

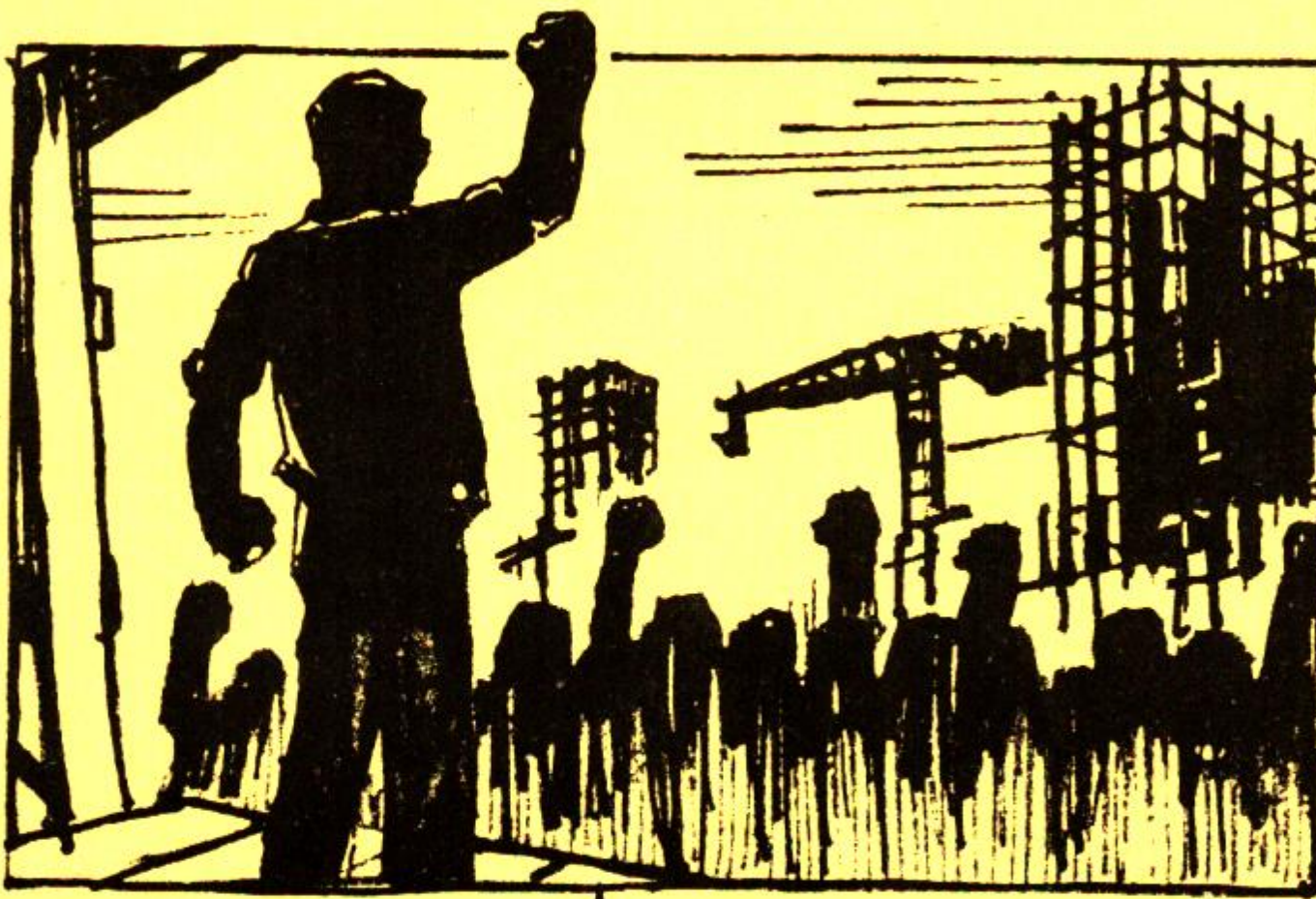
WORKERS'

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? 1977.

**BUILDING
OUR
FUTURE**



NOTICEBOOK

Monthly Publication of the C. W. M.

20p

CONTENTS

	<u>PAGE</u>
Editorial	1
Cuts in Public Spending	4
On the Building Site	9
Do You Know	13
Students fight Fee Increases	14
Real Trade Unionism - Albion Bottle	18
Do You Know	21
Death of a Thousand Cuts - Education	22
Ireland - Divide and Rule	27
Fight Racialism	35
International Comment - Albania	38
Remember the Paris Commune	45

EDITORIAL

The fight against the Social Contract is growing. This month the National Committee of the Engineering section of the A.U.E.W. resolved to reject any new Phase Three. This may come as a surprise to many workers! But had the Committee not adopted this resolution, they would have finally lost all credibility in the eyes of hundreds of thousands of shop-floor workers. Resistance has been growing to their previous policies, and they were becoming a laughing stock as a union in repeatedly telling workers who fought for better wages and conditions to go back to work.

A recent notable example was the Heathrow workers. The booing of Reg Birch, the so-called Marxist-Leninist, who told the men to go back, is only a small indication of the indignation felt by workers all over the country at this betrayal, and of the isolation of the Executive from the needs and issues of the members.

Nevertheless, this step in opposing Phase Three is a positive one in so far as it goes. Other unions meeting over the coming months may well adopt similar resolutions and should be supported. But does this really solve the problem? Is it enough to reject a Phase Three?

The answer presented by the Unions is a return to free collective bargaining. Whilst this is preferable to a Social Contract, it cannot be the solution for our working class. After all, we have had so-called free collective bargaining for generations - Where has it got us??

CONTENTS

So long as we restrict ourselves to bargaining with the capitalist class, we can go no further.

- Participation in running industry which exploits workers can only take us backwards.
- Nationalisation has not solved our problems - nor can it, so long as industry serves the interests and needs of the bosses.

The real question is - who owns industry and controls the state.

Whichever way we turn, it boils down to a question of state power. As workers we have to face this sooner or later, and we haven't even begun seriously to take on this task. This must form the basis of the fight for socialism.

* * *



"No revolutionary movement is complete without its poetical expression. If such a movement has caught hold of the imagination of the masses, they will seek a vent in song for the aspirations, the fears and hopes, the loves and hatreds engendered by the struggle. Until the movement is marked by the joyous, defiant, singing of revolutionary songs, it lacks one of the distinctive marks of a popular revolutionary movement; it is a dogma of a few, and not the faith of the multitude."

James Connolly

* * * * *



CUTS

CUTS

CUTS

CUTS



The cuts in public expenditure, along with pay restraint ("The Social Con-Trick") represents the latest attack on the working people of this country. But what is the reason for this attack? And what will the effects be on the working class?

What They Say

The theory behind the cuts is to reduce the "public borrowing requirement" of the government. The Labour Government proposes to cut - or as they put it ""save" - £2,958 mill. in 1977/8 and £4,424 mill. in 1978/9. The Tories, by the way, aren't very happy about this: they want even bigger cuts. The thinking

behind the cuts goes something like this: the workers don't produce enough goods (particularly for export), and so we can't afford the services which we have come to expect and which we have fought for over the last twenty, thirty years, like schools, housing, transport, hospitals, old folks' homes, nurseries etc.

And in order that the bosses can go on making bigger and bigger profits, the Labour Government went, cap in hand, to the international financiers to bail them out. And they in return, imposed stringent conditions for a massive loan - to be paid for, not by the capitalists, but by the working class. And so the working class is being asked to accept massive cuts in public expenditure, to accept pay restraint, to accept a cut in our living standards.

