

THE BULLETIN

FOR SOCIALIST SELF-MANAGEMENT

number 12

MARCH 1973

price 2p.

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THE FREEZE

Civil servants going on strike is something that would have been unimaginable two years ago, and yet it's happening today. This is just one indication of the serious crisis which faces the British Capitalist class. The Tories are certainly succeeding in uniting the working class, but you do not have to look very deeply into the trade union movement to see that the movement is still terribly fragmented. However recent struggles such as U.C.S., the miners, and the dockers have contributed to awakening a feeling of class solidarity among important sections of workers. They have demonstrated this feeling in their support for other workers in struggle. But what is needed now is for the different sections of the working class to begin to plan a co-ordinated counter-attack on the Tories that will positively redistribute power and wealth in the workers direction. Meanwhile the gasworkers, civil servants, Ford workers and London teachers must receive the support of the entire trade union movement, because a defeat of any one of these sections will give the Tories encouragement to put the boot in on all other wage claims.

As a result of this developing class consciousness the T.U.C. and the various national union officials and executives are under pressure from the rank-and-file to take action against the Tories and the freeze in particular. Hopefully the 'official' union leaders will decide that they must support to the full the call to action coming from their members. But past history has shown that the leaders are more likely to turn tail and run, at best giving very limited support to any action in the hope that it will soon die out (eg '26 General Strike, big demo against I.R. Act). Militant are faced with a choice :- trust your National Executive, or raise the issue of rank-and-file action and co-ordination.

FOR REVOLUTIONARY SELF-MANAGEMENT

part one

The Scientific and Technological Revolution

There has been a whole revolution in science and technology since the end of the second world war, and especially in the last ten years. This revolution has been more profound and far-reaching than any other in the history of mankind, and it is based on two discoveries: the use of atomic energy and the use of electronics and computers.

The process of this revolution is getting continually faster, because it allows automation and computerisation to take over the time-consuming burden of routine calculations in scientific and industrial research; they also take over a lot of the mechanical and mental operations which used to be done by human beings, so that there has been a revolution in productivity and labour organisation as well.

Clearly a revolution on such a scale is capable of putting an end to poverty, exploitation and inequality the world over: the reason why this does not happen is because human society is organised by a political and economic system which prevents the scientific and technological revolution from having its full beneficial effect.

What has this revolution actually achieved?

Half the human race never has enough to eat, and their lives are controlled by foreign economic interests. When they try to free themselves from this control, the bourgeoisie in the developed capitalist countries keeps a grip on them through a corrupt neo-colonial government on the spot, or as a last resort by sending troops. And inside the capitalist countries too inequality is the general rule - inequality between different capitalist countries, inequality between affluent and depressed regions in the same country, inequality affecting old people, unskilled workers, immigrant workers and racial minorities.

The scientific and technological revolution has not been to the advantage of the masses of working people. But it has helped capitalism by allowing it a continuous boom in investments. In addition to this boom, large numbers of multinational companies have sprung up, and the state has got new powers to control private industry by granting subsidies (or refusing them). All these things have given capitalism the ability to avoid recessions and the kind of slump that occurred in the 30's. But this does not mean that its problems have been solved for good: capitalism is still as precariously balanced as ever and still produces crises - persistent unemployment, inflation and international financial crisis.

So in the developed capitalist countries the scientific and technological revolution has contributed more to reproducing crisis of one kind or another than to benefiting the working people. Of course, it has also

caused a tremendous development in productivity, which has given a higher standard of living and new skills to at least a part of the working population. But at what price?

'Productivity', meaning work speeds laid down by the bosses, has been speeded up so much that chronic nervous fatigue is commonplace. The conditions in which we live have got worse- the countryside, water and the air we breathe are polluted, and towns have grown up in such a way that it is now a lot more difficult to actually get to work and come home. The working people no matter how skilled or well qualified they are, have become cogs in a machine: the machine does not belong to them and they have no influence over the running of it. Even parliamentary democracy, ~~is~~ the bourgeoisie's own chosen method of government, is dead or dying, unable to provide even the shame democracy which it previously did. The most essential decisions about our lives are taken by an ever-smaller, untracable collection of individuals who are beyond the reach of the people who produce and consume.

In spite of the scientific and technological revolution, work is still increasingly seen by working people as a completely meaningless activity, as a curse. At the same time, people leaving school are now more educated than before, because developments in technology demand it. This only makes the feeling of alienation at work all the more desperate.

