

THE WORKER



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OUT WITH THE CONTRACT IN WITH SOCIALISM

AUEW breaks the chains

"THIS National Committee instructs Executive Council to call for an immediate return to free collective bargaining at the end of the second stage of the social contract..." With these words the 52-man policy making body of the AUEW Engineering Section (ES) have reasserted the basic function of their union: the maintenance and improvement of members' wages and conditions.

Debate began with an attempt to leave the decision to the National Conference of the full amalgamated union the following week. In response it was moved that the matter should be left to the TUC to decide. Both moves, though inspired by apparently different motives, had the aim of preserving a Labour Government. Against these attempts to obscure the main issue and to abrogate responsibility for a decision whose repercussions would reach far beyond the union, Executive Council member Reg Birch stressed the need for clarity. He said, "You must say what is right to

do, say the agony will continue, that the social contract will continue, but don't tell myths about it. Don't equivocate. If you keep on disarming this union you'll make out a case why we shouldn't bother. Declare where you are! Either you believe in autonomy and believe you're a union or not; but don't ask permission for 'free' collective bargaining. Don't try and smuggle in contraband, go the whole way, say we'll go without wages for a whole year to save the employing class!"

And so the debate began, and in spite of all the dire threats and abject pleas, the committee defeated the decision not to decide and went on to vote almost unanimously for an end to the wage restraint. So immense in fact was the pressure from resolutions submitted from shopfloor and branches in every part of the land that National Committee was left with no alternative than to accept its leadership responsibility and debate the issue at length. The result was a reassertion of

the democracy and autonomy of the union itself.

Once again therefore the Engineers have by their decision issued a clarion call to all other unions who have yet to confront the same question - namely collaboration or confrontation with those seeking to destroy Britain - a challenge already taken up by the South Wales NUM.

Whatever equivocation may now be voiced by faint hearts a clear lead has now been given and already resolutions of congratulation are being submitted to Executive Council from branches. With confusion now cleared and self-imposed shackles broken, AUEW members in every place of work are once again in a position to pursue their legitimate claims for improvement of wages, hours and conditions of employment. A great blow for progress has been struck, against 'loyalty' to a 'Labour' Government - against reaction - for a future - for a working class - for socialism. It must not now be undone.

London summit - unity in reaction

THREE times now the leaders of capitalism have assembled and discussed. First Rambouillet, then Puerto Rico, now London. Each time the problem has been the same: a persistent problem and one they would dearly like to solve. The problem has not been inflation, nor trade wars, economic slump nor even unemployment. To them these are not problems but attempted solutions. Their common problem has been and remains the working class.

Of the seven "leaders" at least four have but a short time left in which to "rule" in their own countries. Put together in one country, all seven would be political rivals. But meeting together they represent not the American Demo-

cratic party, French Gaullism, Italian Christian Democracy or whatever. All represent capitalism.

Even in military alliance capitalism does not reach that level of unity which is called forth by workers who will not submit to their dictates. And so, fittingly they met again in London, the capital of the oldest capitalist country, the country whose working class is seen by them as a problem whose solution cannot be left to British capitalism alone.

It was equally fitting that at the time of their summit the National Committee of the Engineering Section of the AUEW should also be meeting, showing the true intent of the working class in

their rejection of a Social Contract, in their rejection too of that great capitalist unity the Common Market. This then is the problem for capitalism.

With over 15 million unemployed between them - going only by official statistics, the spectacle of these great men coming together only to issue a vague statement about unemployment among the young (nothing about anyone else unemployed, mind you) may have seemed laughable, even pathetic. But this was not the aim of their meeting.

Capitalism is founded on competition. They come together only to attack. Is the CBI anything but



May 11th - NUPE-led day of action against the cuts. See Page 3.

John Sturrock (Report)

an organisation of employers to combat workers? Is the EEC, or NATO, any different? When capitalists make alliances it is to prepare for war, war against the workers, and there is nothing laughable in that.

They wish to destroy our working class, carve up Britain and distribute the pieces among themselves. Carter came early to inspect his domains in the North East. Our message back to them must be that Britain is no frightened lamb to be led to the slaughter, jointed and served up. To hell with summits, to hell with Nato, to hell with the EEC! We will decide.

