

# THE WORKER



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## NO TO EEC

We, the CPBML, are in favour of the workers of Europe fighting our common class enemy, of aiding one another in revolution.

But we are opposed to the Common Market.

The EEC, though purporting to be a fraternity of nations, is merely a community of monopoly capitalist states, dressed up in the clothes and concealed in the jargon of a false internationalism - purposely to confuse the response of organised workers.



Workers at Chrysler vote to continue their strike SEE PAGE 2

### EEC - The Truth

The support of the United States and NATO for 'European Union' has deliberately been excluded from the deluge of pro-market propaganda which the government is churning out of the EEC building in Whitehall Place.

The impression is being created that 'Europe' will be a political and military force independent of NATO.

The Market, it should be pointed out, is essentially the economic arm of NATO. The United States, for instance, has long supported the EEC idea. As far back as 1948 such US organisations as "The American Committee On United Europe" under the leadership of Dulles (then head of the CIA) promoted "The European Movement" - a front organisation with contacts throughout the social democratic parties of Europe.

NATO's current role in Europe has recently been outlined by Gaston Thorn, premier of Luxembourg, in the April issue of NATO Review. Monsieur Thorn points out that the nine states may in the future work towards a common military policy including "... responsibility for nuclear defence, conventional defence, and standardised production of armaments. ...." He goes on to state that the nine must adopt

common positions within NATO, but points out that although this may seem to be something new it "... is the price to be paid for the policy of unification which we have adopted and which is supported by the United States and the alliance as a whole."

Monsieur Thorn clearly sees a major military role for the EEC within NATO - a role which we recognise as directed towards imperialist war, interference in the internal affairs of smaller countries, the attempted intimidation of Albania and the suppression of revolution throughout Europe if not beyond.

#### Unemployment

"The young need Europe" and "Jobs for the boys" are two of the slogans currently being used by the government-sponsored pro-market propaganda machine to conjure up a picture of unlimited employment opportunities in the EEC.

That this is a monstrous distortion of the truth is revealed not only by the fact that unemployment in the Market is running at a rate of one in twenty but also by the results of a survey of youth unemployment carried out by the EEC Commission itself. Unemployment amongst youth in the EEC has increased by 49

It is the internationalism of big business arraigned against the power of workers throughout Europe. Its motto is the free movement of capital and labour; firms, now multi-national, take European-wide decisions, and in their wake come rationalisations, mergers, closures, depressed regions and an enlarged army of unemployed.

EEC membership has meant for the British people, dearer food and the introduction of the odious V.A.T. (in reality a tax on consumer spending). While the European landscape has sprouted new mountains to compete with the Alps and Pyrenees - mountains of beef, butter and eggs.

For the capitalists, entry into the Common Market has been motivated pre-eminently because of you - the British workers, who have over the years continued to defy all the attempts of British capitalism to hamstring your trade unions. By collaborating with the European governments, they hope to dissipate and contain the militancy of British workers which the employers have found increasingly difficult to contain on a purely national basis. Mobility of labour across the continent is seen as a tactic to break the unity of our class, to dilute the level of its trade union organisation (still unique in Europe), and import the worst features of industrial relations current in the EEC.

percent in the last 12 months, compared with an increase amongst all ages of 32 percent. The survey confirms that it is the young above all who are denied work. One in three unemployed in the whole EEC is aged between 15 and 20 years.

Although youth unemployment in Britain rose by 13 percent in 1974, the situation in other EEC countries was much worse. In Ireland unemployment amongst young workers aged 15 to 25 rose 121 percent. In Germany it rose 210 percent and in Denmark it rose 405 percent.

#### Food prices

Food prices rose 40 percent during the first two years of Britain's membership of the EEC. The price which we pay for our

## Thin End of the Wedgie

The Minister of Industry, Wedgwood Benn, is partly right in saying that one of the causes of Britain's economic plight is that British industry has been starved of investment by a capitalist class that could reap higher profits elsewhere. In his proposed solution for the problem he is totally wrong.

If capitalism proves utterly incapable of directing funds where they ought to go, the right answer is to get rid of capitalism. What Benn proposes instead is to replace the capitalist investor with public investment - that means us - and preserve the capitalist system. Some £6000 million raised mainly from the working class by taxation is to be pumped into British industry, and NEDO even wants to include in this sum for saving capitalism trade union assets and pension funds!

