

THE WORKER



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The alternatives for the organised working class

FIGHT OR PERISH!

Editorial

'Attack on Inflation' - Defence of Profits!

Capitalism is not about a decent standard of living for workers or the good of society or the economic strength of the nation. Capitalism is about profits.

The present capitalist government's so-called "Attack on Inflation" is not about inflation at all. It is about profits.

The classic policy for sustaining profits in a period of economic crisis is to cut wages and cut the work force, particularly in the less profitable sections of the economy. That is just what the Government's £6 wage limit and drastic cuts in the public services will do.

If it were really directed against inflation, it would modify fiscal policies which over the decades have depreciated the pound in the worker's pocket in relation to the appreciation of the capitalist's property. It would limit price rises even if this meant limiting increases in profits.

It does not do this. It cuts wages which are not the cause of inflation. It cuts wages because the capitalist class does not live on wages but on profits. The whole government policy is directed against workers to the advantage of capitalists. This "attack" is a defence of profits which are the life blood of capitalism.

It is not in the national interest but in the interest of profit-grubbers to whom the nation means nothing - as was shown by their willingness to see it submerged in a monopoly-capitalist Europe.

For Wilson to say that the government is not "deliberately creating massive unemployment" in the interest of capitalist profits when the number of jobless is already reaching one and a half millions is a bare-faced lie.

What are we to do about it?

Workers fought off the Tory Industrial Relations Act which was intended to destroy the trade unions' capacity to prevent the defence of profits from eating away the standard of living of their members.

But the Social Contract which was Labour's way of achieving the same end broke the ranks of the labour movement through their lack of ideological clarity and paved the way for the £6 trap the TUC had helped the government to spring.

What do workers do about it? If class struggle stops, the working class is dead. That is the real intention of the "Attack on Inflation" - to stop class struggle, to allow the reaping of profits to go on unhindered.

The policy of the government on behalf of capitalism is to get rid of workers where they do not contribute immediately to the amassing of profits. Our policy on behalf of our whole working class must be to fight wherever we are and join those fights together in an offensive against capitalism itself.

We have got beyond the point where class struggle in this or that factory, office or school is enough. Not even a struggle against redundancy by one large union like the NUR is enough. What is required now is guerrilla struggle on a much more concerted class front so that cuts and redundancies in those sections where the working class is relatively weak can be countered by massive action where their strength lies. Only thus can the revolutionary force be mobilised for destroying the profit system.

If the representatives of the labour movement will not lead in this campaign for the very survival of the working class, a campaign which has to take the offensive if our class is to defend itself at all, they will be swept aside and our class will find its own leaders in struggle.

TUC Conference- When shall we learn?

The 107th Annual Conference of the TUC achieved - through a pseudo-left spokesman - what has been repelled hitherto, for the best part of the century, by the organised working class.

There were but two moments of notice at Congress. The first, already forecast as foregone - namely, the acceptance of not wage restraint but wage cut - and that voluntarily. (The £6 limit.) There is some comfort in the knowledge that the vote against such surrender was much greater than expected - it makes the decision to fetter the working class something of a pyrrhic victory.

It is curious that the employers, whose representatives sat with crossed fingers, were far more interested in the outcome of the debate than were workers - an apathy on the part of the latter we shall yet regret. Far more representatives of the employers were present in the gallery than workers.

We have had and rejected in turn, Mond/Turner, Macdonald, Snowden, Cripps, Selwyn Lloyd (pay pause), Brown (Incomes Policy), before that Gaitskell and after that Mac Millan, then Carr and Heath interspersed with Casle and "In Place of Strife". Now we have Jones for Wilson. After defeating a previous Labour Government's "In Place of Strife", after defeating Heath and the Industrial Relations Act and Donaldson, after refusing Heath's threshold payments (which, in passing, would now pay more than £6), we

submit to worse. We submit to worse because it is espoused by one who comes, though claiming to be of us, clothed as a high priest of economics combining

secure their release' without the unions themselves calling upon their members to withdraw labour, particularly the union directly involved, UCATT, it is pious.



Reg Birch at the TUC's 1974 Conference

loyalty with purity in white robes - but no crown, 'tis the cloth cap doth deceive us - Jones.