THE BLAME

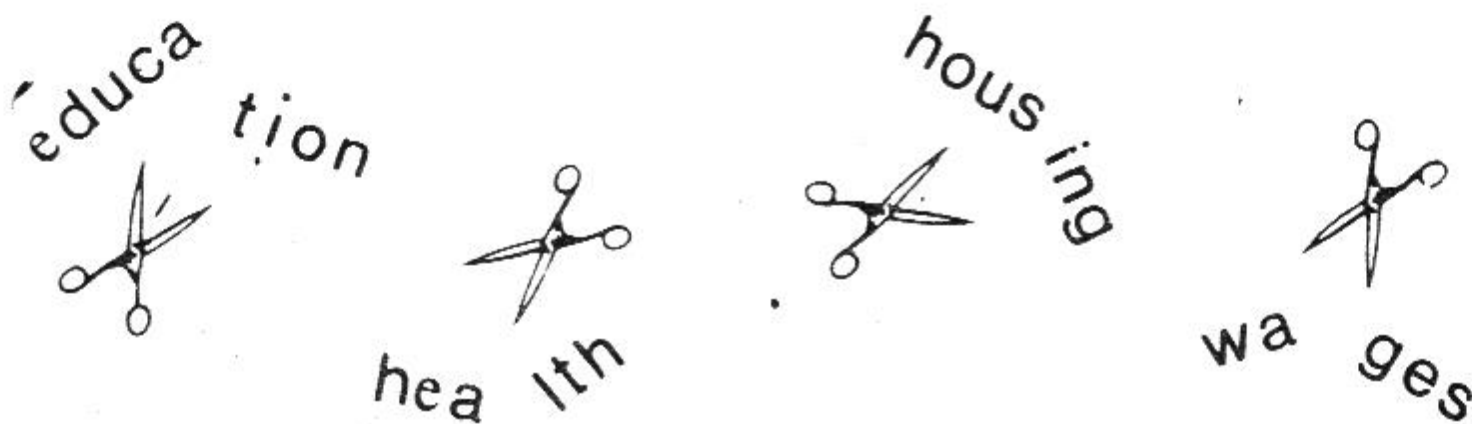
The fact that this economic crisis is of the making of the capitalists and not of the working class is irrelevant. The fact, that has been quite plainly shown in the last two years that pay increases do not cause inflation, and that the banks, the insurance companies, the international monopolies have been raking in record profits (and then exporting them to places where they find it even easier to exploit working people and resources) has been conveniently overlooked by the "social democrats" and their paymasters. The fact the bosses have been carrying on an investment strike over the last few years has also been conveniently overlooked.

What They Mean

So what is their solution? To attack, to reduce the living standards of the working class, to blame the crisis on the working class. "Belt-tightening" they call it.

Yet, Britain's biggest electrical firm (GEC) is currently issuing £178 million of "capital notes" free of charge to shareholders, as well as the annual dividend. The capital value to Sir Arnold Weinztock is £903,318;

The cuts in public spending are simply one aspect of a concerted attack on the working class. Reduce public spending so that the money "saved" can be redirected into production. This is the theory behind it. But will it work? Is it likely that the international companies will invest their profits in the people of this country? Past experience has shown that they will not.



But how will the cuts affect the working class? The cuts are aimed primarily at the public sector worker. It is he who is to blame for the capitalist crisis, so they say. It is he who is diverting funds from productive industry. So - let's cut public housing works, let's cut public transport, let's cut education, - let's throw the public sector worker on the dole.

But the private sector workers won't escape either. These workers don't use these services? Doesn't the public sector contract out building programmes or need the products of private industry? If you go to work by public transport you'll be hit; if you have kids at school, you'll be hit; if your council house needs repairs done, you'll be hit; if you're on the dole, you'll be hit.

We Must Fight

A pretty gloomy prospect then. But you can hit back, you can defend yourself. And it has been done.

The Tory-controlled council in Buckinghamshire was forced to reverse their decision to close down all the nursery schools in the county.

The Bury council proposed to save a few thousand pounds by withdrawing concessionary bus fares from the disabled. They, too, were forced to reverse their decision.

The teachers in Oxfordshire, who are faced with the biggest cut in education yet announced, are preparing to fight back.

On November 17th last year, 80,000 workers took to the streets of London to protest against the cuts.

In April and May of this year, workers led by NUPE and other public sector unions, are protesting against the cuts by way of "days of action".

It is vitally important that the working class organises itself to work against the cuts. The trade unions have gone some way towards this, but there is still a great deal of resistance on the part of the trade union hierarchies. In fact, we have recently witnessed trade union leaders aligning themselves with the bosses and the anti-working class Labour Government.

Revolution

The fight against the cuts must be carried on, but it is only a defensive one, and can only mitigate the effects of the economic policies being carried out by the government. It does not represent any basic solution to the capitalist crisis. The answer to that can only lie in revolutionary solutions, in socialist methods of production, in the workers' state.



"No Government has the right to ask for restraint, still less for an effective standstill, unless it has done everything a government can do to create a climate of social justice, which alone can justify such a policy".

Harold Wilson, on
July 20th, 1966.



Midas, they say, possessed the art of old,
Of turning whatsoe'er he touched to gold;
This modern statesmen can reverse with ease;
Touch them with gold, they'll turn to what you
please.

(By Sir John Byrom 1692-1763)



ON THE BUILDING SITE

Written by a building worker.

Before the recent Capitalist cutbacks in construction it used to be the policy of some big monopoly construction firms to erect observer platforms for the general public to view the construction worker at work, and all the construction equipment, cranes, hoists etc. This was of great interest to passers-by. There were even regular spectators, usually office workers in their lunch break. Ofcourse the main function of these observation platforms was to advertise how "great and efficient" this particular firm was, and to put over the line that "we really care for the public and do our best to serve the people." There can't be many people around who still fall for this line of patter, but nonetheless, ~~th~~ese Capitalists never tire of trying to pull the wool over people's eyes. Most people will have seen four men pulling on a rope (Taylor Woodrow). The same caper goes on in their literature: "teamspirit" (Higgs and Hills) and so on. I suppose, quite

a lot of people, especially if you'll excuse me saying so, professional people of the higher salaried bracket look on building sites at work as very nice, everybody happy and the thing going like clockwork. But what is in fact happening? To know this we will have to look a little deeper.

THE BOSSES

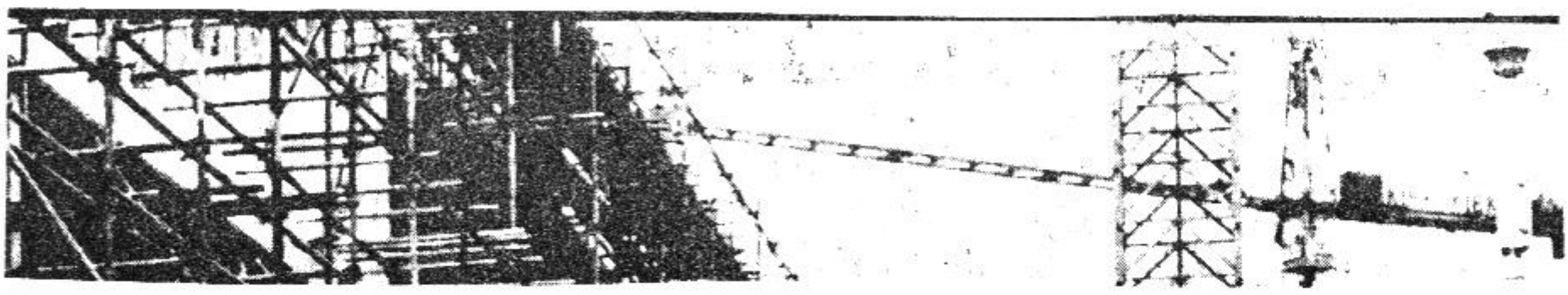
We will concentrate on private contractors, as opposed to state-controlled set-ups. The contractor owns the land, usually the equipment, cranes, hoists, mixer-sets, timber, bricks and all the building materials. With few exceptions he also has the right to say who comes on the site and who doesn't. He will try first of all to keep the labour force disunited, or better still, united under leadership of his choosing. The contractor has one single aim - profit. To get the work done in the shortest possible time, to skimp on the materials if possible, to chase the men, to keep wages down and work output up - are all part and parcel of this single aim.

THE BUILDING WORKERS

What about the building worker?

He owns his labour for which he is going to try and get as much money as possible. It is in his interest to organise under leadership of his choosing. He prefers to work with good materials and do the job right. He enjoys a tea-break, and is not interested in profits.