But since the conditions of world capitalism which made British industry an unprofitable proposition are to remain the same, these public funds, our money, are being poured into an unviable enterprise. Benn is like the totally irresponsible unit-truster, Bernie Cornfeld, with infinitely vaster amounts of our money to invest unsoundly.

If our money is going to be used to revitalise British industry we have to demand that we control British industry. We are not interested in "participating" in the running of it - only in running it ourselves on a socialist, not a capitalist basis. That means we must also take over the state which has always run the so-called nationalised industries not in the interest of us, the working class, who both finance and work in them, but in the interest of them, the capitalist class, who through lavish compensation and capitalist policies of management, continue to profit from them even when they no longer own them.

#### Benn not alone

Benn is not some wild visionary in what he proposes. It is the policy of the Labour Government. While Wilson was not prepared to mention a figure in his recent fireside chat (which did not ignite the Thames!), he did state that it was Labour policy "to behave like a merchant banker" and channel public funds into industry which has fallen behind.

This is also the policy of the Tories who, in spite of a lot of noise about not helping "lame ducks", as a capitalist party can act in no other way but to prop up with public funds any industry falling from a lack of cash.

Indeed, capitalism has now become a system in which the working class finances industry so that the capitalist class can gamble for the really big rewards to be made in commodity and property speculation. How long are we going to put up with this profligate ne'er-do-well to whom the capitalist system has chained us in unholy matrimony?

Benn's role is simply to make this unequal marriage in which we do all the work and they spend all their time gambling with our money seem more attractive to us.

#### Where it's taking us

The falling rate of profit caused by capitalist competition combined with an organised working class prepared to fight to defend its standard of living is the reason for monopolisation and the export of capital. It also accounts for the drive toward the super-cartelisation of the Common Market. It has made one section of industry after another, transport, coal, then steel and now shipbuilding, motor cars and aircraft all too unprofitable for other than public support.

In short, the whole vital heavy industrial base of the economy is becoming the public-funded foundation of a state capitalist system.

But workers know from past experience that 'nationalisation' holds no advantages for them and that the state is the worst possible employer. Hence all the schemes for 'two-tiered management' and 'worker participation' to try to break up trade union organisation and incorporate working class organisation in the capitalist state machine.

State capitalism is the road to fascism. In Germany where industrialisation began on a state capitalist basis there was the greatest susceptibility to fascism. Unless interrupted by the seizure of state power by the working class, the whole tendency of capitalism is inevitably toward fascism. Benn's apparent leftism is the sop to lull workers while the fascist state is constructed around us like a prison.

food will continue to rise until Britain's food prices reach EEC levels.

A British worker on the average hourly wage rate in 1974 took 7 hours 6 minutes to earn enough to buy a typical shopping basket full of essential goods. In other Market countries a

comparable worker has to work much longer to earn enough to buy the same food basket:

Britain	7 hrs 6 mins
West Germany	8 hrs 20 mins
Holland	10 hrs 40 mins
Belgium	11 hrs 35 mins
France	13 hrs 30 mins
Italy	16 hrs 56 mins

# Editorial

"The party's over", says Environment Secretary Anthony Crosland, in calling for a massive cut-back in housing and local services.

We are not aware of any fun and games as far as the working class is concerned. With inflation running at a staggering 34.4 per cent (a 4 per cent rise in prices in one month) and with a million workers unemployed, if there has been a party, we were not invited.

And what's the Labour Government's answer to this disastrous state of affairs for every working-class family in Britain? Wilson told us in his 'great state of the nation' address - higher taxes and further cuts in the social services. Those who suffer most from inflation and unemployment are going to have to make even greater sacrifices.

Has Wilson an explanation of what's gone wrong? "The oil sheikhs and the BBC," he says. Our Party can tell him. Capitalism causes inflation: capitalism is unable to provide employment even when the things workers can make are desperately needed. Inflation and redundancy are endemic in the capitalist Common Market which Wilson insists we stay within. The only countries in the world where there is no inflation and no unemployment are the socialist countries, China and Albania. They rely on their own efforts. They belong to no Common Market, no Comecon.

"The party's over." That is just about true for the Labour Party as far as influence over the working class is concerned - and every other capitalist party.

This is, as we have said, a revolutionary situation. A revolution, as Mao Tseung has put it, "is not a tea party". "The party is over," Crosland says. We agree. The revolutionary struggle has begun.

