

Thats Capitalism (WS43)

Workers Solidarity Movement

1994

In 1977 part-time women workers in Britain earned 83% of the full-time hourly rate for women. By 1992 they earned only 73% of the hourly rate.

In the Indonesian archipelago only 7% of land has a clear owner. Most is communally owned and administered by villages and families. That's no good for capitalism says the World Bank. they are working with the Indonesian Government to change things by compiling a register of land owners. In the next 25 years they hope to register 54 million parcels of land.

If you are 17 or under in the U.S.A. you cannot go out at night alter 11pm. (midnight at the weekends). Those are the curfew regulations being adopted by a growing number of American cities in order to "fight" crime. So far Baltimore, Santa Monica, Phoenix, Dallas and Atlanta have adopted the idea. New Orleans and Washington are considering.

When Mary Robinson went to India last year she hailed the economic changes there. Speaking on our behalf she praised the move "to liberalise and globalise its economy" declaring it to be one of the "most auspicious development of recent years." The changes she said would release "the energies and skills of its people". What these new economic changes are all about was underlined by India's budget in February. The Corporate tax rate was cut from 58% to 44% and the top individual tax band was also from 45% to 40%. The IMF applauded the budget.

A survey of earnings in Los Angles in 1993 showed that the average wage for an actor was just \$12,500. A far cry from money commanded by the likes of Julia Roberts or Robert DeNiro. But there was an even bigger difference. The head of Disney, Michael Eisner, earned \$203,950,000 in the same year. That's 16,316 times the wage of the average actor.

Costa Rican plantation workers have filed suits in the USA against Shell Oil, Dow Chemicals, Standard Fruit and the owners of Chiquita brand bananas on foot of sterility problems encountered by workers picking bananas sprayed with a pesticide banned in the US in 1979. Over 16,000 workers are affected not just in Costa Rica but also Nicaragua, Guatemala, Honduras and the Philippines. The workers have proof that the chemicals in question, marketed as Nemagon or Fumazone, were shipped for use outside the US after the ban there in 1979. No health hazard warnings were ever included with the shipments despite the ban in the US. The workers were never warned of the dangers.

The Drug Enforcement Agency in the USA netted a ring of cocaine money launders in Florida earlier this year. Among those arrested were the vice-president of Merrill Lynch in Panama and another senior executive from the same company.

Russian bosses are catching on fast. The independent miners union in Vorkuta, on the Arctic circle, recently highlighted some novel ways of doing business. The coal being mined by the workers was sold to a local company, owned by the mine director, for just \$3 a tonne. The mine director sold it abroad for \$30 a tonne. All legal and above board.

The number of empty homes in Britain has risen by 30% in ten years, reports the Empty Homes Agency, a charity. The number of homeless families has more than doubled over the same period.

According to the Roman Catholic development agency, Trocaire, 16,442 Brazilian workers were actually in slavery in 1992.

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