The only other real item of note, linked with that which we have written, was the debate on Picketing and Conspiracy. Here, though in reference to the incarcerated workers the resolution called for the General Council 'to use the full strength of the British Trade Union movement to

Though the resolution was carried almost unanimously, without action we will have lost the gas made over dockers in Pentonville and the destruction of the Industrial Relations Act and its industrial court. Such struggle and gain is diminished by this decision.

It would seem that what Heath and Donaldson could not achieve, the Congress will accept in the name of a 'Labour'! (sic) Government and its champion, Jones. Many other decisions and resolutions were debated and sincerely so by the delegates but they are for nothing against this setback and stupidity. When shall we learn?

Reg Birch Elected to General Council

Reg Birch of the Executive Council of the AUEW, and Chairman of the CPB(ML) has been confirmed as a member of the General Council of the TUC.

On September 2nd he moved a resolution which viewed "with alarm the excessive penalties imposed by the courts" for picketing offences and called on the General Council to secure the removal of those sections of the 1875 Conspiracy Act "which militate against workers exercising their rights as trade unionists".

Reg Birch said that the meaning of picketing laws at the moment appeared to be that: "You can picket providing there are few enough of you and you are ineffective."

When there was a demonstration in the hall on behalf of one of the still-imprisoned building pickets Reg Birch said: "The noises off-stage stem from the incarceration of one of our brothers, a member of a union trying to assert that workers have a dignity, trying to assert that

they should fight for a proper living and that workers are civilised human beings."

Claiming that the trade union movement had done too little to help the Shrewsbury pickets, Reg Birch called on the TUC to demand Des Warren's release.

"There is a need now for us to act in order to end the attack on the whole trade union movement epitomised by this incarceration" he said.

The resolution was passed overwhelmingly.

Bristol Murder

Bristol has long been an important industrial and commercial centre in the West Country. But the future under capitalism portends an end to all this, and the appearance of a decaying ruin as jobs, skills and resources are laid waste. In this sense, Bristol's future is a microcosm of degenerating capitalism in general.

The leading engineering project, for example, Concorde, has already had production frozen at 16 planes, and even this figure may be reduced. Certain design staff have long since been made redundant with no further use for their talents. In print machinery the employers have decided they cannot afford the workforce, so they are hell-bent on creating as many redundancies as possible. And as British shipbuilding has been run down, so Charles Hill Ltd, Bristol's last remaining shipyard begins production of its final hull before closure is announced next year.

During the 1980s the planners forecast a revival of the city as the second commercial centre outside London, and white-collar job prospects looked optimistic. In fact the Midland Bank has moved its national Head Office to Bristol, but the corresponding announcement by British Rail to transfer its regional headquarters from Bristol to Cardiff indicates the intention of all such "decentralizations" - concealed redundancy. New office blocks in the centre of Bristol promise not more, but fewer jobs as the traditionally Bristol-based firms (three-quarters of which now belong to Imperial Industries (sic)) rationalise their existing administrations. Government cuts in health, education and local government are all being implemented through "natural wastage", and perhaps the most insidious form of effecting these cuts is the attempt to introduce a bonus payments system in the General Hospital. All this has contributed to the fact that the South-West employment region now has the highest rate of growth of unemployment in the country.

The plan for industry is everything for profit and nothing for the people. In printing and in food, drink and tobacco processing, firms have no development plans for the foreseeable future, and are squeezing everything they can out of existing resources. Production is being speeded up and maintenance cut down, so the danger of accidents increases and the workers' physical and mental health deteriorates.

THE WORKER INTERVIEW

On the 18th July of this year the employees of the Star Shipping Agencies Co. in the City found themselves locked out of work. The cause of this act by the employers at the Agency was the demand by the workers: there to be allowed to negotiate with the Company on the level of their wages, and the recognition of their new membership of the union ASTMS.

QUESTION: When did you begin to realise the need to organise?