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Laurence Sparkham (I. F. L.)
A NATFHE banner on the May 11th day of action.

Oxfordshire teachers struggle to save skills

FOR Oxfordshire teachers the acid test of their will to struggle for education is imminent. Their fight began on September 21st last year with a massively supported half-day strike which forced the Council to think again about its proposals to cut education spending by £13 million. Then in January the Council confirmed its decision to cut the teaching establishment by nearly 500 and capitation - money allowed to schools for resources - by 20 per cent.

As was intended this delay had set back the momentum of the teachers' campaign, but only temporarily. Since February 18th members of the NUT, NAS/DWT and AMA have been imposing sanctions on the Authority by refusing to cover for unfilled vacancies and for colleagues absent for more than one day. Now teachers' attention is concentrated on one aspect of the attack, the threat to teachers' jobs.

In anticipation of making staff cuts the Council has since September been offering only fixed-term contracts to all new appointments, believing that it could draw a distinction between redundancy and failure to renew fixed-term contracts in September 1977. Teachers have not been taken in by such niceties. To them there is only one definition of redundancy, and that is being taken out of the class-room and being denied the opportunity to practise their skills.

Two Associations of the NUT in Oxfordshire have therefore given their overwhelming support to motions calling on the Executive to authorise strike action in the eventuality of any redundancies.

NUPE Conference - No to cuts! No to contract!

DELEGATES at the bi-annual NUPE National Conference find the Union exercising good leadership in the struggle against the cuts, but facing a much greater and more significant battle which is part and parcel of the cuts struggle - the social contract.

NUPE's guerrilla line on fighting the cuts where they occur has been taken to a higher level by the E. C. 's call for 'days of action'. The days of action have been a challenge to NUPE's own membership, to the commitment of other public sector unions pledged to fight the cuts and to industrial unions as well. For the first time NUPE has led conscious political action and the membership has seized upon the call and has asserted its leadership in what is a most significant political struggle.

If NUPE can assert such effective leadership on the cuts, why not on the social contract?

The call has been taken up by the Division and now, since the April Conference, the National Action Committee is throwing its whole weight behind Oxfordshire teachers.

A ballot of all members of the NUT has now to be undertaken before 21st May in which they are to be asked to support escalated strike action. They are also being asked to go onto the offensive on the question of class-size by refusing to accept classes of over 30 in secondary schools, 27 in primary schools, classes containing reception - 30 children and 32 in all other classes, and to intensify sanctions by refusing to undertake voluntary duties during the lunch hour.

While the Trotskyites have been bleating about the betrayal of the bureaucrats, events have been gathering speed and left them behind. The National Executive is clearly determined to make a stand and win in Oxfordshire, and to reverse the policy of drift. It is now up to the members to show their determination and make an active response to the leadership.

They shoulder a grave responsibility. If they vote against strike action they are voting for more cuts and more redundancies for their weakness will be exposed and exploited. If they vote for action they stand to win a historic victory for education which will place all teachers on the offensive. All eyes will be fixed on Oxfordshire teachers: a conclusion to their struggle will not only steel other teachers in Britain for battle but also strengthen the arm of other workers fighting all cuts in public services.

The cuts and the social contract are one and the same. They are both part of the attack on the working class. They are both part of the strategy to de-skill, de-industrialise and destroy our class, our unions, our health and our education.

It is not enough to say our members would do better under the social contract than under free collective bargaining. What a slur on our power and organisation to say that we could not win something better than a 20 per cent wage cut after such a successful year of struggle on the cuts.

National Conference must unite the struggles against the cuts and the social contract, and assert its right to lead the public sector unions. We can and must smash the social contract. We demand the right to determine our own claim through our own union organisation.

FURTHER EDUCATION - END THE DESTRUCTION OF SKILL

IT IS to state the obvious to say that in a situation of the destruction of industry, skills are also being destroyed. As such industries as textiles or aircraft manufacturing disappear so does the expertise of the work force painfully acquired over a long period. The aircraft industry is a good example of this process. Hawker Siddeley factories now making household goods means that the knowledge and the ability of the workers is getting rusty and forgotten and no one new is learning this once highly skilled trade. It comes as no surprise to learn that the number of apprenticeships is declining and colleges specialising in engineering and construction courses are having a 'lean' time.

