

# Parties of the corporations can't represent workers, labour movement can be an agent of social change

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dreadful waste of the taxpayer's money. I think the government has just incredible gall to put that pamphlet in the family allowance cheque urging everybody to support their programme of anti-inflation after cutting back on the baby bonus or family allowance. I thought that to be incredible gall.

It's timed to take the steam out of October 14. I think if we use John Munro and the prime minister as our weather

vanes we are almost positive of a huge success on October 14 just listening to what they are saying these days.

**EXCALIBUR:** Do you believe that wages are a significant factor in creating inflation?

**HARTMAN:** No, I don't. I think wages have been proven to be a very small part of the cost of any given article, and of course in the services it is slightly different. But you know John Munro came to our convention and he has said it many times, as has the prime minister, that wage increases for workers were not the cause of inflation.

**EXCALIBUR:** What do you think causes inflation?

**HARTMAN:** I think there are many things; the tremendous profits that are being made, the gouging by land developers, high interest rates, and prices that aren't being touched by this whole programme at all.

**EXCALIBUR:** Do you accept the argument that higher profits serve to stimulate the economy and stimulate jobs?

**HARTMAN:** They only do if these profits are turned back into the economy, but if they go into the pockets of the investors then I don't see that they create any more jobs. Sure, one of the programmes of the CLC was that a certain amount of these profits be turned back into the economy to stimulate further growth, the large corporations and multinationals don't want to do that. They want to divide up the pie themselves.

**EXCALIBUR:** What do you think of professionals unionizing? For instance,

York's faculty has just recently done that.

**HARTMAN:** I think that is the interesting development that has been taking place over the last couple of years. The interest of the professionals and para-professionals I guess you would call them, in organizing. I think faculty members and teachers generally are a little afraid to take the step into solid unions, and get into the labour congress. But they are moving to organizing into associations for their own protection. And we see that more and more.

We see the semi-professionals, the technicians in hospitals. We have seen moves of interns in hospitals, teachers. We had a group of faculty members in a small college in New Brunswick. And we find there are a lot of librarians coming into the unions. I think they're realizing this is their only method of protecting what they have and improving on it.

**EXCALIBUR:** What do you think of professionals joining small unions and shying away from the such groups as the CLC like the Graduate assistants at York who recently joined a small Graduate Assistants union?

**HARTMAN:** I think such groups are afraid yet to get into the mainstream of the labour movement. I think there is still a feeling among faculty members, the same as there is among nurses. They don't feel they can do the right thing as professionals and join unions. I just think it is an old attitude that is just hanging on.

**EXCALIBUR:** Do you regard faculty members, office

workers and people of that sort as 'workers'?

**HARTMAN:** Yes, I really believe they are. They are doing a different job than the caretakers at the university but when you get right down to it, they are working for a living like everybody else. They don't have the greatest wages or the greatest working conditions either.

**EXCALIBUR:** Do you see the New Democratic Party as the party of labour?

**HARTMAN:** It is the only party that does speak up for us, it's the only party we can go to and get the kind of support that's needed. I'm not saying it has proven to be the answer to everything. But you can participate in the policy making and you can criticize without a splitting process taking place.

**EXCALIBUR:** Do you think there should be an organized attempt to have members of the labour movement elect an NDP government?

**HARTMAN:** Yes, that's a policy of most unions.

**EXCALIBUR:** Can the other parties, the Liberals and the Conservatives ever represent labour's interests?

**HARTMAN:** No, I don't think they can. They are part of the great power structures, the multi-nationals and the big corporations and I don't think they could ever represent workers. You can't represent the multi-nationals and workers at the same time.

**EXCALIBUR:** Would you say any concessions you get out of the Liberals and Conservatives are only band-aid measures made because you were too powerful to say no to?

**HARTMAN:** That's right. I think that any of the good legislation that we have achieved is because of pressure from the labour movement and political parties like the NDP and the CCF people.

**EXCALIBUR:** Do you see

Canadian society as a class society with working and ruling classes?

**HARTMAN:** Yes.

**EXCALIBUR:** As a woman union leader do you see sexism as a problem of the trade union movement?

**HARTMAN:** Yes, sure it's a problem. And it is a problem we are working pretty hard to overcome. Trade unions in Canada were traditionally in the industries that were predominately or in some cases, 100 per cent, male. There has been that tradition and there has also been the whole tradition of women having their place in the home. We have a lot of changes to make in society, in our homes and in the trade union movement. I think the changes are a beginning to be apparent there, I'm happy they are but we have a long way to go yet.

**EXCALIBUR:** Do you see the trade union movement as being not purely economic but also as being an agent of social change in the country?

**HARTMAN:** I think that almost has to be its biggest role. I think a united strong labour movement can bring about great social change.

**EXCALIBUR:** Is there anything you would like students at York to bear in mind as October 14 approaches?

**HARTMAN:** I suppose the thing I would like any student to remember is that no matter what educational qualifications they come out of university with they are going to find when they get out they really are workers regardless of what kind of positions they are in because there are only so many places at the top that people can ever achieve. I think that's important for everyone to remember, that we really are workers. We should try and remember that and try and remember to treat people in that same way.



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