The dispute came to a head after months of difficulties we had experienced. There had been three sackings at the agency this year. This gave rise to a feeling of insecurity. In addition to this we realised that our standard of living was falling as a result of inflation, and we attempted to get the agency to accede to our demand to discuss this. Last Christmas we came up against a miserable attempt by them to trick us into accepting something less than a wage rise: they made us a dud offer of a 15 per cent wage increase. This showed us just how cunning the employer is and just how ignorant he is of our intelligence. For many people at the Agency this 15 per cent increase added up to NO increase at all, since this was a PLUS increase - that is, plus a catch; the rise include the threshold agreement. We therefore pressed for a £6 a week increase and in February of this year the workers in the freight department decided to unionise. After calling a meeting we succeeded in bringing all the members of the section into the union.

QUESTION: What situation did you find you were facing then?

The Agency attempted to ignore the whole question and refused to recognise the Union. What they did eventually do was to offer us £4 from the 1st of last July with a promise of £2 more in January 1976! Without hesitation this was rejected. So we repeated our £6 demand and added the demand for reinstatement of the sacked workers. Unperturbed by the subsequent lockout, we got together and organised a picket line and leafleted the public.

QUESTION: What have you gained from struggle?

We are totally united. We have done what we could not achieve alone, unorganised and disunited.

The employers gave us nominal recognition, refusing at first to negotiate, but subsequently full recognition was won. In addition the sacked workers were reinstated, and we have now accepted the £4 offer on the condition that negotiations continue on the remaining £2. We also doubled the rate for overtime pay, and received backdated pay for the period of the lockout. We have refused to touch the backlog of work which we regard as the responsibility of the Agency, in spite of the offer of overtime rates. We have gained a lot of confidence from taking this action ourselves, and we have learned that our organisation is our strength.

QUESTION: What is your opinion on the £6 a week flat rate ceiling on wage rises and its threat to the unions, and how do you view the future?

First of all the £6 increase will just not be enough for people to live on by. Workers will be bound to fight against decreasing living conditions. The idea behind the proposal is to make the whole country bear the brunt of the crisis 'equally'. Nevertheless, the employers still make profit out of us. The country is for business and not for the people. The government's proposals are aimed at making the workers take the burden of their crisis, and at weakening working class organisations through cutting out the right to negotiate. But the only way for us to survive is to continually struggle against deteriorating conditions.

until they are eventually thrown on to the scrap heap. Next to the Avonmouth port a new dock is being built for bulk traffic in grain and minerals from the EEC. This commitment to imported resources thus stands for immense monopoly profiteering from the European "mountains", and a conscious intention on the part of capitalism to destroy agriculture and mining in South Wales, the South-West, the Midlands and basically throughout Britain.

Ten years ago when the threatened cancellation of TSR2 jeopardized jobs in aerospace, workers cooperated with Rolls Royce and British Aircraft Corporation in implementing redundancies. But the lessons of that grave error did not pass unlearned. In the struggle against Phase III aerospace workers devised new forms of guerrilla struggle as did print machine workers. Last year the paternalist firm of WD & HO Wills was shaken by the first strike in 80 years. Yet with the exception of the outstanding example of the engineers at Masson, Scott & Thriswell, redundancies have been very badly fought and employers are laying men off with impunity throughout the city. Today at both Rolls Royce and the Avonmouth docks the attack of the 'Healey plan' is hesitantly being met. The revolutionary element in these struggles is the fight against corporatism through defence of mass democracy in the unions, and the attack on the government's plan to reduce us all to pauperism. But from this needs to come the understanding of the urgent need to defend Britain as an independent nation whose skills and resources are wantonly being destroyed by capitalism - the understanding of the need to fight much harder so as to make revolution a reality.

The future under socialism would allow the skills and initiatives of the working class to live again as never before: resources would be used to serve the people and not destroyed to make profits for monopoly capitalism. We would need ships and planes to defend our territorial waters and air space, for example, whilst public transport in a town like Bristol would cease to break down every day once skills were usefully employed. We should do away with subjecting to imported food and minerals and revive our own agriculture and resource industries. Public funds would no longer extend monopoly docking facilities, but instead pay for health, home and educational improvements where hospitals, houses and schools are now being abandoned by society. And for this, the effects of the present system must continue to be fought, but the aim must be to stamp out the cause of the decay, capitalism itself.