## INDUSTRIAL FRONT

### Crosfield Workers' Occupation

This occupation at Crosfield Electronics, London has now been terminated. The repressive organs of State Capitalism - the Judiciary, the threat of a further attack by the management to put even more workers out of work, the lack of support by our fellow workers at Peterborough and test workers in London all have contributed to leaving the rest of the work-force in a position where to continue would have been folly.

Our position has been one of guerrilla warfare. The management has been unable to smash Trade Union organisation within the factory as they sought to do.

The management applied for an order for re-possession of the occupied site which was granted in the High Court. Any attempt by those sitting in to resist would have been met, as in the case of Warwick University, by 500 police suddenly bursting in, if workers had taken action and fought back, they would have been faced with criminal proceedings against them; one must remember the Shrewsbury Two, still in jail. We have instead retreated in an orderly manner and are regrouping our forces; we shall continue to fight this management on every issue.

We have a long way to go to educate workers, who desire only employment, that they must unite solidly to guarantee that job, and defeat the employing class. In future issues we will discuss what steps are necessary to achieve this end.

### Chrysler

Workers in this country should not be fooled by the shouts of capitalist newspapers that the strike of workers at Chrysler is suicidal, nor that the offer of participation is anything but another device by the employing class to try and get the working class of this country to collaborate with them. If this idea of a so-called revolutionary plan for profit-sharing and employee-participation is being studied by union leaders, then they are studying the wrong issues.

## The Ryder Report

Sir Don Ryder has confirmed again that far from being any kind of 'socialist' measure, state intervention into private industry means an intensification of exploitation. How can it be otherwise when the reason for the state's very existence is to serve the interests of the capitalist class?

Not only are we the working class to be compelled to prop up British Leyland with so called 'public finance' amounting to £700 million, but this money is to be used as a hammer to bludgeon British Leyland's workers. Ryder's report speaks for itself:

"In Chapter 9 it was stressed that the progress of the new capital expenditure programme and injection of public money into British Leyland should depend, step by step, on evidence of a contribution by the work force to improving British Leyland's efficiency."

What increased efficiency means is made clear in another part of the report:

"The Team believes that it is both essential and feasible to look for significantly greater co-operation between management and workers than in the past, leading to fewer industrial disputes, more realistic manning levels and more mobility and interchangeability of labour."

What this pompous language means in plain terms is that in return for "public finance" workers are to be expected to accept redundancy and be prepared to move their jobs and homes at the management's behest. If they don't accept this, then they are to be threatened with the withdrawal of finance and the debt queue.

To pour salt in the workers' wounds, Ryder tries to conceal this capitalist offensive with the familiar social democratic deceit of "workers' democracy". He says:

"The most important reason for setting up a new structure of joint management/union committees is the need to provide a forum in which representatives of British Leyland's workers can contribute effectively to improving British Leyland's efficiency."

So, what Ryder would like to see is a framework in which workers' representatives can be seen to have agreed to the decisions about redundancy and worker mobility taken by the management, under the threat of a withdrawal of financial assistance from the government. Somewhere along the line Ryder has got his dialectics all wrong: workers will never be their own gravediggers.

However, Sir Don has a much clearer grasp of the reasons why the English working-class is so formidable an enemy, namely its capacity to engage successfully in guerrilla struggle at its place of work. He says:

"It is British Leyland's policy to reduce the number of bargaining units. They argue that under the present arrangements the Corporation is in an almost continuous bargaining situation. The settlement of a claim in one location leads to a negotiation in another."

In order to reduce this capacity, Ryder recommends that further steps should be taken towards corporate bargaining by Trade Union officials as far away from the shop-floor as possible.

Let no-one be deceived that "nationalisation" or "workers' democracy", the "socialist" measures of a Labour government, are anything but a device to trick the working-class to accept further exploitation, the only solution to the capitalist crisis short of overthrowing the whole rotten system. The alternatives are clear, either corporatism and more intense oppression or socialism, the dictatorship of the proletariat.

### out of their own mouths

Kosygin: "War is too high a price to pay for liberation from imperialism."

Ian Smith: "How can we work with Africans when so many of them are in detention?"

Meanwhile about 5000 steelworkers in Scotland operated a one day token stoppage on May 19th, and are sending a delegation to London to lobby the talks between the TUC Steel Committee and BSC on redundancies.

### ASTMS

ASTMS members working in computer departments in universities all over the country have been promised restructuring since 1971, a promise of increase in wages that never materialised. The growing discontent has resulted in computer operators being called out on strike, on selective basis, at the end of March to back their demand for a living wage.