Therefore, what we are looking at from our platforms is an arena, an arena of class struggle, and it is anything but the nice clockwork teamspirit that it seems at first sight. After all, the building site is only a factory without a roof.



MONOPOLIES IN CONSTRUCTION

From looking at all the different names of the contractors' boards outside sites, it would appear, that there are lots of building firms, but in fact the whole industry is controlled by a very few giant monopoly groups; some building workers call them the "the Big Five": Taylor Woodrow, Mac Alpine, Higgs and Hills, Tarmac and Costain. These five have interests in all branches of the construction industry, ranging from basic supply (cement, sand, quarries etc.) to ship building (Costain John Brown).

Under Capitalism at its present stage, the most backward people seem to get the top jobs. An agent(site manager) is considered a good man if he can "fiddle", usually getting the clerk of works (customers' representative) to pass badly completed work, or in some cases, work which hasn't even been done. A foreman who is able to bully and cajole the workers and has no brains at all is considered a great fellow by the owners.

UNIONISM IN THE BUILDING TRADE

As far as Trade Unions go, the construction workers have a great history of struggle, dating right back to Chartist time and before. It was the organised building workers, who first brought together the first T.U.C. In every revolution they have played a militant and leading role in building socialism. Examples of this are the 1917 Russian revolution (Sabutnics), rebuilding the railway in Albania, and in China, where the construction workers defied all the advice of the so-called "experts", dug down and brought the oil to the surface to make China self-sufficient in oil.



Picket line-

1972

Builders'

Strike.

Building workers have become very disillusioned with the behaviour of their Trade Union officials. The men can see plainly how silly it is to rely on these Trade Union organisations to really change anything. As far as the so-called leaders are concerned, the building worker can discuss bonus, paths to the canteen, bingo, football and sex, but any talk about state-power or suchlike is firmly discouraged. Any shopsteward indulging in such talk will be labelled by these fine gem gentlemen as "Mavericks", or such like.

The building workers are largely a mobile force of workers, comprising of many nationalities, with a large contingent of Irish workers. They live a hard and dangerous life. Among them are many rebels, but a rebel only becomes a revolutionary when he places himself under the discipline of a revolutionary party. When these rebels are turned into revolutionaries they will do more than just haunt the construction bosses, they will then become a nightmare to the whole Capitalist system of exploiters.

Do you know

The British Army of the Rhine ran into "problems" on its recent N.A.T.O. manoeuvres in Germany. 3,000 soldiers and 495 tanks were to practise war for some two weeks, from March 21st to April 6th, in the Warburger Börde. These manoeuvres were named the "Spring Rites";

The "problems" which forced the British "Spring Rites" to be broken off several days early on March 31st - were the peasants. They have often complained about manoeuvres across their fields. This time they decided to take action.

The peasants from the little towns and villages in the area surrounded the British tanks with their tractors and refused to move. In the end, the tanks had to be withdrawn and the whole N.A.T.O. manoeuvre stopped on March 31st.



55,000 men, approximately one third of the whole British Army, form the Rhein Army. It costs Britain £600million per year to keep them in Germany, and they have been there since 1945.

STUDENTS FIGHT FEE INCREASES



During the Spring Term, at colleges all over Britain, students took action to fight fee increases. The government has brought out proposals for massive fee increases, to take effect next September:-

British undergraduates	from	£182	p.a.	to	£500
Overseas undergraduates	"	£416	"	"	£650
British postgraduates	"	£182	"	"	£750
Overseas postgraduates	"	£416	"	"	£850

These fee increases will affect many students, and will certainly prevent a lot of people who hoped to go to university/college from doing so - they'll just not be able to afford it. The fee increases are part of the Labour Government's cuts in education and public services. They estimate that by increasing fees to this extent, they will "save" £28 million. What they will actually do is make education at this level more and more into a preserve of the rich.

ORGANISED ACTIONS

Widespread action has been taken by students against the proposed increases; in college after college students protested against the Government's proposals, and called on their own college administrations not to implement the fee increases and force the government back down. In many places where there was no satisfactory response from college authorities, students opted for occupation as the best means of putting pressure on them and the government. They took over administrative areas of colleges, where they would interfere with the activities of college authorities, without stopping lectures. In quite a few places, such as the London School of Economics, or the School of Oriental and African Studies(London), overseas students, who will be most badly affected by the increases because of their discriminatory nature, took a leading role.



THE LESSONS

A lot of students who hadn't been involved in student union affairs or in struggles like this before, came forward and took part enthusiastically in this campaign. It was a real education to many of them - one student commented: "I've learnt more in one week of occupation than I've learnt in two years of university." Many saw how the police and courts, as weapons of the capitalist state, were used to end some occupations, and understood their role more deeply.

During these occupations the role of the revisionist Communist Party of Great Britain and of the "Broad Left", in which they work, was exposed in the National Union of Students. They failed to give any lead at a national level, and within a number of colleges, they opposed or sabotaged strongly-supported proposals for militant action on these issues.

At the L.S.E., for example, C.P.G.B. members joined with the Tories to vote to end the occupation, which had great support - both inside and outside the college. It seems that for them, militant mass action is not such a good thing if there's a Labour Government in office! Though people like the Trotskyite Socialist Workers' Party took a more militant stand, they seemed more concerned with using the occupations as recruiting grounds, rather than building a strong and effective campaign.

Despite threats of imprisonment for some students involved in occupations, and the use of courts and police against them, students aren't dropping the fees campaign; they are determined to pick up where they left off, in the summer term.

RATIONALISATION PRODUCTIVITY

BEFORE



AFTER



REAL TRADE UNIONISM

STRUGGLE OF 300 WORKERS AT ALBION BOTTLE COMPANY

Workers at Albion Bottle Company, an American/British-owned firm in Birmingham, went on a one day strike in protest against the Social Contract on 20th April, the day of action.

On their return to work next day they found the factory gates locked. The management told them that they were no longer needed for work. The workers set to and organised a 24 hour picket.

UNION OFFICIAL BETRAYS

The following Sunday, 24th April, a mass meeting of all workers was called, where, at the company's request, the Union Official tried to divide workers between black and white. He accused the Indian workers of causing the lock-out. Then he proposed that the workers should accept the management terms:- a return to work, but only for those workers whose names appeared on a list issued by management. Such a proposal was a betrayal of Trade Unionism. He was allowing the company to sack those workers who had been most active in defending the workers' rights. His proposal was defeated by a large majority. The workers decided to back the shop stewards (whose names had not been on the list) on the principal: One in - All in! This was an example of the unity of all workers against the divisive tactics of the management.



However, by now Albion Bottle Company was getting desperate for oil. Their furnaces were cooling down, and once these furnaces grow cold the company can lose thousands of pounds in restarting them. The company therefore proposed that all workers return to work within 16 hours. The Union District Secretary showed to the meeting of workers a written agreement for a phased return to work for all workers. The workers in good faith accepted the agreement, and the pickets allowed the oil in.