Industrial Front



Each issue in this column we report and analyse the various struggles our class is conducting on the industrial front. Last week the "Financial Times" boasted a "Two to one majority for the £6 pay policy" - an obvious cry of victory from the big bosses of industry who believe that they have "bought" our class just because their arguments won out at the TUC.

The British working class have never been bought off, as we know every day as one struggle ends a new one begins.

What we need to see now is that we can no longer blind ourselves with the false formulae of social democracy in order to try to live with capitalism. But by the use of all our skill, strength and experiences, we can turn every struggle into a truly revolutionary step toward the destruction of the capitalist system and the creation of the workers' state of Socialism.

The recent miners' ballot is an indication of the inadequate response of the working class to the attack by the Government. We also report several confrontations that are progressing.

"The Worker" is pledged to take a leading role in all levels of class struggle, to report, to analyse and give leadership from our class to our class.

We look forward to reporting in this column the overtly revolutionary advances of workers on the road to socialism.

Hull Dockers

In April Hull dockers achieved a pay rise of £5.95, only six months after their last increase, at a time when the government had proclaimed there should be one year between agreements. The Docks Board promised a further rise in October. Since then the £6 farce has been introduced and the employers offered a 5p (sic) rise at the end of July. The Shop Stewards Committee did not even bother to meet to consider this offer.

This insult came at a time when there is a scheme to sack 64 workers aged over 60 (or over 50 for those on permanent night duties). To sweeten the blow, employers award a miserly £250 as compensation under the 'golden-handshake' scheme. Hull Shop Stewards have called for a National Shop Stewards meeting to discuss job preservation.

G B Brittons Bristol

115 ASTMS and APEX members at this shoe factory are on strike in pursuit of a threshold payment of 17 per cent. Management have offered only 10 per cent, breaking agreements and sheltering behind the £6 limit and 12 month rule.

Although there have been redundancies recently here, the white collar section is unified and solid on their demand. They are picketing the warehouse where there is a two-year stockpile of shoes, sealing it effectively - while inside, NUFLAT members will not work where safety supervision is lacking.

There is great courage in holding out under threat of closure or redundancies. A sister factory at Bryn Mawr (S. Wales) is also on strike and co-operation from lorry-drivers has been excellent.

US SPONSORED TREACHERY

The signatures on the agreement between Egypt and Israel were hardly dry when Israeli troops attacked southern Lebanon killing one young girl and wounding many others. This outlines the real purpose of the agreement reached under the auspices of US imperialism. By neutralising Egypt, Israel can concentrate its attention on the other neighbouring Arab countries. Hence the massive US aid, economic and military, to Israel of over \$2000 million which appears as a clause in the agreement.

If there ever was a case of equating the aggressor with his victim, that agreement is it. The state of Israel was founded on aggression and occupation of Arab land. Apart from the daily raids on refugee camps, Israel started the 1948 war, the Suez war in 1956 and the '67 June war. By agreeing not to resort to the threat or the use of force against Israel, Egypt sanctions Israeli occupation of Sinai and abandons its right to regain its occupied territory.

The agreement gives the US a foothold in this vital area of the Middle East, something it has been aiming for since Lebanon withdrew its hospitality for US warships. US personnel are to be stationed in a buffer zone between Israel and Egypt manning 'three watch stations'. Once established these personnel will withdraw only if both parties request them to.

This cowardly act by President Sadat is made more disgraceful by the heroism shown by the people of Egypt and their armed forces in the October War when they crossed the Canal to liberate part of their country. This latest agreement between Israel and Egypt will not bring peace to the Middle East. Now that the US is involved, the conflict can only intensify and spread. The question of the Palestinian people, their right to their homeland is completely ignored. The struggle of the Palestinian people is made harder now that Egypt is pacified by the US with, among other things, \$800 million in US aid.

The past few years have highlighted what the Palestinian people have always maintained, namely, that their struggle is long and arduous with no easy short cuts.

Miners Ballot

The miners have accepted by a 3:2 majority the government's £6 a week pay limit - in effect a wage cut. Obviously it is of little worth rejoicing that the majority was less than that expected by the capitalist press. That this section of the working class which has always been at the forefront of the bitterest struggles, which honoured itself by being one of the group of workers to break Phase III despite Heath's national lockout shows what a poison social democracy can be, although tribute at least should be paid to the miners of Scotland and South Wales in having rejected the policy. Workers from these parts of the country have suffered the policies of successive governments - both labour and Tory - far too long, in terms of declining industries and their resulting mass unemployment and derelict communities to have any faith in such a policy.