Aston and Birmingham Universities are affected by the call and at these two places the unity of the strikers is an example for all. The Unions have been negotiating with the employers for a long time but the employers have refused to move an inch from their original position. Finally the Union membership has been

forced to adopt a consistent line of no negotiations unless the universities show willingness to move from their present position. Acceptance even of such a modest demand as this by the universities can only be brought about by strike action a lesson that the computer operators have at last learned.

### Newmarket

For the past weeks the stable lads at Newmarket have been on strike for the modest sum of £35.31 a week with no extension of the working week. The trade union involved is the TGWU, and although the lads are not receiving strike pay, only social security, they are determined to carry on their first industrial action. They realise that that unless they organise now the trainers for a very long time in the future will go on acting like overlords.

Many issues are at stake. Newmarket is in a relatively non-unionised part of the country.

## WHAT FREEDOM OF THE PRESS?

A concerted and long-planned attack has been mounted in recent months by press employers on the National Union of Journalists. Masquerading as a defence of the 'freedom of the press', it has served only to prove, by the distortion of the reporting on the issue which has been published, what the majority of NUJ members already know - that under capitalism there is not nor ever has been any freedom of the press. To quote one member of the union's National Executive Committee, "press freedom consists of those prejudices of the proprietors which the advertisers allow" - or to quote a delegate at the union's policy-making Annual Delegates' Meeting in Cardiff last month, "freedom of the press is the power of a small group of wealthy men to have their views on every breakfast table in the country".

What is really at issue is not the so-called 'freedom of the press' but the fundamental right of any trade union to organise and to struggle for the furtherance of basic trade union aims, and to apply those sanctions, including strike action and blacking of different areas, which are most appropriate. The NUJ has a declared policy of working towards a 100 percent post-entry closed shop. The employers are using two defences against the strength which this would imply - in the first place they are seeking to have certain people, in particular editors of newspapers, excluded from the closed shop, and if that fails, they are attempting to ensure that they will at least be exempt from union discipline on the question of industrial action. This then is their definition of press freedom - the freedom of editors specifically to act as blacklegs!

The 1975 Annual Delegates Meeting of the NUJ, unperturbed by the freedom to distort for which Fleet Street papers have apparently been given free rein, reaffirmed union policy on pursuing the post-entry closed shop, and determined that no member, regardless of category, is exempt from union discipline. It further rejected all illusions concerning the spurious issue of the 'free press' by declaring its opposition to any "Charter of Press Freedom" worked out with employers whose policies of monopolisation and contraction have made a mockery of the 'free press'.

Some lads have tied cottages, so if a lad loses his job, and some already have, he also loses his home.

The stable lads' pay comes from particular trainers, who have been able to employ scab labour, at much higher rates of pay, for essential jobs. Even picket lines have not prevented these scabs getting in.

The lads know they will win for as one said "The trainer pays £60,000 for one horse and then says he cannot afford £1 a week rise to us." They are attempting to involve other lads throughout the country, also other unions are giving their support. Such solidarity is needed since many of the racing fraternity 'who fool neither do they spin' are capable of vicious assaults on lads whose only crime is to struggle for a decent wage.

## Insane aggression

Only in comic literature could one find anything to match the capacity of the American Government for braggart and self-deception. To judge only by the verbal bouquets passing on Capitol Hill of late it would be easy to suppose that the so-called Mayaguez incident was motivated other than by petty spite. The truth is, however, that this much vaunted act of piracy, the express purpose of which was to demonstrate the "resolve" and "capacity for firm action" of the United States in the aftermath of the humiliating defeats of Indochina, has earned not the admiration but the contempt of the world at large.

The Mayaguez, which was detained as a legitimate response to the persistent violation of Cambodian air-space and territorial waters by US traffic, served to provide the flimsy pretext for attack for which the Ford administration had been seeking. The vicious aerial attacks on Cambodian territory and shipping and the invasion of Koh Tang Island to "rescue" the already released crew of the Mayaguez can only serve to underline the military, political and moral bankruptcy of US imperialism. It was indeed as the Cambodians described it: "an insane act of aggression".

Under the heading "Acts of piracy pure and simple" the Peking People's Daily said: "If US imperialism does not draw a lesson from its defeat in Indo-China and continues its hostility to the Indo-Chinese people, it will certainly suffer more ignominious defeats".

## Laotian Liberation

Twenty-five years of fighting for the independence and national sovereignty of Laos is approaching a victorious conclusion. The Pathet Lao (Land of the Laotians) has overcome French and American imperialists, "Secret Wars" and "Low Profile Operations" by the US airforce and the CIA.