The Government, in the guise of the Department of Employment, is worried by the situation. They blandly tell us that there is a shortfall in the number of skilled workers required. Whilst recognising that 'industry' is unwilling to pay for training, the Department recognize that something has to be done. The Government's answers are of course those that will give heart to anyone desiring the destruction of skills. The first of these remedies is starving education of funds, making education increasingly difficult. Secondly the Department of Employment in their discussion document 'Training for Skills' questions the idea of long-term training and apprenticeships. The answer is the short course provided by skills centres, turning out 'skilled' engineers in six months. The same Department goes on to criticise unions for not accepting the workers coming off these short-cut courses as fully trained!

Medway teachers

TEACHERS are taking action to defend educational standards in Kent. They will refuse to teach classes after June 1st whose teacher is absent for more than one day. And they will refuse to teach classes they consider oversized. These teachers - from Gravesham in North Kent - are implementing the sanctions decided at this year's NUT Conference. Their action should force the local authority to take on supply teachers to cover for absences.

The teachers have condemned their authority's scandalous educational provisions. Support is widespread and NUT members are determined that their action shall defeat Kent Education Committee's attempts to reduce educational standards.

Meanwhile teachers in the Medway towns have added their voices to those raised in other parts of Kent by members of the NUT and are demanding union action to safeguard members' jobs and to defend education against the attacks upon it instigated by the Tory county council at the behest of the Labour Government.

Recent proposals, under the guise of 'voluntary redeployment' threaten the loss of a number of teaching jobs in schools regarded as 'overstaffed' by the authority. Recognising this, teachers in Medway are opposing these cuts and increasingly coming to understand the responsibility they bear in determining whether education is, as the authority (and the Government) would have it, an expendable commodity, or, as they clearly feel, a right which must be defended.

The official process of running down skills was given a boost by the Employment and Training Act of 1973, which set up the Manpower Services Commission (MSC). Under this agency were placed the Industrial Training Boards (ITBs), the government training centres, now known as Skills Centres, and various job creation schemes. MSC also set up Training Service Agency (TSA) in April 1974 which has become the main 'hatchet man' in the destructive process. TSA divides training from education. An absurd but instructive rumour went round Manchester that TSA wanted to set up a limited literacy scheme. Does someone who wants to work in a paint warehouse need to read much more than the word 'red'?

The TSA was set the twin tasks of helping to combat unemployment and adding to the pool of skilled workers. The courses set up by the TSA are often without general educational content; a course on Centre Lathe Turning without any general background of engineering techniques. These courses are of short duration, 28 weeks, six months and sometimes as short as three months, like an engineering course in Blackburn. TSA courses do not always lead to recognised qualification. The employment prospects of those attending courses such as Training Opportunity Scheme (TOPS) are not really enhanced. It is a matter of putting off unemployment or at best the upgrading of unemployment from an unskilled to a semi-skilled position. There is also a question of relevance

concerning some of the TSA courses. One instructor openly declared that the course he taught on television repair was useless and a total waste of time.

Where the TSA use skills centres, which they do for many short term industrial courses there are added problems. These centres are manned by instructors who are paid well below the Further Education level and certainly do not have the same conditions. These centres with the 'cheap' instructors and short courses are the spearhead of deskilling in the educational sector.

TSA in colleges also means an attack on education. With the squeeze on educational spending, any extension of TSA work, which is suggested, must come instead of existing courses, unless massive funds are injected for more teachers and accommodation. The money that comes from the TSA and the ITBs is also subject to short term consideration and can be withdrawn at any time. More TSA courses would make Further Education even more vulnerable to attack than it is at the moment. The uncertainty of TSA funds has led many LEAs to use part-time teachers rather than full-timers in these areas, which has meant a lowering of standards as part-timers are not subject to the same conditions, being hourly-paid.

Next Issue: NATFHE Conference and the fight for Education in Skills.