COMPANY TRICKS

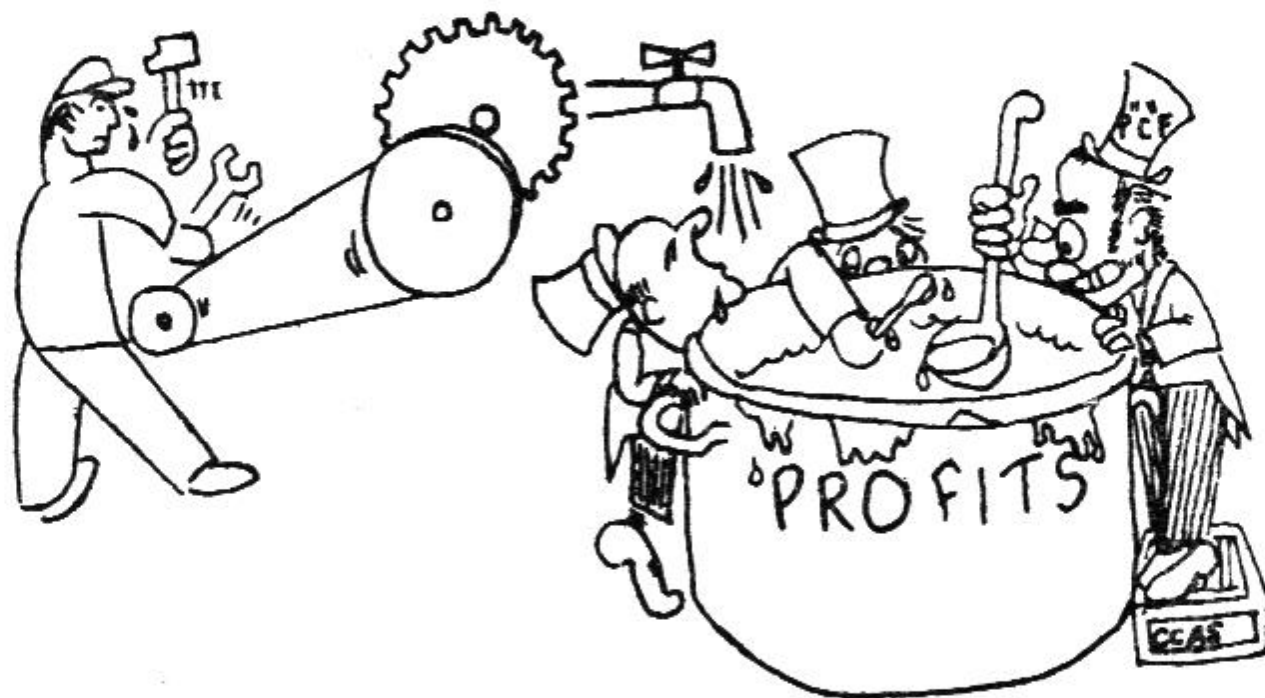
But, next day, the company broke the agreement by sacking all the shop stewards. Workers immediately called a mass meeting and decided to stay out until all workers are reinstated, including the shop stewards. The District Secretary was asked to show the workers the copy of the agreement between him and management. He refused and insisted that workers should go back to work on the company's terms! Since then he has been spreading false accusations against the workers in the local press, in an attempt to discourage workers. He has refused to make the strike official. He is no longer serving the workers' interests, that's for sure!

UNITY AND DETERMINATION

The workers, despite threats from the management and no cooperation from the Union Official, have decided to stick it out until the management withdraws dismissal notices from all workers. A sign of the workers' faith in their cause is the day and night picket outside Albion Bottles.

These workers have shown courage. They protested against the Social Contract. The management sacked their shop stewards hoping to destroy the Union at Albion Bottles. They thought the workers would be isolated and thus discouraged. However, they have shown great unity.

Support from other workers would be most welcome. Get your local union branch to support them and denounce the corrupt union official!



DO YOU KNOW.....

That there is a "maximum" in profit-making "allowed" by the Prices Commission. And in the Midlands in the last three months, 58 companies exceeded it. Not astonishingly these companies, for which we work, and which are so concerned about workers' "welfare" and about keeping to Government rulings on wages and cuts in spending, are using all the loopholes to beat the Prices Code!!'

Who is really behind inflation?

Workers are forever being blamed for rising inflation because of their demands for higher wages. But for 5 or 6 years now, workers have been accepting wage restraint, freezes, cuts, the social contract, but still prices are going up and up, and the big companies unashamedly publish their profits!

To name just a few for 1976/7:

Pre-tax profits for:

British Home Stores	£25.5m.
Mothercare	£11.95m.
Sainsbury	£26.18m.
Post Office	£400m.
British Leyland	£70.5m.

These are companies that most of us use. But how much longer have we to go on working for a pittance, making sacrifices for us and our families to survive, while profits get bigger and bigger on the sweat of us all? Our loss is their profit!

DEATH

OF A THOUSAND

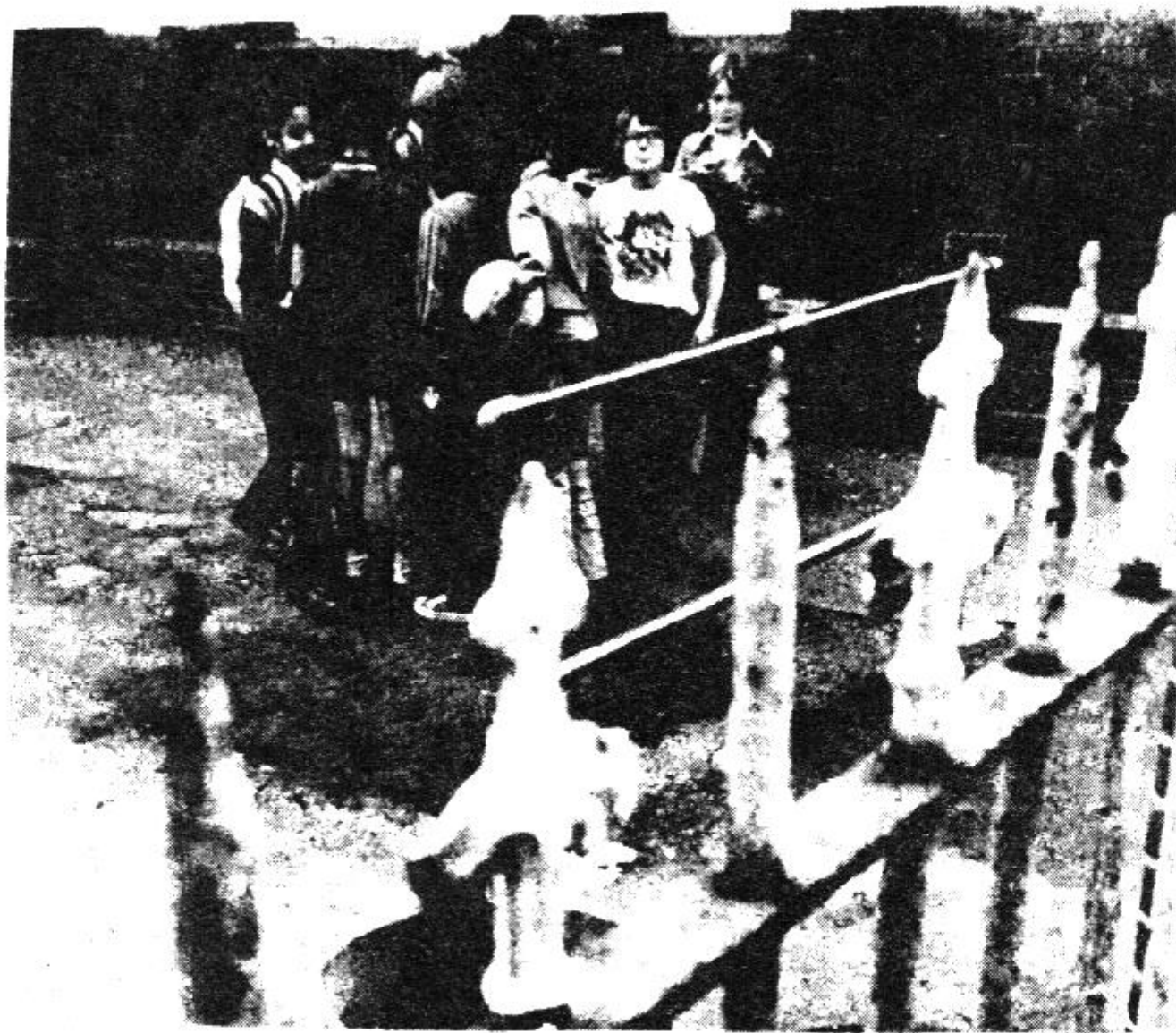
CUTS

THE GREAT DEBATE

Did you take part in "The Great Debate"? Puzzled readers may think that this refers to Concorde's landing rights, the Lib-Lab pact, or even Sunday opening in Wales. In fact, "The Great Debate" is a grand title for a series of conferences organised by the Department of Education and Science about the content of the school curriculum, standards, teacher training and the role of education in preparing the young for work.