The large monopoly companies are obliged, if they want to keep in the race, to use the latest benefits of the scientific and technological revolution when they are developing new products. This means, under a capitalist system at least, laying out enormous investments. Thus they have to make sure that the sales will justify the money spent, and they do this by spending more money on advertising, which prepares the consumer to receive the product and creates an 'artificial' market for it. The result is that the product costs much more than it should do, out of all proportion to its use-value. The machine in which all working people are cogs is an economic machine, a money machine: it has no connection with peoples real needs.

The scientific and technological revolution has thus caused two things: an overall rise in the standard of living and education of working people in the capitalist countries, and at the same time new kinds of frustration, deprivation and oppression. In a way, the two things go together. But they also conflict. Where does this conflict take place? In the everyday struggle of working people, inside and outside the workplace, against this machine and the pressures which it puts on them.....

the second part of this article will appear in the March issue of the bulletin.

Declaration of the Executive Bureau of the
Revolutionary Marxist Alliance

With the cease-fire the Vietnamese people have just carried off a considerable success.

Through one of the longest wars in history the Vietnamese people have defended their right to independence and thus their right to undertake the construction of socialism.

Defeat of the Vietnamese people would have brought on a set-back for the world revolutionary forces, including those in Britain. The signing of the act thus marks not only the end of the pretensions of the American government to be the police force of world capitalism, but it also marks still another set back for the capitalist system.

The Vietnamese peasants, workers and intellectuals have only been able to win this fight at the price of millions of deaths.

Throughout the whole world, the workers and oppressed peoples salute these victims as their brothers, fallen under the blow of the common enemy: the most powerful international capitalism.

The cease fire should be recorded as a success, but by the same token, it should not entertain any illusions. The cease-fire isn't peace, nor can the unity of Vietnam, the reconstruction of Vietnam by socialism be undertaken from the north to the south.

ON the contrary, playing on the American capitalist governments fear of losing all influence in Vietnam with the collapse of the military/police apparatus that keeps the government of south Vietnam in its place, Thieu affirms his intention to keep his clan in power.

At the same time as workers will help the Vietnamese people to rebuild their houses, schools and factories, through their practical solidarity, the workers will also keep alert for the manouvers that the Americans and their puppets will inevitably attempt.

The workers still don't forget how limited the aid of the Soviet and Chinese governments was. It was only the diplomatic interests of these governments in regard to the different States and to the core of the workers movement that

decided, this aid, and not a revolutionary
politic.

But doubtless, above all, the workers will
keep in their memory the extraordinary
contribution furnished by the Vietnamese
fighters, peasants, workers and intellect-
uals, male and female, towards the triumph
of socialism.

Paris 24/1/73

It will be interesting to see how quick Harold Wilson is
in protesting at the action of the Israeli air force in
shooting down a Lybian passenger plane. We remember how
prompt he was to condemn the action of Munich.

WORKERS CONTROL
Conference

convened by..... the institute for workers control.
for the weekend of March 31st.-April 1st. '73
at Nottingham University.

delegates fee, food, accomodation...£5
delegates fee only.....£1

contact

Conference Secretary
45 Gamble Street
Forest Rd. West
Nottingham
NG7 4Et

WOMENS CONFERENCE ON
WOMEN'S LIBERATION AND SOCIALISM

on March 17th.-18th.
at Students Union, Edgbaston Park Rd,
Birmingham 15.

The aim of the conference is to try to bridge the traditional
divisions on the left which often keep marxist women in the
movement from working together.

Two main areas of discussion have been picked out.

- (1). The relationship of the patriarchial family to class and
to capitalist society. This brings in the central question
of the nature of the work now performed by women within
the family and it's relation to capitalism.
- (2). The strategy of the womens liberation movement and the role
of revolutionary women within it.

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WHAT'S GOING ON IN THE WOMENS MOVEMENT

Since the National Conference in November a lot of things have been happening. This is a report of a few that are being organised nationally.

(1) THE FAMILY ALLOWANCE CAMPAIGN

About twenty groups throughout England, Scotland and Wales are organising a campaign against the Government's proposals to end family allowance payments and replace them with a system of tax credits for children.

This has angered women and women's organisations who have no connection with the Women's Liberation movement. They are carrying out their own actions and we are trying to work with them where we can. The Child poverty Action Group and other organisations are also protesting to the Tax Credit Study Group set up by the Government to consider the tax proposals.

Some of these organisations would be happy with a tax credit system payable to the mother. We feel that even if the government agrees to this it would still be a step back-wards.