WORKER INTERVIEW

Sladebrook School, Brent

A SHORT while ago the Sladebrook High School in Brent made the news headlines when a secret dossier on violence at the school was leaked to the local Tory MP and the Press. An inquiry is being made at the school by order of the Department of Education and Science.

Our correspondent interviewed a teacher at the school. Question: The inquiry at the school is to investigate violence and attainment levels. Are you not concerned with these two factors? Answer: Yes, but violence as with the rest of the so-called Great Debate is being used as a smokescreen for the cuts. The authorities are not really concerned with violent assaults on staff. They expect teachers to put up with assaults rather than spend money on providing the resources needed to care properly for difficult pupils.

Q: And standards?

A: We are genuinely concerned about standards but we will not allow pupils or teachers to be made scapegoats for inadequate educational provision. Some of the people who talk about raising poor standards demand cuts at the same time.

Q: How do you think standards can be improved at Sladebrook?

A: The number of pupils attending the school is falling because of a drop in birth rate and families moving out of the area as factories are closed. A falling roll provides us with a great opportunity to improve education in the school. Already some of our pupils are benefiting from smaller classes.

Q: You want to keep teachers to allow the children to be taught in smaller classes?

A: We need the teachers, better facilities and the money to improve educational standards.

Q: What is the attitude of your local education authority?

A: The authority wants to take teachers away from the school on the grounds that our roll has fallen.

Q: Is your campaign to keep the teachers in line with your union's policy?

A: Not only has our campaign been in line with NUT policy it has led to a significant advance in the policy of the local branch - the Brent Teachers Association. Now the policy is that no school should suffer a cut in the staffing level for 1977/78 even though school rolls fall below the 1976/77 levels. The school staffing establishment should remain the same thus improving the pupil-teacher ratio.

Q: Your school, obviously, is not unique. Schools throughout London and indeed throughout the country will be involved in similar struggles. Can you offer any advice?

A: Ignore diversions, like that of violence, stick to the correct path. Fight for improved ratios which will bring smaller classes, higher educational standards and full employment for teachers.

Going for a Burton

THE CITY of Leeds has two basic manufacturing industries, clothing and engineering. Both in the last five years have declined dramatically. In engineering it is estimated that 5000 jobs have been lost, in the clothing industry estimates reach between 10,000 - 20,000 jobs. There are four main clothing groups in Leeds, Montague Burton's is one. Their decision to sack 750 workers in Leeds and 650 workers in Warrington and Walkden, can only be seen as a major threat to the whole clothing industry in the country. A forewarning that what happens in Leeds - once regarded as the capital of ready made clothes, will swamp the rest of the trade tomorrow. (Fifty out of four hundred and thirty high street shops are also to close.)

Burton's at their peak employed over 10,000 workers in Leeds. Its scale was epitomised by its massive canteen which could take 8000 workers at one sitting. Signs of the times were shown recently with its demolition, a symbol of the destruction of the industry.

Burton's who are heavily involved in property deals in the city and the export of capital and the trade to the EEC, have stated that the reasons for these sackings, due to come into effect from August, are that there are no orders, that fashions have changed from the Sunday suit image to more leisurely appearance, that imports have seriously undercut the market. Many clothing workers in Leeds in anger point out the untruths of the situation.

Yet in Leeds alone, three major factories are doing work

for Burton's contracted out to them because Burton's cannot handle it at present. Work is contracted out to smaller, badly organised shops so as to cut below union rates. Burton's work is being done on this basis throughout Yorkshire. Workers in these factories are raising the question of blacking this work in the fight to try and save jobs at Burton's. In one factory working on contract work from Burton's they have an order for 25,000 sportswear suits, so much for the lack of orders and inability to meet changing fashions.

Imports are raised as the bogey of all shop floor workers, yet in the last few years it has been stated time and time again in the press and at the recent conference of the National Union of Tailors and Garment Workers, that the major importers are the very manufacturers who wail so much about them. One worker from Burton's stated that their skill was to be able to sew Burton's labels in goods from Yugoslavia or other East European countries.