Only the Beginning

The government has taken an axe to every area of public life. It is not even as though the government were asking the working class to accept cuts now for a better future soon. What is being asked for is cuts now so that the working class will be in no position to resist even greater cuts to come.

That architect of the government's £6 plan to cut workers' wages and eliminate skill, Jack Jones, is proposing that when the present limit ends next August a new flat rate limit should be continued. What Jones wants is a permanent, built-in, overall wage-cut which levels out incomes to the benefit of his own members and puts an end for all time to collective bargaining and class struggle. Just as, in some cases, the employers collect union dues by deducting them at source, the employers, according to the Jones scheme, would add a flat rate increase (less of course than the rise in the cost of living) to the wage packets of those still in work and eliminate the need for trade unions altogether. By that time Jones, presumably, would be a minister in a Labour Government, a life peer or on the board of a big industry.

And just consider the cuts in services called for in a government circular issued on September 4th to local authorities.

Local Transport: A further £12 million cut is to be added to the £20 million cut already envisaged for the underground services, involving earlier and larger increases in fares than those previously planned and a further deterioration in equipment and service. A reduction in capital expenditure on local transport of the order of £70 million is also demanded.

Environment Services: Reductions are to be made in the staffing of parks, refuse collection, administration and town and country planning, thus further destroying our national heritage. And for those who think it might be better just to end it all, the cost of dying is going up too - with higher charges for crematoria and cemeteries.

Housing: Council rents will rise by 60p a week and a reduction in the amount of rate fund contribution to housing revenue accounts has already been announced.

Education: A standstill on all improvements of standards which really means at present costs a reduction in standards. In large urban areas with a falling population, teaching staff must be reduced and there must be a tightening up of staffing ratios in higher education. Material standards and upkeep of premises must remain below the level recently accepted as desirable and there is no scope for any more expenditure on youth recreation and community services.

Home Office Services: Limitations on probation and after-care services. (No cut in the police force is called for!)

In other articles we have indicated cuts that can be expected in the Health Service.

If that is the Britain you want - drab and poverty-stricken with an ill, uneducated working class - you can get it simply by giving up the struggle and letting this or any other capitalist government organise your lives for you in the interest of capitalism.

LIBERDADE

Portugal - long the poorest and most repressive state in Europe - shook the whole continent with its April revolution in 1974.

After 50 years of stultifying fascist rule under the draconian dictatorship of Salazar and Caetano, the people and army of Portugal at the same time that the liberation struggle in Portugal's African colonies were sweeping to victory managed to overthrow the old regime in Portugal itself. For the first time in generations, class struggle raged in the open and the aspirations of the people blossomed in the clear light of day.

Trade unions were declared legal, political prisoners released, the torture chambers closed, the secret police - the PIDE - abolished, and the torturers themselves incarcerated. The rights of freedom of speech and assembly were proclaimed. The colonial wars in Africa were halted and the right of the colonies to independence was advanced. These were the welcome fruits of that bourgeois-democratic revolution of 1974.

For a year or more, the fascists scurried into their rat-holes, into exile or sank into anonymity. But now, they are re-emerging to contest all these recent developments. The landowners, the Catholic Church, the large industrialists, all are now trying to turn back the clock, to reconstruct the edifices of repression, to instigate divisions within the ranks of the Portuguese people and facilitate the hoped-



for fascist resurgence.

Their propaganda, aimed to confuse, elevates the Soviet threat into the central question for the Portuguese people. (As if anyone nowadays believed Russia to have any connection with revolution, bar selling Lenin's books and the promotion of tourism.) The Portuguese people have not done what they have for Russia, America or anyone else; but because at long last, they tired of subjection.

The media are portraying the attacks on the revisionist communist party as progressive. They are nothing of the kind. They are

utterly reactionary, a cover for attacks on the democratic rights won so far. The question for the people of Portugal is how to consolidate the gains of the democratic revolution in the face of the new fascist challenge, keep their ranks united, and not be diverted into confused participation in reactionary pogroms instigated by the representatives of the Vatican in northern Portugal.

