plus people live in China.
80% live in the countryside. The vast countryside is covered by a complete network of medical services. On average, there is 1 doctor to 50 families....

.....8 out of 10 people in Old China were illiterate. Today, one fifth of the population is in education. Together with the primary, secondary schools and universities, there are colleges attached to factories and farms, mobile schools for the remotest villages, and horseback schools for the wandering herdsmen. All students and teachers also work in factories and farms for a time so that they come closer to workers and peasants.

.....All the means of production - the factories, mines, etc... - are owned by the State. A percentage of the wealth produced by the workers in these factories goes to pay for all the social facilities.

.....China is probably the only country in the world that doesn't owe a penny to anyone. In this way it can keep economically and politically independent.

.....Before 1949, China was almost totally dependent on imported oil and had to import vast quantities of cotton and grain. Today, China is self-sufficient in oil and even exports some. While China's population has increased by 60%, grain production has increased by 140% and cotton production by 470%...

.....There is real democracy in China. Every neighbourhood in a town, and every village has a revolutionary committee. The people in the area elect ordinary workers and peasants from among themselves as members of the committee. These committee members then represent that area in government, and can be recalled by the people at any time.

* * * * *

Historical Notes

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2.

ON UNEMPLOYMENT

1939-1977

1939 Unemployment fell sharply during the year from 1,800,000, but still stood at 700,000 at the end of the year.

1940-45 Once the war had begun in earnest after the occupation of France, levels of unemployment fell to 200,000 by the end of 1940 and to 70,000 at the time of the campaign to support the Soviet Union (then, a socialist country) with arms in 1942-43.

1946 After demobilization, at the time of the changing over from war to peacetime production, unemployment rose to 380,000.
After the war, workers and demobbed servicemen were determined not to put up with the same rotten life they'd had before the war, and were looking towards a new kind of society and were prepared to struggle for it. The Soviet Union, at that time the first socialist country, whose efforts had largely defeated Hitler (including 25,000,000 people dead!) enjoyed tremendous prestige among the working class. . . .
In the circumstances, if capitalism was to survive, major reforms had to be made.

1948 Labour Government elected by a landslide majority. along with 3 Communist M.P.s. It was this labour government that carried out these major

reforms to stabilise capitalism...as proposed in the Beveridge Report..., nationalisation measures, the NHS, secondary education, etc... and adopted so-called Keynesian economic policies to try to prevent slumps and unemployment..

1948-63....Known as the 'post-war boom years'
There was rebuilding and reconstruction out of the ravages of war. Industry was given a boost. Billions of dollars were injected into the British economy by U.S. Marshall Aid. The so-called 'cold-war' with its arms race started. Cheap food, raw materials and superprofits flowed in again from the 'empire'...The change to Commonwealth only made more certain captive markets for British goods. Keynesian economics were applied in government spending and fiscal policies. But these policies, which included printing money and borrowing heavily to pay for government deficits caused inflation and layed the ground for later crises in the economy. Throughout this period, unemployment remained fairly low at about 300,00 This was accepted as 'normal'. Ironically, there was a shortage of labour in many industries! Workers from S. Italy were 'imported' in the 50's on tough 4-year contracts to work in the brickworks of the LBC, and London Transport recruited workers from the West Indies. Immigrants, today used as scapegoats for unemployment, were encouraged from all parts of the 'empire'. The purpose of this was to create a large pool of labour from which the capitalists could exploit to increase their profits.



1952....480,000 unemployed. Even during the years of 'boom', the periodic recessions couldn't be avoided, and as time went on, they became more frequent and more serious.

1958-59..recession..520,000 unemployed.

1963....recession..870,000 unemployed.
Demonstrations against unemployment.
Training boards set up and number of training places doubled.

1965....Redundancy Payments Act, aimed at 'sugaring the pill' of unemployment.

1966....June. Special Development Areas set up. Special Development Districts had previously been set up in 1960.

1967-68..Monthly average of over 550,00 unemployed.

⁴⁴ 1970....582,000 unemployed. The so-called 'boom' is definitely over, and the trend of unemployment is unmistakably upwards once again.

1971....800,000 unemployed. Collapse of Rolls Royce and Upper Clyde Shipbuilders and numerous other bankruptcies. According to Britannia, Book of the Year, 1973, p.271....." the economy failed to respond to the traditional fiscal measures....There were sharp falls in manufacturing employment as the 'shake-out' of the labour force continued,..this represented the manufacturers' attempts to reduce labour costs per unit of output.."
In other words, unemployment was being used to increase the exploitation of the workers, at a time when world conditions were becoming less and less favourable to the British capitalists.
July..Work-in at Upper Clyde Shipyard begins against threatened closure of the yards, and continues for a year, succeeding in keeping all the yards open.
November..970,000 unemployed.
Demonstrations at parliament begin with clashes with the police.