From 1951 to 1973, 18,000 jobs were lost in clothing manufacture in Leeds, from 1973 to date another 15,000 to 20,000 jobs are estimated to have been lost. Leeds as the centre of the clothing industry, was the best trade union organised. The factory owners attempted to defeat this in several ways, factories were amalgamated resulting in loss of jobs, factories were moved to development areas - Scarborough, Pickering, the North East - no trade unionism, no traditions of factory solidarity, low wages,

government grants. The major strike by the women workers of Leeds in the early 1970s was more of a desperate attempt to hold the shifting ground they were stood on besides fighting for the shilling on the hour. Resulting from that struggle, a major but belated backlash against the Masters Federation, the capitalists have proceeded to destroy the clothing industry in Leeds. In five years they destroyed as many jobs as it had previously taken them 20 years to do - blacklists followed, dispersion from Leeds.

Burton's is regarded among many workers in the clothing trade in Leeds as one of the key sections. Fears are that if they close, all others will in time follow. Many workers openly state that they see no future for the clothing industry after ten years. The solution is not therefore to surrender, to accept that because the capitalists are set on this course nothing can be done; nor is the solution to call for nationalisation - so that a state industry can then sack you. The struggle to save the skills, jobs and production of the clothing trade is intimately tied up with the destruction of capitalism.

To save our clothing industry - Smash capitalism.

Footnote: Warrington workers intend to occupy their factory. Leeds have had their notices put back ten days, but a decision on industrial action remains to be taken.

Packers strike

MAENSON Clothes Ltd of Leeds recently won a \$5 million order from the United States. Boasting of such success, an article to their 'credit' appeared in the local paper. As the packing required a new format, packers of finished goods at the factory decided, with this \$5 million success floating around, they should receive special payment

for their new American-style pack. They have been on strike since. Work at the production side of the factory continues, so creating a stockpile of finished but not packed goods, and it is being mooted that distribution workers will come out in solidarity, so keeping everything in the factory.

At time of writing the dispute continues.

South Wales miners against the contract

NUM delegates to their South Wales Area Conference voted overwhelmingly against the Social Contract. Complementary to that decision, they took up again the demand for a £100 a week face worker, first adopted as the aim of national NUM policy two years ago.

However, whether the call was for £100 or £140 as demanded by one miners' lodge, this is no measure of the political clarity with which the demand is pursued. The Conference allowed itself the dubious privilege of being addressed by Tony Benn who called for a close relationship between the Labour Government "under heavy pressures from international financiers" and the unions, especially the South Wales miners. Delegates showed their appreciation of the Government's problems by voting against the Contract.

Yet they were still unwilling to totally reject allegiance to that

Government. Area President Emlyn Williams made the almost ritual call for the Labour Government to carry out its 1974 manifesto and ignore the pressures of the IMF and CBI. One delegate proposing the retention of the Social Contract did so on the basis that the miners rejecting it would bring down the Labour Government and pave the way for the Tories.

Probably he is right. It is of no concern to us whether a Labour Government falls or whether it is replaced by the Tories, Lib-Lab, SNP-Tory or whatever else can be produced from the insipid parliamentary cook-book. What, however, does concern us is that the miners, on embarking on an offensive against the Contract, take responsibility for their actions, not by calling for the return of a Labour Government with socialist policies, but by admitting to themselves that their action brings us a step nearer to revolution.

Child care - does the state care?

A REPORT of a study carried out by the London University Institute of Education was published recently which illuminates the pitiful condition of child mindling.

But the child minders themselves work long hours for "grossly inadequate pay" of £5 - £7 per child per week - out of which all food and other expenses must be met. Due to the heavy work load of child minders half did not touch the children affectionately during the researchers' continued visits, and more than a third did not even talk to the child. Over a third of the minders had not played with the child or told him a story during the previous day. In many cases the space available for the children to play was inadequate or even unsafe.

The message is clear - ideally child minders should be salaried employees of the state. But need we hope? Our state's reply will be that such a move would "infringe parents' rights and responsibilities" - which incidentally was the same reply used to try to combat compulsory schooling! Our children's future is being cut away from beneath their feet - how can we possibly sit back and hope?