SHAM DEMOCRACY

But the original question is anyway "academic", for the so-called "Great Debate" is over, and soon the government will announce its proposals for change in the education system. No doubt they will declare that these proposals - drawn up long before the conferences began - reflect the majority opinion expressed in those meetings. What a farce! Only 400 people spoke in the conferences, including numerous businessmen, but not one representative from the largely working-class, school student body. No votes were taken in the meetings - there wasn't even a clapometer!



Meanwhile, we have every reason to be apprehensive about the reforms that will be proposed. On the grounds of helping Britain's industrial recovery, the Labour Government will attempt to force schools to teach certain subjects. There can be no objection to the aim of ensuring that every child learns the basic skills in English, Maths, etc. that are needed in an industrial society. However, it would be naive to think that Shirley Williams, the Education Minister, has the interests of working-class children at heart. (remember all the good work she did when she was minister for prices??) No, the hoo-ha about what is taught in schools is being used as an excuse for the state to take more control over education.

EDUCATION AT THE SERVICE OF WHOM

Like any other investment, the schools are paid for by the workers but run in the interests of the bosses. And now, like any boss, the government is out to get more for less:-
More - because the government is stepping in to make the schools serve the interests of capitalism more efficiently and more directly, in terms of both the children's skills in English, Maths etc. and more ominously, their attitudes to authority, politics and so on.

For Less - because more cuts are being made in education than in any butcher's shop. The hot air of the "Great Debate" is being used to cloud the death of a thousand cuts now being served on education. Since the Labour Government came to power in 1974 it has forced cuts no less than four times. The latest round of these cuts mean:

- * the closure of many nursery classes and the exclusion of children "rising five" from schools;
- * money for books, equipment and stationary has been reduced by as much as half in some schools;
- * less money is being spent on the maintenance and repair of schools and new buildings are built to lower standards;
- * youth clubs are being closed in several areas;
- * course fees in further and higher education are being raised dramatically;
- * there are cuts in jobs - not just of teachers, but of welfare assistants, playground supervisors, school secretaries, dinner ladies etc.
- * meanwhile, nearly half of all primary school classes have over 30 children and there are over 10,000 teachers on the dole.

Luxury Education for the few

Contrast this return to the Dickensian world of Dotheboys' Hall with the small, but powerful private sector which is, of course, unaffected by the cuts. The politicians make cuts that leave working-class children without pencils to use in class, or water to drink with their highly-priced meals. Meanwhile, the ruling class (including the politicians) use some of the vast profits they rob from us, to give their own children a privileged education that prepares them as the next generation of bosses.



<u>Of all:</u>	<u>% who attended public school:</u>
14 year olds in school	2%
Labour Cabinet members	42%
Admirals, Generals, Air Marshals	55%
Directors of Big Companies	70%
Church of England Bishops	75%
Judges and Q.C.s	80%

(Source: 1968 Public Schools Commission)
These are the people that run our system and reap the benefits from it. These are the people who tell us we must accept cuts in education, like we should accept cuts in wages.

We must stop them - stop them now!
The future of the education of our children rests in our hands and hearts.
Let us use them now!

FIGHT THE CUTS!



"The struggle for Irish freedom has two aspects: it is national and it is social. Its national ideal can never be realised until Ireland stands forth before the world a nation free and independent. It is social and economic, because no matter what the form of government may be, as long as one class owns as private property the land and instruments of labour from which all mankind derive their substance, that class will always have the power to plunder and enslave the remainder of their fellow-creatures."

(by James Connolly in the manifesto of the Irish Socialist Republican Party, founded 1896)

IRELAND

DIVIDE AND RULE

This is the first of a series of articles on Ireland, the nature of the conflict and its importance for the British working class.

Why religion isn't the cause

of the «troubles» in Ireland

Ireland, as "everyone" will tell you in the papers, on the television and radio, is suffering from a "religious war", is split by "sectarian strife".

In this series of articles we want to demonstrate that religion, far from being the cause of the troubles in Ireland, is simply one of the weapons used by those who have a vested interest in dividing Ireland - so as to control both parts. We want to show how seemingly pious men, on both sides, have used the cross as a crow-bar to prize apart the working class of Ireland - and even on occasion in Britain.

When did it start ?

Britain has been in Ireland now for 750 years. But it was only in Cromwell's time, having won the civil war in Britain against the aristocracy and beheaded King Charles, that the ancestors of our ruling class, budding capitalists, got complete control of Ireland from its native rulers. In the areas most rebellious against British rule, in Ulster, the native population was either cleared away for or subordinated to, settlers from Scotland and England. By the time we begin our account, the descendants of these settlers, and converts to Protestantism, had begun to consider themselves Irish, and far from being a privileged minority, many of them suffered from the same privations as their Catholic neighbours. Many Protestants from Northern Ireland fled to America, where they played a prominent part in the American War of Independence. They did not want to stay under British rule!

The United Irishmen of 1798

Those who stayed behind in Ulster were not noted for their love of British rule either. The leaders of the United Irishmen rebellion against British rule, leaders still commemorated in Ireland, came from Ulster. These leaders, men like Wolfe Tone and Henry Monroe were protestant and so were their supporters!

At this time, the bulk of the Protestants were concentrated, East of the River Bann, in the Counties of Antrim and Down. It was here that Industrial Capitalism as we know it was most developed, and consequently it was also the place where the ideas of the French Revolution had taken strongest root, among the craftsmen and small businessmen.

The high tariffs levied by Britain in order to prevent Irish industry from growing and becoming a possible competitor encouraged these revolutionary ideas. Here in fact was the immediate economic reason why the descendants of settlers and converts were proud to be Irishmen. Ireland needed unity and independence from Britain to develop.

The Fight Against The Landowners

West of the River Bann, where the protestants were in a minority, was the birthplace and cradle of the Orange Lodges. They were formed out of the many secret societies in the Irish countryside, like the "Peep o' day Boys", who were in their turn inspired by such organisations as the Catholic "Defenders".

Originally, these organisations, both protestant and catholic, were formed with similar aims: to force down rents and tithes and to protect tenants against evictions.

However, the anti-landlord issue was to become confused and diverted as a result of the landlords' splitting tactics, in those areas where there was a fair number of protestants, namely in Ulster, outside the counties Antrim and Down.

Peasants' Plight

The rapidly rising population of Ireland, still dependent on agriculture, was desperately short of land. The protestant tenant-farmers of the North had so far been able to maintain a fair living standard by the "Ulster Custom". By this the landlord allowed the tenant farmers to keep the benefits from any improvements they made in their holdings. (indeed, it is very likely that this incentive to produce and so build up capital was the main reason why industry and trade was more developed in the North).

Now, however, the landowners took advantage of the poverty and misery of the Catholic peasantry, to offer them land at far higher rents and on less advantageous terms than the protestants. The landless catholics had little option, either to pay the higher rents or starve. Fearing that this would undercut their living standards, the protestants reacted and attacked the catholics. The catholics in turn defended themselves and counterattacked in the hope of winning more land for themselves.