1972....885,000 unemployed..

1973-74..a fall to about 650,000 unemployed. A short-lived 'boom', particularly in the building industry. Tory government handouts to building firms....
December..Meriden workers co-operative set up in response to NVT's plan to close the Triumph works.

1975....January and May... K.M.E.(Kirby) and Scottish Daily News workers co-operative set up.



April..Under strong pressure from the International Monetary Fund (international capitalist bankers)the labour governmentswings away from 'keynsian' economic policies which like previous capitalist economic policies, are now failing, and turns to so-called 'monetary' policies popular with the right wing Tories...namely, cutting down on government spending, especially on social services, keeping the supply of money down, inevitably increasing unemployment!

By August, unemployment had passed the million mark again...as it was before the 2nd World War...now, 1,151,000! In September, under pressure from the trade union movement, Healey introduces 'measures' aimed at reducing the level of unemployment...Job-creation schemes, (up to 35,000)..Temporary Employment Subsidy (up to 70,000 jobs), Youth Recruitment subsidy. Community Industrial schemes (up to 4,000); expansion of training centres, etc..

But all these are a drop in the ocean of unemployment, and only served to hide the real nature of unemployment and fool workers into thinking that the labour government was really doing something about unemployment. November..15,000, mainly from the NW of England, march in London against unemployment.

Smaller demonstrations begin.

1976....January.. unemployment reaches 1,303,000.

Healey introduces new 'measures'... and says they will save or create a further 140,000 jobs, BUT, admits most will only be temporary.

March..300 mile march of 100 unemployed youth from Manchester to London.

Viscious attack on march by police at Hendon (N. London).

20,000 march for 'right-to-work' in London.

Unemployment continues to rise.

By August, the level passes 1½ million!

November 17th..Over 60,000 workers, mainly public sector workers, from all over Britian, including many women, demonstrate against cuts in government spending and unemployment..

1977....January.. close to 1¾ million unemployed!

Demonstrations continue to occur and be planned.

February..9 week strike of 2,800 workers of Balfour Darwin's in Sheffield ends, preventing 473 proposed redundancies..

And so it continues...
What will the rest of 1977 bring?
Or even more ominous, 1978-80?
How far away are the breadlines and soup
kitchens?

* * * * *

This is the second of 2 articles giving
notes on the history of unemployment.

As we said in the first article, what the
notes show is that we have never been free
of unemployment under capitalism. All that
has changed over the years is ups and downs
of levels of unemployment, together with
ups and downs in capitalist crises. All the
'measures' adopted by successive governments
under pressure from the working class have
failed and must fail because they are all
aimed at the stabilising and survival of
capitalism.

But we know that capitalism needs and
creates a permanent 'reserve army' of
unemployed workers to pull into the economy
in a boom and keep wages down. Capitalism
does not want, nor is it able to get rid of
unemployment, whatever its Party political
representatives may be or what they may
even want - Labour, Tory, or Liberal..

There will always be unemployment under
capitalism...The only time the level has
really fallen was due to the war..and while
capitalism may prepare for war as an attempt
to temporarily stave off its problems, the
working class has a choice..Are we going to
go on suffering under the capitalist system
or are we going to break with it and build
our own future, free from unemployment and
insecurity once and for all?

This is the choice we must make now!

FORUM

FOR

DISCUSSION



"Continuous connection with the mass of workers, the ability to agitate unceasingly among them, to participate in every strike, to respond to every demand of the masses - this is the chief thing for a Communist Party, especially in such a country as England, where until now (as by the way is the case in all imperialist countries), participation in the socialist movement and the labour movement generally, has been confined chiefly to a narrow upper section of the workers, representatives of the labour aristocracy, largely thoroughly and hopelessly spoiled by reformism, captives of bourgeois and imperialist imperialist prejudices. Without a struggle against this section, without the destruction of every trace of its authority among the workers, without convincing the masses of the complete bourgeois corruption of this section, there can be no question of a serious communist workers movement. That is so for England, for France, for America, for Germany..."

Lenin...in a Letter to Sylvia Pankhurst,
dated August 28, 1919.

**WORKING CLASS
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