

education today + tomorrow

Volume 30 No. 2

Winter 1977-78

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Education Today and Tomorrow

is Published by the Teachers Advisory Committee of the Communist Party

to give a clear lead on the problems confronting the schools and the teachers and on how to solve them;

to explain the policy of the Communist Party on all educational matters in schools, a policy that aims at ending class privilege and establishing a democratic education system;

to be a forum of opinion and discussion on educational and professional problems.

Readers are reminded that articles do not necessarily reflect the view of the Editorial Board.

SALARIES

— some brass tacks

For teachers, to assess our loss of purchasing power since the time of Houghton or the 1975 Arbitrated Award is a simple and exact matter of mathematics.

However, to calculate the reaction of teachers to that loss, to estimate their appreciation of its significance, to know "the mood", the understanding, the motivation of the profession is a matter of far greater complexity — but one that must be tackled if anything is to be done about the loss other than remark it.

And we, after all, are in business not merely to observe, understand or estimate, but to change.

Nothing is easier, of course, than to write and print spirited "calls to action", and some sheets devote themselves regularly to this with energy, ecstasy even, and singular lack of effect.

Unemployment

One recalls the touchy boast of the haughty Glendower: "I can call spirits from the vasty deep"; and equally the dour response of his son-in-law Hotspur, the man who had to do the actual fighting: "Why so can I; and so can any man. But will they come when you do call them?"

Our job is to make the sort of call that will be followed. Maybe to be able to do this there is first some necessary groundwork and preparation. That would not seem contrary to what often is the nature of the situation in the lives of real flesh and blood people. And I confess without shame or apology, whatever may be my taste in novel, poetry, ballet, film or opera, such are the sort of people I am solely interested in politics.

In this period when various sections in various ways are testing the turbulent waters of wage bargaining, between the Scylla of ten per cent and the Charybdis of twelve months, what then are the contributory influences to the "mood of teachers"?

It must not be forgotten that over the last four years there has been a loss to the profession of at least 45,000 teachers, either unemployed or trained and having gone to other sorts of work rather than face the prospect of protracted unemployment. They are part of, or many are still part of, that industrial reserve army that Marx referred to over and over again as a main weapon in the armoury of capitalism in keeping the living standards of the workers as low as possible in the interests of private profit.

Echoing Healey

Only a fool would ignore the effect this must have on the morale of those still in employment, however little they may be aware of it, in a sector whose "muscle", compared with that of workers producing the very sinews of industry, is minimal.

On top of this has to be reckoned the support given — for whatever reasons and with whatever reservations — to the economic aims and methods, as stated by Healey and Co., of the present Labour Government. Though others may be seen now to be embarking on the most bellicose of challenges to the Government's economic policy there is not the faintest ripple of sympathetic response from the body of teachers.

Very large numbers of reasonable, concerned, intelligent teachers still react with disapproval to others' large wage demands, echoing Healey's "We must all restrain ourselves in the interests of the country as a whole, to beat inflation. What we want is not more money that will be worth less, but to be able to buy more with what we've got."