By 1968, every plane not being used to bomb Vietnam was sent over Laos; US air-raids reached 27,000 sorties a month. In February 1970, US forces evicted 23,000 civilians from the Plain of Jars (so named for the hundreds of bronze-age relics to be found there before the American Bombing).

The ceasefire of February 1973 should have marked the end of eight years of terror and destruction. By this time well over a million tons of bombs had been dropped on Laos. However the US Government had as little respect for this Agreement as they had for the two earlier ones. The mercenary 'Secret Army' continued to be financed by the CIA and anti-Pathet Lao politicians were given full backing for their policies. But both the 'Secret Army' and reactionaries in the Government have been soundly defeated in the last few months. After their hurried evacuation of Cambodia and Vietnam, and the denial of Thai air bases for further aggression against the Indo-Chinese nations, even the US can see there is little more that they can do to prevent the Laotian people from attaining full control over their own country.

Recent events reflect the support among the Laotian people for the Pathet Lao and its political party, the Neo Lao Haksat (Lao Patriotic Front). Demonstrations in the major cities against US interference and local and national rightists included even the armen of the Royal Lao Air Force, denouncing their Commander for ordering attacks on Pathet Lao positions, and securing his resignation.

Pro-US ministers have been forced to make way for those prepared to implement the 1973 Agreement for a coalition government. The fulfillment of the Neo Lao Haksat programme for "full democratic rights and freedoms for the people" to secure "their role as masters of the country and their own destiny", and for a "policy of peace, independence and neutrality" cannot be delayed much longer.



Fighters of the Laos people's Liberation Army study the political programme of making Laos a peaceful, independent and democratic country

## SCHOOL LEAVERS - DESPAIR OR HOPE?

One of the contradictions of capitalism is that it needs skilled labour yet is not prepared to train it.

A section of workers feeling the cruelty of capitalism particularly at the moment is our youth. In many areas of Britain there are young people for whom the first glimpse of working life is the Social Security Office.

There was a time when employers could not wait to get their hands on those fresh-faced young workers, straight from school. Now these young workers are an embarrassment to them.

Hundreds of lads who should now be starting apprenticeships are being forced into jobs giving no training - which will result in a lack of skilled labour in the future.

In our Party we are fighting to bring about a socialist state, where worker and boss are one and the same. And where youth

A Socialist country like China is able to include in its Constitution an Article which simply states "Citizens have the right to work". This right will always be denied to us in a capitalist Britain. To shake of unemployment, we must shake off capitalism.

## May Day in Albania

A delegation from the CPB(ML) celebrated May Day in Tirana on the invitation of the General Council of Trade Unions on behalf of the working class of Albania.

Together with revolutionary workers and fraternal trade union delegates from all parts of the world we experienced a tremendous manifestation what has been, and is being achieved in a country where the working class are in control of their own destiny.

It was a great honour to stand alongside the other delegates, fighters for Socialism in their own lands. In particular the Vietnamese comrades whose heroic peoples' war against the American imperialist invaders has resulted in inevitable victory and had entered and liberated Saigon only 24 hours previously.

The parade itself demonstrated all the aspects of life in Albania that we had witnessed in our tours of the industries, the state and co-operative farms, of education, and of the political and ideological advances of the working class. All this backed up by a military preparedness of the whole people ready to defend their Socialist homeland against any would-be invader who could only try at his own peril, as the fascist and imperialist invaders of the past have learned.

Everywhere we travelled we saw construction and advancement in this small country where there is no unemployment, no price rises and the standard of living is constantly rising in a planned and equal way. Since the Second World War when many of the best sons and daughters of Albania



Delegates from many countries at May Day celebrations in Albania

gave their lives in the fight against the Italian and German fascists, against foreign imperialists and their own ruling class from a land scorched by war, socialist construction has increased industrial production 87 times, electric energy by 174 times and today electricity is exported to Greece and Yugoslavia.

In agriculture where previously 30 tractors served a handful of landowners now 15,000 are the property of the whole people.

We were not just impressed by the material advances that have been made but by the manner in which progress has been achieved. The political and ideological advances of the working class have been so great that they stand as an example to all other workers in the world.

We saw how the trade unions serve the people in all aspects of their life. In particular at the

present moment the working class are conducting a great struggle against bureaucracy. Just one example was in a superphosphate plant, where the workers decided that the administration was too bureaucratic and overstaffed. After discussions at all levels, 23 office workers volunteered to transfer to production leaving only those necessary in administration.