ASTMS CONFERENCE- THE KEY ISSUES

THE DESTRUCTION of industry and services continues. Our approach to Industrial Democracy and the Social Contract affects our ability to stop this destruction, and outlines the importance of this year's ASTMS Conference May 21st to 23rd.

Social contract

ASTMS policy proudly stands opposed to the contract. This year of 24 motions on Incomes Policy, 15 oppose the contract, 8 deal with side-issues, and but 1 is directly in favour of it. Another resounding NO! is likely this year, but our task is more than this. We have to translate our opposition from passivity into activity for such a policy to be meaningful. In so doing we must not see free collective bargaining as an end in itself but as an assertion of our dignity as workers and a defence of our unions which the social contract would make redundant.

Industrial democracy

While overall our class accepted the idea behind the social contract on elsewhere, under the name of "Industrial Democracy". The TUC pamphlet on the Bullock Report

declares the basis of this to be in "... a new relationship of equality and co-operation between capital and labour..." So long as we rely on the boss buying our labour power we are slaves to capital and not equals. Should we swallow this same pill as the social contract then we will continue to suffer as "Industrial Democracy" weakens our union structure and bargaining power.

The continued destruction of industry is evidently a political decision. Our organised strength is all that threatens to spoil it. We must not be tricked into swapping Bullock for the Social Contract, rather throw them both in the bin.

The crucial debate

Therefore "Industrial Democracy" is the crucial debate at Conference. Our job as delegates must be to reject it in the phoney form in which it would be imposed by Bullock and strengthen it in our own unions which must serve us rather than become the extended arm of government that "Industrial Democracy" proposes. Let the debate be on "Whose Industrial Democracy?". Let us give our Conference the revolutionary perspective we need to make progress - No more Contract! No phoney Industrial Democracy! No more Cuts!

Airline officers reject contract

THE MERCHANT Navy and Airline Officers Association in Conference at Eastbourne have refused to conclude pay agreements under the Social Contract. Speakers rejected the argument that the value of earnings are the cause of inflation, and are clearly determined to pursue an independent salary claim. They deplored, too, the issue of lies that characterised the "contract" from its inception.

"We were told that if we wanted democracy to survive we must accept wage control. We have had wage control. First of all as asked wage freeze, then dressed up wage control, and finally by a wave of the magic wand, the full works, the coach and horses, glass slippers and tiara of the Social Contract. But people who wear glass slippers should beware the midnight hour."

Public Meetings

All meetings will be held at the Bellman Bookshop, 155 Fortess Road London NW5 (Tufnell Park Tube) commencing at 7.30 p.m.

- Friday, May 27th "The City of London, financial centre of capitalism."
- Friday, June 3rd ---no meeting planned---
- Friday, June 10th "Save our public transport."
- Friday, June 17th "North Sea Oil, capitalism's salvation?"
- Friday, June 24th "Food mountains, want amidst plenty."
- Friday, July 1st "The decline of apprenticeship and technical education."
- Friday, July 8th "Socialism, not the Labour Party."
- Friday, July 15th "Revolution, not World War."

MANCHESTER

Monday, May 30th

"Only Revolution can save Britain"
Millstone Hotel, Thomas St.

CORRECTION

A meeting arranged by the New Albania Society was incorrectly advertised for Saturday June 12th. (There is no such date anyway.) A meeting sponsored by the New Albania Society will be held in the autumn.

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NAME.....
ADDRESS.....

Socialist democracy in Albania

THE FOLLOWING excerpts come from an article in the Albanian paper "Bakshimi". "The approval of the Constitution of the People's Socialist Republic of Albania by the People's Assembly recently is a vivid reflection of true socialist democracy and humanism, a confirmation of the teachings of Marxism-Leninism that the dictatorship of the proletariat is inseparable from the broadest, most profound and complete democracy for the working people."

"Only the revolution and the dictatorship of the proletariat", says Comrade Enver Hoxha, "ensure the broad working masses the possibility of participating in running the life of the society, of having their say about the home and foreign policies of the state, of effectively enjoying democratic freedoms and rights".