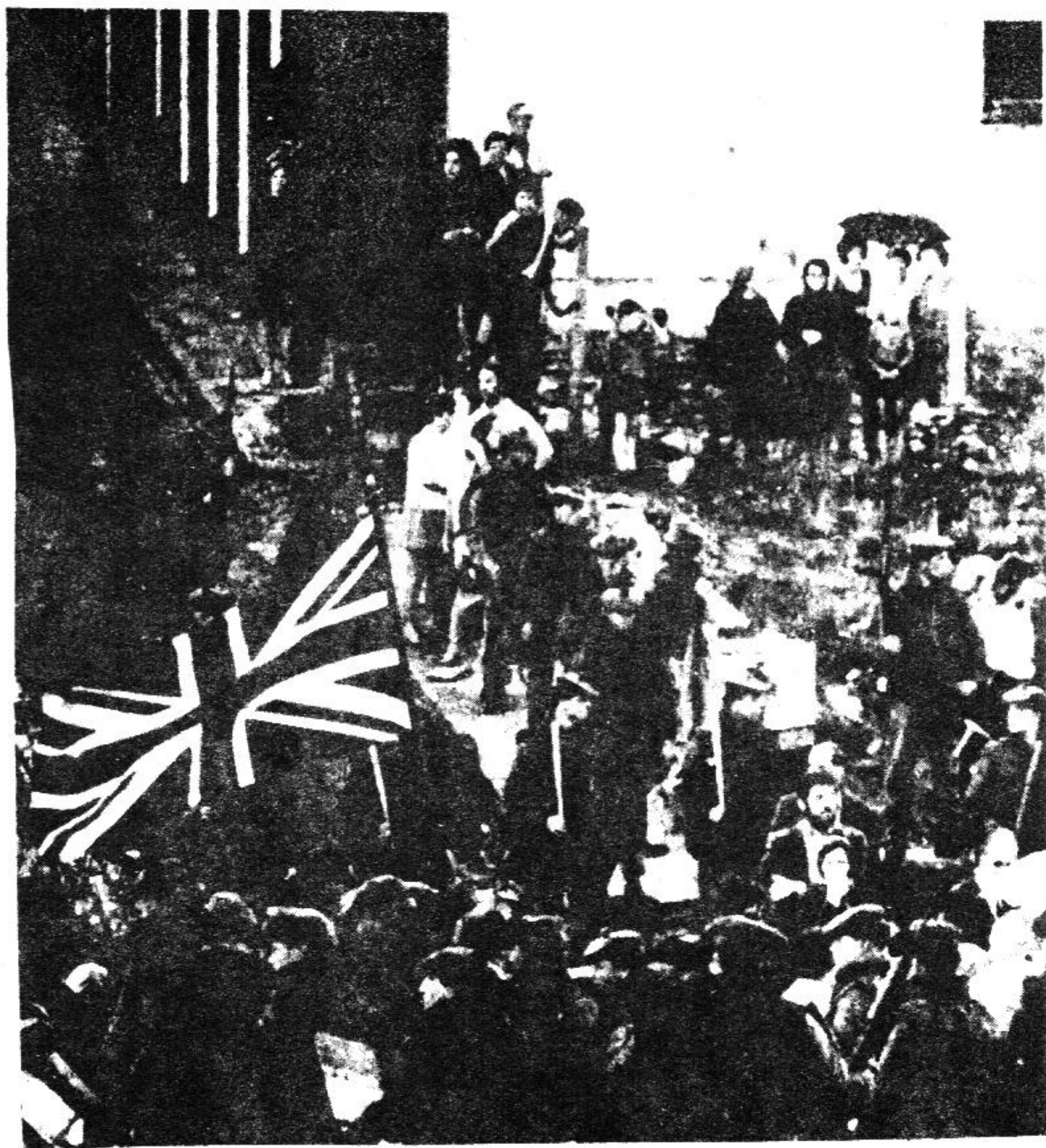
Needless to say, the government was in no way unhappy about this conflict. The two groups were too engrossed in fighting each other, to turn round and jointly confront the real source of their misery - the landowners. The government could also take advantage of this situation to act against the real threat to English Power in Ireland - the United Irishmen, with their calls for freedom and independence.

The United Irishmen

The United Irishmen was the first and even now perhaps the most successful non-sectarian organisation in Ireland. Its strength was greatest in Antrim and Down among the Radical Presbyterian craftsmen and businessmen of Belfast and district, but it had support throughout the country for its demands, which ranged from Catholic emancipation to a democratic Republic of Ireland.

With doubtless intentional irony, the British government sent a force of mainly catholic militia to drive the organisation underground. They smashed the radical groups and presses of Belfast with unprecedented savagery, and infiltrated the highest councils of the organisation with Government spies. As a result, when the organisation was forced to rise, it was weakened and the rising uncoordinated.

The only two areas to rise in arms in May and June of 1798 were the Presbyterians of Belfast and district, and the mainly Catholic area around Wexford. Both, regardless of religion, paid the same bitter, bloody price of defeat. The rank and file were slaughtered and the leaders, like Wolfe Tone, were executed. This struggle for Liberty, Equality and Fraternity and an independent republic had been smashed. In 1801 the already weak Dublin parliament was suppressed and the tenuous legislative independence of Ireland was taken away to Westminster by the Act of Union.



BRITAIN'S VIETNAM

IRISHMEN DISUNITED - The Famine

The same areas, which had fought so bravely with the United Irishmen in 1798, succumbed to the reactionary Orangeism within a generation. Once again the ruling classes were able to play on the economic misery of the Irish people to divide them.

The economic interests of the ruling classes in Ireland were now clearly tied to the British. With the Act of Union the industrialists of Belfast were bound up with the economy of Britain and the Empire. The tariff walls and discriminatory legislation were gone, and business flourished.

The lives of the workers and peasants in the area were, however, still miserable. The ever-growing population and poor agriculture led to more and more people going to the cities from the predominantly Catholic countryside, in search of work. Belfast, a city renowned for its radical traditions, had up until then had a friendly mixed community of Protestant and Catholic people. As an industrial centre it now attracted a stream of Catholics from the countryside. This stream was soon, however, to turn into a raging torrent, when after the repeated failure of the potatoe crops the Great Famine struck. Thousands of destitute peasants streamed into Belfast and over the sea to Liverpool and Glasgow.

The employers and landlords could profit from their misery. Driven by starvation these people were ready to work at less than subsistence wages and pay high rents for flooded cellars. The employers could use them to undermine the gains made by the small, but growing trade unions in these cities, gains which had been paid for in blood, gaol, transportation and starvation. The workers in these unions felt threatened.

As yet there was no political ideology which could expose the employers and unite all the workers. Socialism was still the dream of a few. In this vacuum, the present threat of displacement by the Irish Catholics from the countryside led to the growth in these cities of the Orange Lodges among protestant workers. Even now, a hundred years later, these retain some strength. While in Glasgow and Liverpool at least traditions of working-class solidarity have reasserted themselves, such solidarity in Belfast has been affected ever since. The employers have found religious strife and the Orange Lodges extremely useful to split and weaken the workforce, and they have never had any scruples about using it.

Needless to say, the British Government and the other property-owning class in Ireland, the landowners, were not distressed by the divisions in the working class. But it was later in the 19th century that the full significance of the split among the Irish people dawned upon Randolph Churchill and Co. and was used to its fullest extent.

(To be continued in the next issue of
"Workers' Notebook")



THE TWO FACES OF NEO COLONIAL BOURGEOISIE

FIGHT RACIALISM

Racialism was not born with mankind. It flourished out of a particular society, when it came to serve the interests of a particular class.

Merchant trade capitalism thrived on slavery. In the 15th century British merchants accumulated gold from the "trade triangle": they took ships to Africa, where they exchanged what they called "black gold" for cheap jewelry. The ships would crowd thousands of people into their filthy, rat-infested holds and then take them to America in exchange for some pieces of silver. Thousands died, women and children as well. But no white man's conscience was to be disturbed. "These black men were inferior races" which the rich white men traded like cattle.

The winning of colonies was grafted on to the slave trade. Capitalism developed into imperialism. Once again the idea that non-white races were inferior to white ones was adopted and used by the British and other imperialists, only to justify their brutal and cruel treatment of the people in the colonies and their robbery of these countries resources.

They did their best to indoctrinate the people in Britain in order to win support for their imperialist wars and policies.

In the 1950s, racialism was dug up again with the arrival of immigrant workers in Britain. Workers from former British colonies were invited to come to Britain by the government, at a time when the British economy was in need of a larger workforce. They were invariably given the lowest paid jobs and the hardest, and they became the target for new racialist propaganda.