Everywhere we went we saw examples of the Dictatorship of the Proletariat as the means by which the workers are consolidating socialism with the guidance of their Party in the application of the Ideology of Marxism-Leninism.

All delegates were agreed that our visit was not only a pleasant one due to wonderful hospitality but also an education in revolutionary socialism from which we all learned a great deal.

## AUT

When Prentice conceived the idea of attacking the quality of higher education in this country by starving the Universities of funds, increasing staff student ratios, cutting research budgets and refusing to consider a claim from University teachers for a backdated pay rise, he must have thought that the University teachers, with their history of "cooperation" and non-militancy, would be a pushover. But under attack, the University teachers, like other sections of our class, have achieved a degree of political clarity, have stepped up their organisation and are fighting back.

The successful day of action on May 8th forced Prentice, in an attempt to forestall further militancy,

to concede arbitration on the wage claim. Far from being satisfied by this the Association of University Teachers stepped up their action by recommending members to refuse to release the results of final examinations. In this action they have the full backing of the National Union of Students. In addition a list of twenty other possible sanctions has been drawn up, including a refusal to do unpaid government work and mass applications for civil service jobs. These sanctions are to be applied until the results of arbitration are known. Just as school teachers are fighting to preserve primary and secondary education, University teachers are just beginning to fight to preserve the quality and quantity of higher education in this country.

## ATTI conference

Important policy decisions are to be taken by the Annual Conference of the Association of Teachers in Technical Institutions meeting in Scarborough this Spring Bank Holiday, in the present post-Houghton atmosphere, the 400 delegates have the task of reaffirming union policy on cuts in education, salaries and conditions of service, all of which the Houghton report of last winter undermined.

Houghton's job was to pave the way for the present offensive on education and teachers. The conference's job is to give the signal for our offensive against these attacks.

The most important question facing the conference is the fight against education cuts. At a time when primary and secondary education is looked upon as an unnecessary expense, further education is treated as a luxury. College building, repairs, capital goods, consumables and other essential facilities are cut drastically. The education of millions of young people is threatened. The response, so far limited and isolated, must now become national if it is to succeed.

On salaries, Houghton's criterion of preserving relativities with other sections of workers challenges the long-established ATTI policy of maximum increases for all grades. Preserving such relativities means reducing future claims to a level where they merely reflect the success or failure of other workers' wage struggles. If all agree to such a policy there would be no advance. Such is the invidious ideology of Houghton which the conference has to pronounce upon.

## No teacher training cutbacks!

A joint meeting of the Student Unions of the Technical Colleges which train teachers to work in Further Education was held on the weekend of 9th-10th May.

The four colleges - Wolverhampton, Bolton, Huddersfield and Garnett - are all more or less threatened by government cutbacks, which take the form of merger with "nearby" Polytechnics.

The Student Unions have decided to go onto the attack by declaring themselves financially, politically and constitutionally autonomous. They have initiated a campaign to preserve and expand the four colleges, with the decision to oppose cuts at the local level, by pressing for uniform conditions of service on teaching practice to apply to all four colleges; and by pressing for a joint certificate to be awarded by the four colleges recognised as independent.

This is a conscious attempt at a guerrilla approach. The government cannot even plan its cutbacks properly, and has allowed the Wolverhampton and Bolton mergers to be temporarily suspended, while Garnett is in principle recognised as independent. At the same time, the merger at Huddersfield has shown what a disastrous policy the government is embarked on.

This is a weakness for the government which can be exploited, for the overwhelming majority of staff and students at the colleges can now be united - including to an extent the Principals, who met the same weekend as the Unions, and who appear to agree with them. No progress can be made, however, until the membership forge their own unity and ceasing all faith in "well-placed" individuals who will "fight" for them.

# Democracy in the unions

## The phoney left

## "Terrorism" Act stays

There is presently a furore in the Press about how Officers of the AUEW should be elected. They, the press, clamour for a retention of postal balloting in the name, of course, of democracy. They do not comment nor appear to have a view regarding unions: who in officiating themselves have no elections whatsoever. We make the point that in their not commenting in regard to these they are correct, for it is none of their business.

If we accept that the Press is a champion of democracy, which is not true of course, then their view must be answered. Democracy should mean participation, mentally and physically. This is especially true and needed in trade union affairs. That is, participation by the members and only the members of the union, in this case, the AUEW Engineering Section.