The dictatorship of the proletariat is the fundamental con-

dition of the democracy of the working masses, its political guarantee. The proletarian revolution breaks and destroys the bourgeois state and bureaucracy and sets up on its ruins the state of the dictatorship of the proletariat, the new form of democracy for the working people. The dictatorship of the proletariat liquidates any form of the private property, eliminates the exploitation of man by man and the basis of its emergence, creates material possibilities for exercising the democracy for the working masses.

"In our socialist state, the constitution ensures the citizens the rights they enjoy in reality. They are equal before the law, without any limitation, without any privilege and distinction on account of race, nationality, education, social and material position, the right to elect and be elected to the organs of the state

power, to work and rest after work, to secure the necessary means of livelihood in old age, in case of illness and disability at work, to education, the right to join various organisations operating in the political, economic, cultural and other fields, the right to make requests, remarks and proposals to the competent organs over personal, social and state affairs. The equality of national minorities with all the other citizens and equality between man and woman, which are guaranteed by our constitution are of importance.

"Contrary to the bourgeois and revisionist countries, where the rights of the citizens proclaimed by the constitution are formal and fictitious, in the People's Socialist Republic of Albania they are real and their implementation is ensured, because there is no gap between the law and reality."

Dictatorship of proletariat in Britain

NO comfort can be drawn for the working class from the results of the Local Government elections. In "The Worker" we have said "Smash the Labour Party", but this time their defeat was not accompanied by a rejection of social democracy. Rather than abstain altogether, many workers said "If we don't vote Labour we must vote for one of the others." Their ideas remained within the framework of capitalist government.

The elections also showed a dangerous "lumpen" consciousness among a part of the class. The neo-Nazi party of National Front thugs increased its vote in the most decayed areas of London - an abandoning of working class morality by a section of the youthful unemployed, in their demoralisation.

The vast majority - experienced in struggle against the employer and true to their own class ethos - did not will not vote for crude Fascism. Fascism cannot come to Britain in this form. The greater danger is the desire by the working class to survive within a declining economic system which requires their destruction. To engage in confused, unprincipled struggles which bring defeat and fragmentation - this is the stuff on which corporate fascism feeds, for resistance to it is weakened. Corporatism requires not only our defeat, but our connivance in defeat. The ballot box is an essential part of this connivance.

But abstention is not enough. A mere rejection of social democracy would permit worse to

ensue: a total fascist dictatorship. This Party, the CPB(M-L) says "Don't vote", not because none of the bourgeois parties are any good. Of course they are no good. We say that the working class now has a historical responsibility to decide its own affairs, and the "X" on that ballot form is the very abdication of that responsibility.

The decision to abstain must be a positive opting for revolution, and the rejection of social democracy must be accompanied by the growth and strengthening of the working class's own Party, The Communist Party. We must refuse to participate in the parliamentary farce, asserting the pride, dignity and unity of the working class. No to capitalist elections. Yes to the dictatorship of the proletariat.

EEC - POVERTY AND PLENTY

A SIDE-EFFECT of Carter's visit to London has been a flurry of argument over British Diplomacy's role in Europe. But the more our 'leaders' pose as saviours of the EEC the more destructive their policy at home. The British ambassador in Paris states that his aim is "... to facilitate change not destroy the principles of the Common Agricultural Policy."

In other words, they seek to take over themselves this machinery which is rapidly strangling what self-reliance there is in British farming. We have been self-sufficient in potatoes for many years now, and production is centrally organised through the Marketing Board. This the EEC is due to dismantle, not only encouraging imports, but setting up machinery whereby the taxpayer will subsidise importers and compensate them for any losses incurred. The Milk Marketing Board is unparalleled in Europe, with doorstep delivery of fresh milk, and a uniform price paid to the farmer and paid by the consumer. This has so encouraged production that 60 per cent of our milk (less than 25 per cent elsewhere) is consumed fresh, with incalculable benefits to our health. The Board has the support of the whole dairy industry, but only token support from the Government and the date set for its demise is December 31st.