As usual, the British establishment is intent on stirring up trouble in the country it calls, proudly, its oldest ally. During the period of fascist rule, there

was no real complaint raised by the British bourgeois press against the iniquities perpetrated in Portugal. Now they are truly disturbed by the events in that land. Perhaps they prefer the former period? Similarly our political parties openly interfere in Portuguese affairs, Harold Wilson hectors the Portuguese and tells them what type of system he wants to see established while the Tory party assiduously develops contacts and influence with Portuguese counterparts. The British working class must dissociate itself from all these actions of our establishment.

First Aid equals Revolution



The real answer to the problem of poverty, hunger and under-industrialisation is to be found in the revolutionary experience of the people of China.



How will countries overcome poverty, malnutrition, underdevelopment and 'backwardness'? Since the Second World War we have witnessed a plethora of international aid schemes - the rich industrialised nations offering the warm hand of friendship to the poor nations of the world.

What has been achieved? The rich nations are richer, the poor more destitute. The warm hand of every capitalist ruling class seeks only to grease in its sweaty palm the super-profits of international exploitation, chipping away at the independence of the underdeveloped nations. We live in a world with one major contradiction, exploiters and exploited, capitalists and workers. The profits wrung from the working classes of the industrialised nations are dispatched hastily world-wide in the search for further gain.

All the capitalist 'aid' schemes in the world can never even begin to score the successes of socialist China and Albania, one nation large the other small, who in the post-war years have eradicated backwardness, have advanced out of feudalism into the modern age. But what is the secret of their success? Both China and Albania have made successful proletarian revolutions - working people have seized the reins of power in those countries - have driven out those who sought to exploit from within, have repulsed those who sought to exploit from without. When working people take control of their own destinies, rely on their own ingenuity, skill and effort, end once and for all the exploitation of their labour power, the problem of underdevelopment becomes one to be solved, not exploited.

BELLMAN BOOKSHOP 155 FORTRESS ROAD LONDON N.W.5

PUBLIC MEETINGS

All to be held in the Bellman Bookshop, 155, Fortress Road, London N.W. 5, at 7.30 p.m. unless otherwise stated.

- SEPTEMBER 19: "The Labour Movement Tricked Again"
26: "TUC and After?" Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, Nr Holborn Station 7.30p.m.
- OCTOBER 3: "Common Market or Socialist Britain"
10: "The Fight against Cuts is Revolutionary"
17: "The Tragedy of Young Workers"
24: "London Murder: The Destruction of a City"
31: "Imperialism - The Dying Beast Lashes Out"
NOVEMBER 7: "The State of Counter-Revolution"
14: "The Role of the Party of the British Working Class"
21: To be announced
28: Celebrating Albania's National Day. Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, Nr. Holborn Station. 7.30 p.m.

HARD TIMES IN PUBLISHING

The future for people working in book publishing and production looks bleak. Inflation and enormous cutbacks in government spending on education and local libraries have taken their toll too.

In the first six months of 1975 publishers' output of new titles reached a record 13,894. But at the same time as this information appeared in 'the Bookseller's' news of cutbacks in staff, output, investment, or all three, was appearing from all types and size of companies.

Wiedenfeld and Nicholson, David and Charles, Cassel Collier Macmillan have all reduced the number of titles for next year. Faber Books, Pan, Futura and Corona tell the same story. As Penguin Education before them, Associated Book Publishers have cut back in their Methuen Education Division as have BPC in Macdonald Educational. Publishers are opting for smaller print runs and the period of sale for which they are printing is generally shorter than 5 years ago.

Once again the Association of Education Committees has produced recommendations on allowances for school libraries, textbooks, stationery and materials, accompanied by a proposal that these be increased for 1976-1977. In theory, these recommendations will enable local authorities to put into operation at least part of the 'Report of the Committee of Enquiry into Reading and the Use of English'. But as expected,

research by the Educational Publishers Council has shown that the majority of local education authorities fail to spend even the AEC's reasonable amount on books.