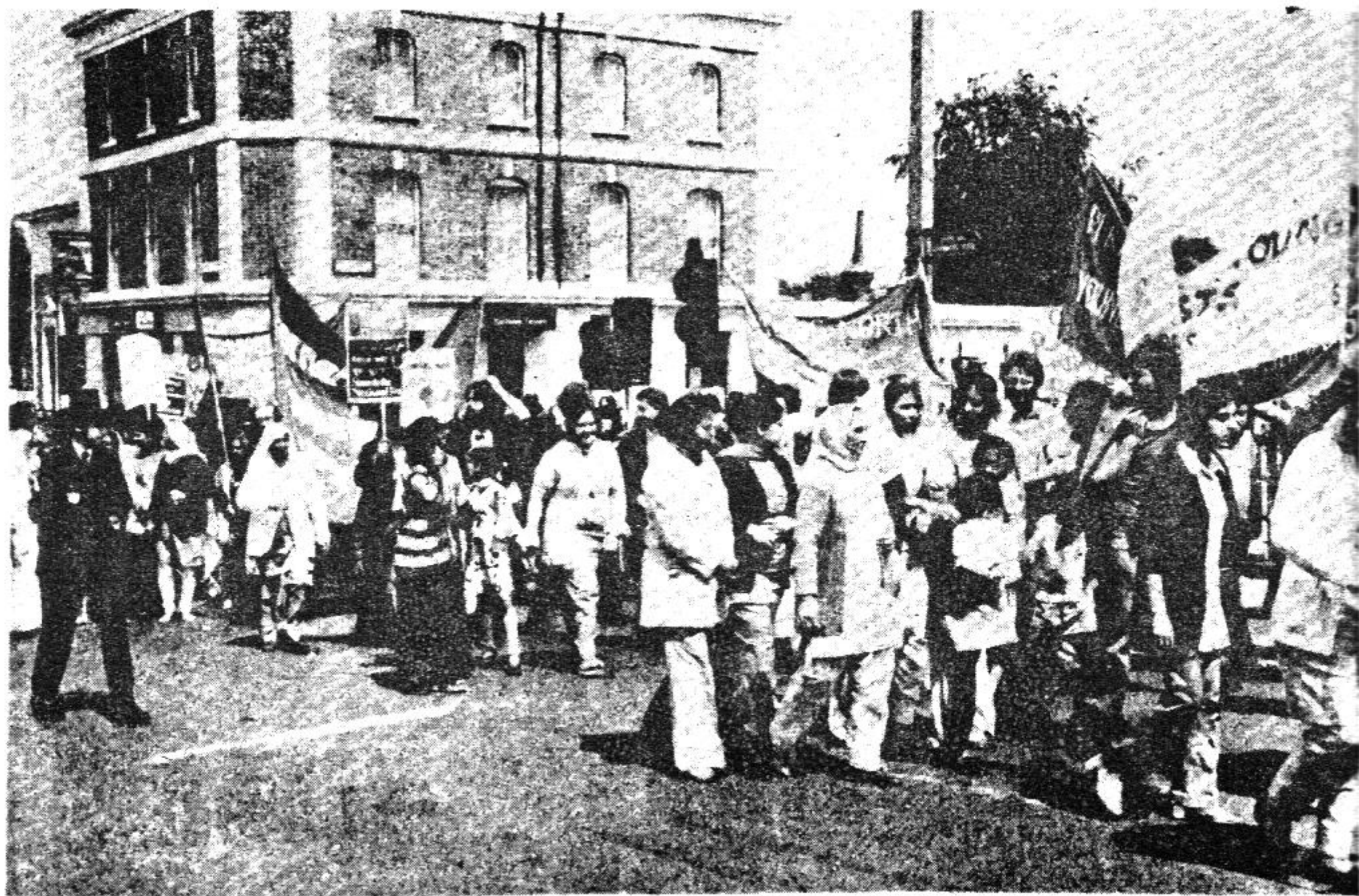
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THE USE OF RACIALISM TODAY

The capitalist class in Britain is still very interested in keeping racialist ideas alive today. They are in increasing difficulties, both economic and political. To get higher profits they have to cut the workers' real income, and so they provoke working class resistance.

It is quite clear that racialism is tacitly encouraged from high-up - to be used as an outlet for the pent up anger and frustration of the people, particularly of the youth at this time of high unemployment and worsening conditions of life. The immigrant workers are blamed for all the evils for which, in reality, capitalism is responsible.



Racialism is used to divide the working people and as a diversion from the real issues. The media are allowed and encouraged to give maximum coverage to stories and issues of racial nature. The outbursts of politicians like Powell, who remains unchecked by the government, make headlines calculated to arouse racial hostility and violence. Nor does the government stop publicity: newspaper articles and T.V. interviews - given to out and out fascist groups like the National Front. Behind a smokescreen of liberal hypocrisy the government has given fascists the green light to stir up racial violence.

Numerous acts of racial violence have taken place, unpunished. Recently, the murderers of two Asian students were set free.

Whenever industrial conflicts break out in a factory, the boss invariably tries to destroy the unity of the workers along racial lines.

The issue is clear: an attack on a black worker is an attack on the unity and strength of the working-class as a whole. The working-class in struggle brushes aside, destroys such racialist ideas, and comes closer and stronger together. Just as workers, solid together, will destroy capitalism, so they will destroy racialist ideas, and build a socialist Britain!