The Government acts positively

only in implementing CAP directives. 500 civil servants have been pressed into administering the loathsome new Intervention Board for Agricultural Produce. 256 tonnes of butter were withdrawn from consumption in January, 1731 tonnes in April, while skimmed milk deposits trebled. Beef withdrawn from sale by the Intervention Board amounted to 21 tonnes in February but 500 tonnes in March. While people begin to starve the governments of Europe cut down the so-called 'surplus' by cutting down productive capacity.

Weapons expenditure of course they see no reason to cut, but rather to increase. Similarly the Government has decreed that the sterilisation of thousands of acres of the best agricultural land under motorways should continue unimpeded. On the advice of the IMF the slow-down in construction was lifted ahead of schedule on May 10th. No money for food, education hospitals; but a further £2 million for the current year alone - for the 'Save It' publicity to encourage us to use less energy, to produce less, consume less, make do with less.

AN OPEN AND SHUT CASE FOR SOCIALISM



Hainhua

China's Anshan steel works open for production.



John Sturrock (Report)

Britain's Port Talbot steel works shut by strike action.

The survival of steel means Socialism

STEEL is one of the main examples of the way capitalism in a last critical state turns on its own industrial base and destroys it - like a disgraced samurai committing hara-kiri. Steel highlights one of the principal contradictions of capitalism. With an insatiable need of high grade steel in Britain and all over the world and with skilled British workers capable of producing any amount of it, both steel production and productivity are in relative decline.

Furthermore so-called nationalisation, substituting our money for investment in steel to replace the money capitalists were no longer prepared to advance since they could make bigger profits elsewhere, has made no difference in this general decline. In a capitalist country where profits, not human needs, determine everything, calling some sections of the economy private and others public has no effect on the overall crisis of capitalism.

In the ten years since the formation of the British Steel Corporation, instead of admitting that investment has been too low the responsible authorities have gone on saying that the industry is over-manned - even though 60,000 workers have been made redundant during this period. Also during this period in which 100 plants have been shut down, Britain ceased being an exporter of steel and became a net importer!

One of the reasons given for the decline of the steel industry is "the slow growth of home demand" and "the exceptionally severe world recession in steel". Of course this is the result of the severe cuts in building programmes, hospitals, schools, factories, houses, carried out by capitalist governments in Britain and elsewhere. Having made steel public so that the funds of private capitalists are not involved, then comes the slash in public expenditure like the Samurai's sword to finish steel off.

The present strike at the Port Talbot works shows what they mean when they say there are too many workers in steel: they mean there are too many organised workers still capable of putting up a fight over wages and conditions.

The electricians on strike are quite correctly saying that they must be paid the same rates as technicians are being paid for the same job. The electricians have been saying it for two years

now. BSC management is refusing even to enter into discussion with the men because the men have such a strong case. For the BSC to grant their legitimate claim would "knock a hole in the company-wide pay structure whose preservation is the night-and-day job of the personnel department."

Meanwhile the BSC is trying to get Frank Chapple and the EPTU executive to order the men back to work and suppress the strike. For a union executive to take the part of management against its own members is also like committing hara-kiri - just as is union agreement to the social contract which makes unions redundant. It fits perfectly into the pattern of what Sir Charles Villiers, Chairman of BSC, wants for the steel industry as a whole - all unions brought under one national negotiating umbrella so that the strength of particular unions is cancelled out and destroyed. That is the kind of set-up the engineers at Heathrow are having to fight their way out of.

Compare this whole tragic saga of waste and destruction with the development of steel making in a socialist country like China. With more than 100,000 workers and staff members, the Anshan Iron and Steel Company is one of China's biggest enterprises and there is no talk about over-manning. In 1960 the Anshan City Committee of the Chinese Communist Party prepared a report on "the Development of the Campaign for Technical Innovations and Technical Revolution on the Industrial Front" which Chairman Mao Tseung hailed as a steel-making Charier in the Far East.

The workers themselves realised the constant need for technical revolution and launched a vigorous mass movement to implement "the principle of cadre participation in productive labour and worker participation in management, of reforming irrational and outdated rules and regulations and of putting politics in command, of opposing the system of placing responsibility solely on the factory director".

The workers could do this because they had established working class state power and socialist relations of production in which such industries as steel, so essential for building a new society, can flourish as can the workers whose industry it is.