Publishers are taking advantage of this situation to push through a concerted and in some cases coordinated attack on a youthful union organisation, through redundancy, policies of 'natural wastage', and seductive attempts to draw union chapels into participation in their own doom as with the tactic of opening the accounts book to union scrutiny in order to support their case for cut-back. It is a sad reality that too many union members in books publishing yet inexperienced in the sophistication of management ploys, have been confused and frightened by this particular weapon, and have contributed to the weakening of organisation in the trade by opting for so-called 'voluntary redundancy'. Further weakness lies in the hidden redundancy and unemployment amongst the freelance workers who service so many areas of the book trade - designers, photographers, illustrators and picture researchers - and amongst whom organisations is difficult and struggle a more hazardous proposition.

There is a difficult period ahead for book workers, to defend the organisation they have already created, and by example of successful struggle give heart to the embryonic movements for organisation throughout the trade.

Democracy and the electricians

The Executive Council of the EEPTU, without the knowledge or consent (which would never have been given) of the members, is attempting to further weaken the democracy and strength of our union.

All contracting members of JIB firms (union members and non-union members) have been sent a circular by the Executive Council of the EEPTU which informs them in effect that a method has been devised whereby the employer will pay their union dues.

You agree to free union membership, your employer accepts you as a member and you receive the benefits of the union. You need never go to a branch meeting or be accepted by a branch.

We are told this will solve the long-standing problem of non-unionism in contracting. In reality it will make it worse, discouraging potential recruits to be active members. A union member is an active member or he is nothing.

Active Trade Unions

This, if allowed, leaves us with the kind of passive organisation that employers and government

have been trying to impose since the beginning of the trade union movement.

It is an attempt to destroy working class democracy and substitute bourgeois democracy. They wish to destroy the informed debate and discussion that takes place at branch and shop meetings. In fact they desire that meetings should not take place at all but rather that you should receive secret ballots through your door to which you must answer yes or no to questions you have not even discussed.

Corporate Unions

This amounts to an attempt to bring in corporate unions through the back door. Behind it lies the attempt to take from our class our own class organisations. The government have indicated that they would be willing to help in this process by so generously paying for union secret ballots.

Unless we defend our own democratic institutions we will not be able to fight the attempt by the present 'Labour', or any government to impose a wage cut on us, still less to fight the final battle for socialism itself.



Housing Famine

Becoming an owner-occupier in 1975 has turned into a contemporary Pilgrim's Progress with innumerable snares and pitfalls to trap Everyman in his search for the promised heaven.

Even though a massive inflow of deposits this spring has enabled a record £479 million to be lent, the building societies are in fact hoarding one-fifth of their assets, a nice figure of £4,000 million. The excuse is that our 'benevolent' government has asked them to hold back on mortgages in order to keep house prices down, but in fact couples on the bottom rung of the housing ladder are having to borrow 'quite a bit more'. The truth is that the building societies are worried that the reservoir of savings in the early part of 1975 will soon dry up as constantly rising prices bite deeper and deeper into restrained incomes. For many workers, 'Giving a Year for Britain' will mean giving up any hope of a new home next year in Britain.

Even in the area where demand for home ownership is greatest, the commuter belt of south-east England, the supply of owner-occupier housing is in fact decreasing. In the Wokingham District Council area, 300 fewer private homes were completed in 1974 than 1973. Even worse is the fact that 500 fewer were started in 1974, which means a bleak prospect for 1975.

There is no better future either in local authority housing, for only 43 council houses were started in 1974. Significant also is the fact that improvement grants for the area in 1974 show a fall of 50 over the previous year.

Barry Jones, Thames Valley Regional Organiser for Shelter says, "With an ever increasing number of homeless families and more and more young couples unable to get adequate housing, it is high time that ordinary people made clear to all concerned that figures like this are totally unacceptable".

Outworkers

Some of the worst practices of the days of the Industrial Revolution, never completely eradicated, are beginning to flourish again in these days of capitalist crisis.

In Nottingham, a widespread survey recently carried out among outworkers indicated that future generations of schoolchildren may read in their history books that the sweatshops of the 1970's existed in the homes of the people!