The Press say that only the 'left' and militants attend branch meetings, the place where a vote is registered and has been so, apart from the last five years, since the inception of the Union over a century ago.

It is argued by them that since others are so idle, so disinterested, they should be fed at home. The remedy is not to encourage disinterest, which serves only the employers, but participation and active interest of membership, irrespective of view within the branch.

Even in Greece, alleged origin of 'democracy' the voter was required to physically attend and place a stone to record a vote.

Even in Britain at general elections and municipal elections one is obliged to go to the polling booth in person. Not that Parliament is democracy.

Of course, as usual, the Press because it is not only ignorant but contemptuous of the organisations of the working class, especially the trade unions, has not in its reaction been able to get its sights right. The decision regarding postal balloting with which they quarrel, though they be not members of this Union, is not the most important question.

First of all, the affairs of this Union, to which they have directed their attention, more properly, instructed their servants to give attention to, are much more profound and embracing in connection with working class democracy. It so happens that the most important question under discussion was not the postal ballot. It is important to know that the decisions of this Union to which the Press have addressed themselves stem first from the National Committee and thereafter the Rules Revision Committee.

The most important question before the former was the matter of amalgamation. Whilst the Press have directed themselves to a constitutional change of rule, properly made, regarding postal ballots, there is at this time a real struggle about democracy which comes down to control and direction and policy of the Union by the membership through their elected representatives. The elected representatives, to use an Americanism, arrived at their power by what is known as a 'Collegiate System'. The policy body of the Union who instruct the governing body, that is, the Executive Council, is named the National Committee and there are of these 52, all of whom must be rank and file, must work at the trade. There is, since it is common knowledge that the Union has amalgamated with former foundry workers, constructional workers, technical workers (draughtsmen), an exchange between all these adjuncts on what should be democratic control.

The decision of the National Committee to reject the proposals of the Executive Council which sought to change the National Committee to National Conference, to enlarge from 52 to 300, avoided what would have been a disaster for the membership. The question of embracing others or being themselves embraced is a matter that requires attention. It cannot be resolved by enlarging a committee by numbers. What is required is that the power of a committee as distinct from a conference shall not be impaired. The National Committee instructs the governing body of the Executive Council. It is a committee, it is not a conference. A committee is a body constituted to work. The members shall do their work and speak more than once until they have resolved the question. A conference is a gathering with which a leadership confers but by which it is not instructed.

A committee, of necessity, must be both well founded and not too large. It cannot, of course, be a mass meeting. Would it be so, then like all large gatherings it demeans itself to a platform. A committee, on the other hand, instructs a Chairman, controls and instructs all those who are in leadership. So the struggle here is one that in enlarging a family within the working class, that working class must keep such representation as to ensure mandatory power, the power to instruct. It is obvious that officers having been elected from their peers, unless they are careful, shall begin to believe they are above their peers. The safeguard within this Union, which is the most democratic, is that they shall never forget their origin.

In expanding the membership of the Union, in embracing a greater amalgamation, it is imperative that the control of the rank and file is not lost. The rejection of the proposals on amalgamation which sought to appease new adherents to the amalgamation by enlarging their numbers is not a denial of democracy but a safeguard of it. What is needed to be done is to ensure that the voice of the rank and file, directly through their representatives who work at the trade, elected by a collegiate system, shall instruct those who are euphemistically described as 'leaders'. The rejection, therefore, of all proposals to enlarge a body out of all recognition of being a committee and term it a conference is real union democracy in practice.

So there are two things under discussion within this Union. There is a bitter battle going on within our Union to preserve democracy. The democracy of the Union can only be described as the control of the members on officers and so-called 'leaders'. The Press have waged a very long campaign against the working class and their unions. In efforts to ridicule the democracy of the membership, and above all, their authority and their control, they have sought to personalise unions. They frequently write of a union which is enormous, like the Transport & General, as 'Jack Jones' Union'. They have written 'Hughie Scanlon's Engineers'. It is important to understand that the trade unions are the creation of the working class, a very long standing weapon they have so shaped, that the 'Jack Jones' and 'Scanlons' will depart by a natural law of retirement or death but the unions, which are the working class, go on for ever.

The serious threat to trade unionism in the form of anti-trade union law was removed by the mass action of the Engineers responding to sound leadership. It was not a victory won by stealth.