At the first of two national meetings of Womens Liberation Groups active in the Womens Family Allowance Campaign we discussed the issues thoroughly and decided that we could not accept the tax credit idea for the following reasons:

a). Millions of women would lose the only money they can by rights call their own.

b). Family Allowances are a statutory benefit paid automatically to families with two or more children, whereas tax credits would be part of the general tax system. The level of a tax credit could be changed at will in a budget- it can be reduced or disappear, overnight.

c). Many people who now receive family allowance would not qualify for child tax credits (e.g. unsupported mothers, wives of students, any woman whose husband is neither working nor getting National Insurance benefits- and what about wives of strikers?).

d). In some cases the money would not be passed on to the mother if paid to the husband.

e). The family allowance book can go with the child. For example, if a child spends a month with its grandmother she can cash the allowance for the child.

f). When the parent changes jobs, often he/she is taxed on an emergency code and may have to wait up to six months to receive the child allowance. With the present system cash is paid on the dot each week.

g). If there are child tax credits which are paid to the man it will be an apparent pay rise to him. If the woman gets the tax credits, it will be an apparent cut in pay for the man, and so argument about child tax credits would set men and women against one another. Already a report in the Nottingham local paper about the child allowance campaign described one of the women as 'the housewife who wants to take £4 from her husband's pay packet'.

As a result of this discussion, the following statement and

demands were drawn up and are being used in local campaigns in shopping centres, post offices, and at public meetings. They were used to draw up a petition which is to be presented to Parliament when the Tax credit Study Group reports to it in July:

" The Family Allowance is the only income that all women with two or more children are entitled to, and, pittance though it is, it's the only source of money of our own. It is also the only recognition of the work we do in looking after children. The government is trying to take this money away.

- a). We want the family allowance to be kept and increased.
- b). We want at least £2 for each child, and more for older children.*
- c). Family allowance must remain a statutory benefit.
- d). Family allowances must be paid to every mother for every child; including the first child.
- e). Family allowances must be made tax free.
- f). Maternity allowance must remain tax free.

*At the 2nd. national meeting it was decided that it might be better not to ask for a specific figure like £2 since this might be taken as a maximum.

(2) WOMENS ABORTION AND CONTRACEPTION CAMPAIGN

This campaign which has been going for more than a year now had its first national conference in Liverpool on 27th./28th. January. There has been a lot of local activity some groups have set up free pregnancy testing and advice services, others have been campaigning for an extension of local authority free contraception clinics. The importance of the campaign springs from the fact that if women do not have control over their own bodies, if they cannot decide for themselves when and how often to have children it is almost impossible for them to make any important decisions about how they are to live. It is not a birth control campaign though we believe that many women have more children than they want because the choice is not in their hands.

The conference decided that it would organise a campaign against the march in Manchester on Sunday 25th. March by the Society for the Preservation of the Unborn Child (S.P.U.C.) who specialize in horrific propoganda about 'child murder' without any regard for the suffering caused by forcing women to bear unwanted children. A S.P.U.C. member has said 'it is better to be a battered baby than not to have the chance to exist at all'. They claim that any woman can get an abortion under the present act even though the evidence shows that N.H.S. abortions can be very difficult to get and are often delayed until the operation is complex, expensive, and distressing to everyone concerned.

the freeze
PHASES 2 AND 3

In 1919-20 during the revolutionary storms in civilised Europe, Lloyd George, one of the finest and cleverest bourgeois statesmen, while calling on the conservatives to unite with the liberals- to face the rising working class danger - wryly looked at the scene and said,

"... Four fifths of this country is industrial and commercial, hardly one fifth is agricultural. It is one of the things I have constantly in mind when I think of the dangers of the future here. In France the population is agricultural, and you have a solid body of opinion which does not move very rapidly, and which is not very easily excited by revolutionary movements. That is not the case here. This country is more top heavy than any country in the world, and if it begins to rock, the crash here, for that reason, will be greater than in any land."