The extent of outworking was found to be enormous, yet the bulk of statutory protection afforded to workers in factories and workshops does not extend to those working in their own homes. In only one instance were holiday or threshold payments made, and, apart from one company, there was not a firm that covered outworkers for industrial injuries, pension rights or any National Insurance benefits.

Wage-levels for outworkers are appalling, while the employers gain added benefits in that their costs are low, no heating or lighting bills to meet, no canteen facilities to provide, no factory to rent.

Employers have very few

EDUCATION CUTS

Agonise or Revolt?

British schools are open again and the stage is set for a dramatic year. Never before have teachers, and all concerned with education, been presented with such a glorious opportunity for political struggle.

The government policy of dismantling education has been declared and made clearly manifest. The policy proceeds according to the resistance encountered. Now all have heard, and heard again, the government's plea for economic stringency. All are now tasting its bitter implications in the schools. The choice is to acquiesce or to revolt.

Every murmur of dissent, every staffroom battle, every

union debate now take on a mighty significance. The unemployed teacher, the depleted staff, the absence of equipment all challenge a response. Every teacher, every worker, must stand up now and be counted. Do you accept education cuts and the bleats of capitalist inadequacy? Or, do we grasp the vanishing fragments of this education system and, welded rock-like, use them against the destroyer?

A focus for the national encounter is provided by a protest lobby of Parliament on Tuesday, October 21st. Support has gathered and the invitation has been extended for all to declare themselves on that day.

Students reject Mulley

The annual conference of Student Unions in Colleges of Education took place last month against a background of cuts, merger and closure. Delegates, many of them from colleges which will cease to enrol students from next year, or where the number of new students is to be slashed, were treated to a farcical display from Fred Mulley, the Secretary of State for Education.

The wisdom of Mulley

On the problems of Britain's economy:

"While the depression in the world market exists, there is nothing we can do."

Further on the same subject:

"The main problem is that British people buy foreign goods. If we do not have the patriotism to buy British, how can we expect the Japanese to buy British."

On the 'increase' in education expenditure:

"In fact, we are spending more on education this year than we did last year."

On the reason for cuts in education expenditure:

"If workers are to have living standards cut by the £6 per week limit, then it is only fair that public expenditure should be cut too."

On the closure of colleges of education:

"We are not closing any colleges down."

Further on the same subject:

"The colleges we are closing down are not really being closed down..."

On the problem of student housing:

"I do not see what the problem is."

Despite Mulley's convincing arguments the students were unanimous in their opposition to cuts.

scruples when it comes to exploiting workers in the most profitable way, and where workers are least organised, there they work in the worst conditions for the lowest wages. Only we, by organising ourselves in unions, can begin to eradicate such anachronisms as the situation of outworkers and defend our rights and our dignity as part of the working class.

As the newly published pamphlet, "For Education: A Revolutionary Struggle" *, describes the urgency of the situation;

"Today, capitalism stalks our land in the form of growing counter-revolution sponsoring and espousing ignorance, destroying education, just as it sponsors the de-industrialisation of Britain. It hopes to demoralise our class and turn us into subservient slaves with no ability to oppose their rule by imposing on us unemployment, declining standards of health and living, illiteracy. Capitalism has realised that a person who has had access to education is more capable of being independent, and likewise a class. A first requirement, therefore, for a decadent capitalism heading towards corporatism is to deprive our class of education. This they are now remorselessly bent on doing.

"In this new historic situation, workers are faced with stark alternatives - either accept the cuts and allow the destruction of education, or oppose the cuts completely, defend education and take the offensive against capitalism. To choose the first would be to go against our traditions as a class, ultimately deprive us of our skills and culture and invite enslavement, which is of course, unthinkable. The second is the only road of progress."

* "For Education: A Revolutionary Struggle". Published by the CPB(ML).

YOUTH UNEMPLOYMENT TRAGEDY

As vacancies notified to careers officers for young people fell last month by nearly 10,000 to 28,000, unemployment amongst youth soared to 265,000, with the worst deterioration in the West Midlands.

Liverpool, Wolverhampton, Humberstone and Newcastle are all having to make emergency short-term plans to cope with the additional unemployed young people - numbering a total 4,500 in Liverpool. On one day in Wolverhampton 2000 unemployed young people faced a handful of vacancies, only 2 of which were for girls.

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