Though the legislation has been repealed the threat to the unions remains as serious as ever. They are under constant attack from many sides and will only repel those attacks if they wake up to the danger and act to deal with it instead of standing back and looking at the antics of those seeking to destroy the unions in rivalry with each other although this was some sort of contest in which they themselves are not directly involved.

The recent meeting of the Engineers National Committee and Rules Revision Committee has been the occasion for a number of press articles all purporting to champion the cause of trade union democracy. The issue is presented as a contest between the 'right' and the 'left', and to revolve around two main questions being decided, the question of the terms of amalgamation and whether to retain the postal ballot or revert to voting by attendance at the union branches.

In both these issues the question of the union's democracy is fought out and both contenders claim to be the real champions of the Union's democracy.

It is easy enough for anyone to claim to be a champion of democracy, the term has come to mean almost anything. But the definition of 'left' and 'right' needs a bit of sorting out. The 'Communist' Party of Great Britain, the revisionists have their own definition which if the truth be told can be stated in quite simple terms. A 'left' is one who supports and votes for decisions of the 'C'P and a 'right' is one who doesn't. It's as simple as that.

How do the left and right treat with the question of postal ballots? It is presented as an issue where the right support postal ballots and the left oppose. Each claiming their attitude to be more democratic. The Levins and Woodrow Wyatts make out a very plausible case for postal ballots based on comparative voting figures. The championship of postal ballots by the capitalist press doesn't spring from any regard for democracy - quite the contrary. They know that a postal ballot is far more likely to be influenced by press propaganda than is a branch ballot.

However the revisionists of the 'C'P do not advance a very clever case for ending postal ballots. They concentrate almost entirely on the financial aspect, which opens the way for the proposal already made that the Government will pay for the cost of postal balloting in exchange for the union putting its elections under the supervision of a state body like the Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service.

Of course the members must defend the Union and to do so they must defend its hard won democracy but they can only do so by their own efforts, and their own involvement; their own commitment to working class ideology, that is, Marxism-Leninism. This is difficult of course. It may seem much easier to leave it to the various wheeler dealers but that won't work.

To scrap the whole dirty capitalist system is difficult too. But that is what we have to do.

Powers to arrest, detain and deport without trial or even production of any evidence were introduced in the Prevention of Terrorism (Temporary Provisions) Act of last November. At the time THE WORKER noted that its only link with terrorism was the way the Birmingham killings were used as a pretext to erode yet further our rights and civil liberties. Now it appears that 'Temporary Provisions' was a less than honest description too, for Parliament is currently approving the extension of these powers for a further six months.

"These provisions have been fairly extensively used" said Lord Harris, the Labour Minister, "and it would be helpful if the police could retain them." Just how helpful is shown by the fact that of 355 arrested under the Act, only 13 were ever charged

with any offence. Others were simply deported - or, to use the Home Office jargon, "excluded". Lord Harris wasn't joking when he said "Exclusion orders are designed to be used where proceedings in court cannot be taken."

The terrorists of all sorts - those that bomb, maim and kill ordinary working people and those who exercise more forcibly and viciously the anti-working class laws - are the enemies of both British and Irish workers.

Will we allow the 'Prevention of Terrorism' act to become a vehicle for legal terrorism against our class - as conspiracy laws are used to jail pickets and the Industrial Relations Act was used to fine Unions and imprison dockers? Far better to learn from the way the working class defeated the Industrial Relations Act and consign this latest denial of civil liberties to the same fate.



A wife of one of the Chrysler workers shows her solidarity. This is International Women's year. The women of Britain can only liberate themselves fighting shoulder to shoulder with fellow workers in class struggle.

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- Unless otherwise stated, all meetings at Bellman Bookshop, 155, Fortress Road, London N.W. 5.
- Fri May 23rd 7.30 pm: Common Market - No!
  - Fri May 30th 7.30 pm: Albania: Socialism in Practice. Holborn Assembly Rooms, St Johns Mews WC1
  - Fri June 6th 7.30 pm: China: Consolidation of the Socialist State
  - Fri June 13th 7.30 pm: Women are only Free Under Socialism
  - Fri June 20th 7.30 pm: From National Liberation to Socialism
  - Fri June 27th 7.30 pm: Exposure of Social Democracy.
  - Fri July 4th 7.30 pm: The British Revolution
  - SUN June 1st 7.30 pm: No to EEC! Park Hotel, Beverley Rd, HULL
  - Tue June 3rd 8.00 pm: No to the Common Market. Brighton Workers' Bookshop, 37, Gloucester Rd B'ton.

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