The working class has come a long way since 1920: today instead of 20% of it in agriculture we have just under 3%. This makes the 'top-heaviness' greater in favour of the working class. This favourably balance was aptly demonstrated in the series of sectional battles won against the government, rolling back the manifold forms of the 'counter-inflation' (counter-working class) drive of the bourgeoisie. Now, while the bourgeoisie is indulging in face saving exercises by deluding itself with quite a lot of crap about 'public opinion', behind the scenes, its experts are preoccupied with devising tactics to defeat the working class. Naturally it is not going to be through their own ingenuity that they will succeed (if they are going to) but through the present crop of workers 'leaders'. To substantiate this projection let us see what one of the ruling class's Lloyd Georgian political analysts has to say about the present scene:

"The danger will only become more acute once more if these efforts by individual unions to extract more pay from their employers are suddenly transformed once more into a co-ordinated working class attack on the government and its policies...." (David Watt, Financial Times 16/2/73).

Despite all the bullshit that is poured out from Transport House daily, the T.U.C. is doing its utmost to avoid 'a co-ordinated working class attack on the government and its policies'. Leaders of the railwaymen, miners and dockers are holding back industrial action so as to allow the government a respite. This can incur demoralisation of the lower paid workers whose bargaining power is not so devastating that it can bring the Tories to their knees. Therefore the strong must help the weak, and to shirk this cementing of unity is tantamount to doing a service to the Tories, who can begin their propaganda war on the higher-paid worker inflating the economy.

Well, here is a working class, conscious of its power as well as its vulnerability, conscious of the fact that it must...
re so to ensure the...
... ..

of the fact that it must pursue 'unpopular' economic policies so as to ensure survival; it is also conscious of the almighty power of the working class, but yet not perturbed or dismayed at the prospect of the 'ungovernability' of the country. Why? The answer is to be found in the bureaucratic fifth column operating in the workers movement: the Feathers, Gormleys, Jacksons followed separately by the Scanlons and Jones's, all of whom have been 'stupidified' by fabian ideology, thus making them incapable of shifting the battleground to where the ruling class does not want it i.e. socialisation of the means of existence - land, homes, factories, commerce and foreign trade, owned and controlled by the producers themselves. We are now entering a new period.

The material basis for social democratic reformism has been eroded by the crisis of the system itself. The development of the multi-polar world is creating serious problems for Common Market capitalism. This fierce international competition, recently exemplified in the world monetary crisis, will, undoubtedly, lead to a furious international trade war. As things stand British capitalism is enjoying a decreasing share of this market; Common Market entry might enable the British bourgeoisie to hold on for some time but it would no longer enable it to feed slaves as heretofore. Hence the sustained drive against the working class. That is why since the Tories took office in 1970 they have proceeded against the working class with such militancy and resolution. But to break their bureaucratic fifth column's hold on the workers struggle, it will be necessary to form functional (see issue no. 1 of this journal) workers councils. This is the immediate task of the British revolutionary left.

N.C.C. 17/2/73

abortion/contraception campaign (cont.)

It was decided that the priority for action in the next few months would be a campaign to get free contraceptive advice and supplies made available to all men and women by right under the N.H.S. In particular we should counter pressure being built up to remove the House of Lords amendment on free contraception from the N.H.S. Reorganisation Bill.

If that happens then even those places which at present have free contraceptive services will probably lose them.

(3) MARCH 10th. DEMONSTRATION - LONDON

A demonstration is being arranged for International Women's Day. Meet at Speakers Corner, Hyde Park, 1.30p.m.

CONCORD THE RIGHT TO WORK

Concorde illustrates the problems workers face in capitalist states, and also illustrates the problems faced by Labour politicians like Wilson and Wedgwood Benn, who find it impossible to see solutions outside the system. It is clear that Concorde is a rich man's aircraft, it will fly directors and the servants of multi-national companies from one point of the Earth to the other at supersonic speeds. This is an expensive and highly subsidised form of travel for such people. But aircraft workers must defend Concord as well?

can never defeat the united working class

the boss-es can only solve their

the most important sections of workers

and isolating one section from an

other, so that they can pick us off one by one....

this is the well tried policy of any ruling minority.. divide and rule.

if the working class does not build on

the successes of the past few years... to positively take the wealth and power away from the bosses who have shown themselves unfit to govern the world for the good of man

present in their attempts to do this they have so far only succeeded in

doing the opposite of creating a new atmosphere of class solidarity among workers in the face of the common enemy -the bosses.

then we are asking asking for defeat.

TUC and union officials consistently fail to co-ordinate different sections of workers in either 'economic' or 'political' action. This is a setback but is only

but the Tories are no fools and they learn from their mistakes and they will eventually succeed in their efforts to get us at each others throats

to be expected. The real class unity need -ed in

this crisis can only be forged by the rank-and-file who will prepare with every new link established in the unions, across industries and in the working class

democratic form of