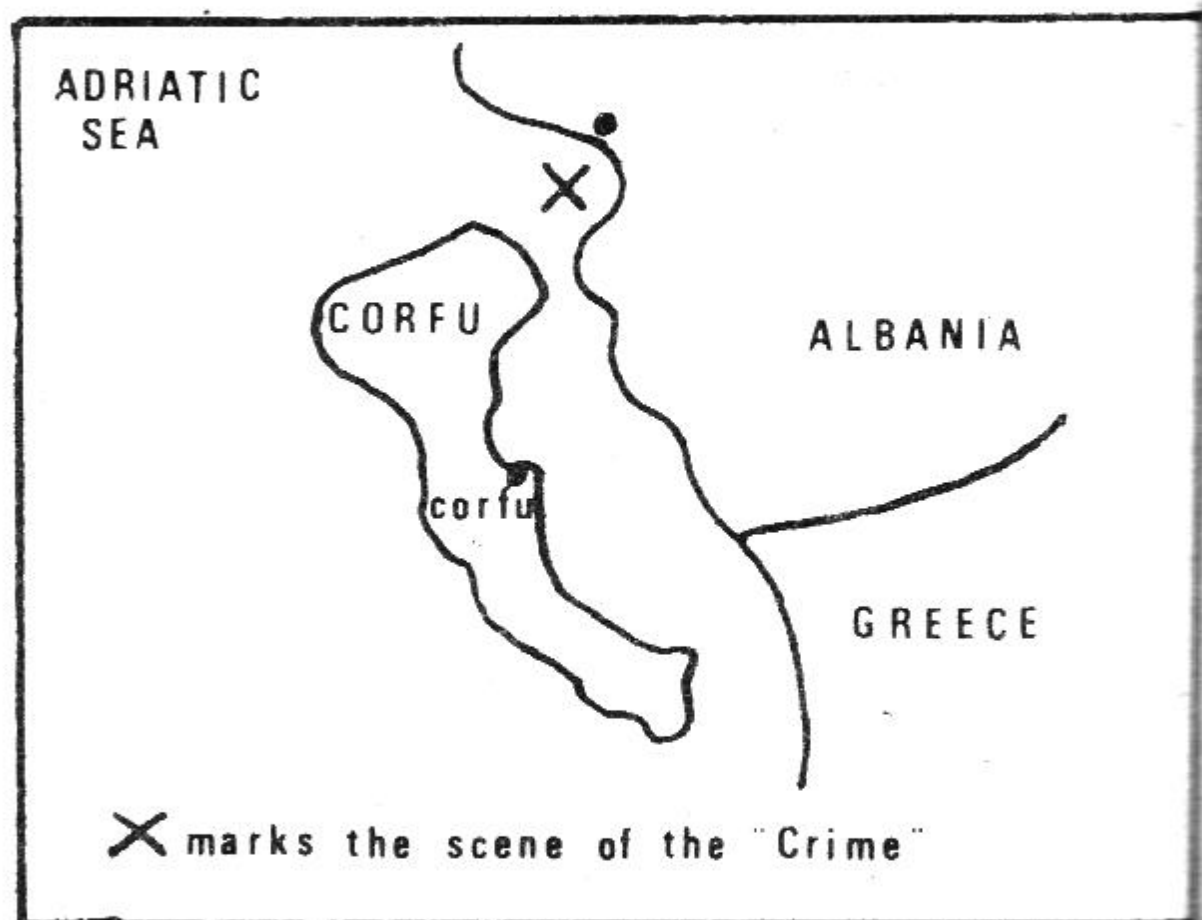
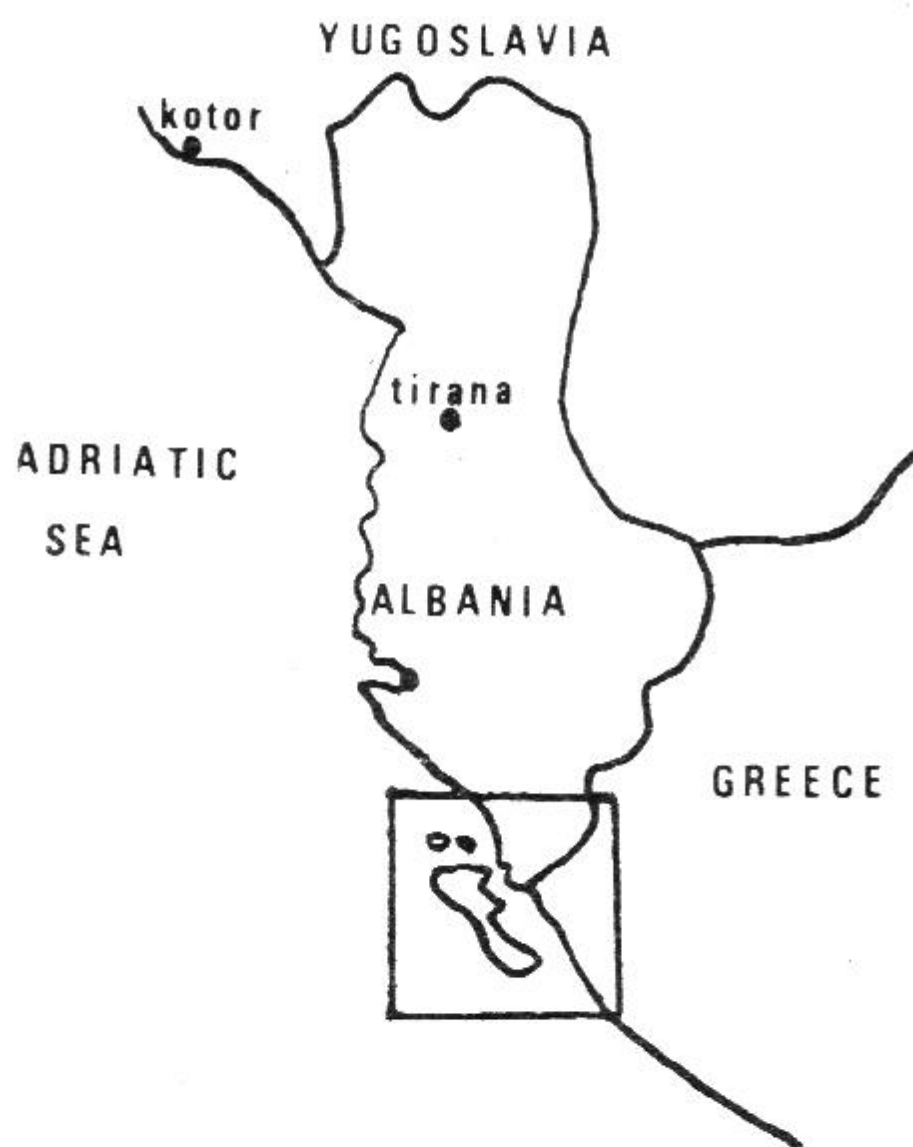


INTERNATIONAL COMMENT

THE

CORFU GULF

'INCIDENT



BRITAIN

REFUSES TO RECOGNISE

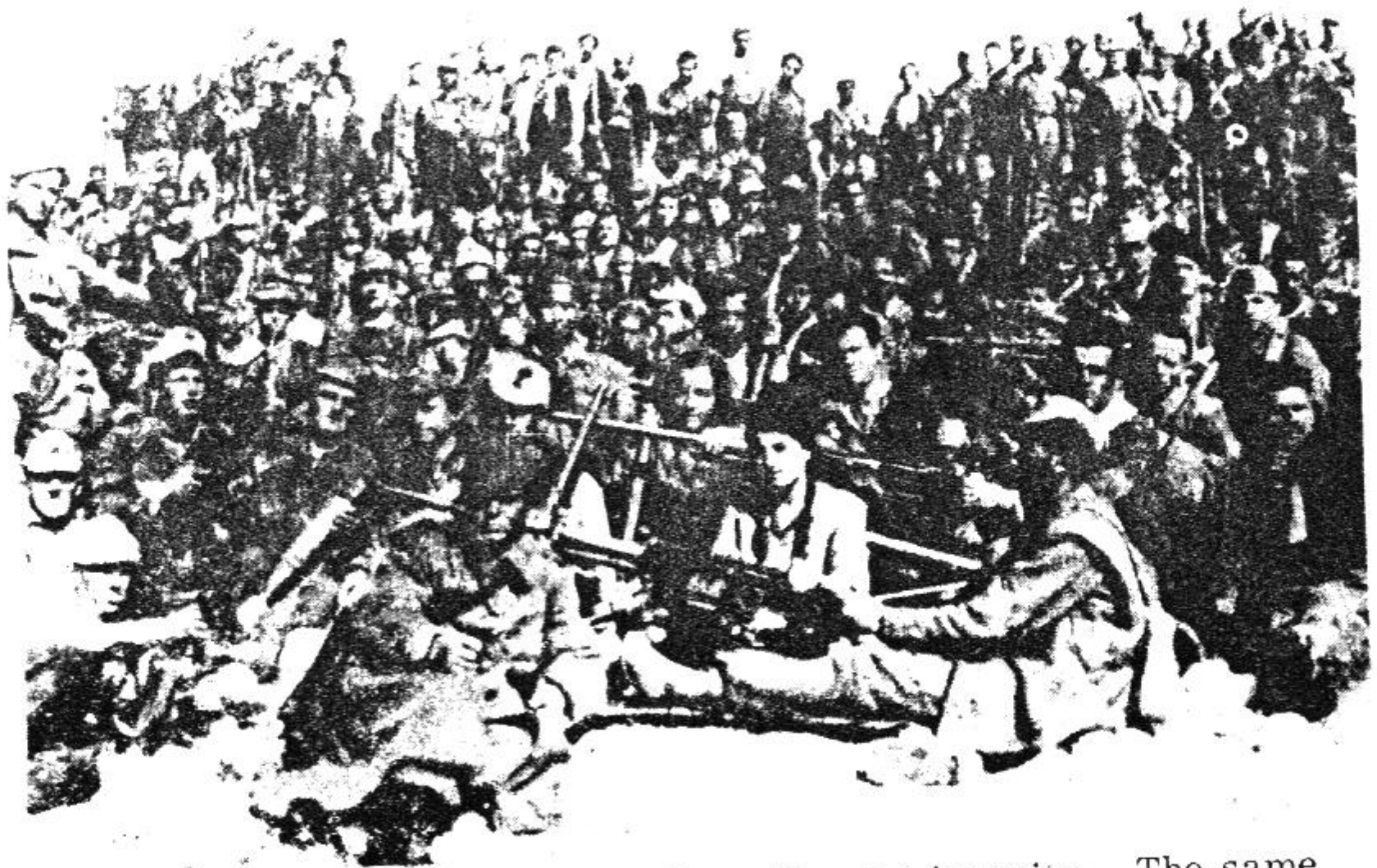
SOCIALIST ALBANIA

WHY?

The Corfu Gulf incident of 1946 is now almost, completely forgotten, almost as ignored by the British Public as the existence of Albania, and indeed, this was probably the main result of the incident. It is still used by "Her Majesty's Government" as the excuse for not recognising Albania and so, in some quarters, the loss of life is regarded as well worth the result.

WHAT HAPPENED

In the post-war period one of the many unpleasant legacies of the recent hostilities was the shoals of mines laid in the waters of the Mediterranean, and to remedy this, a body was set up rejoicing in the name of "Mediterranean Zone Mine Clearance Board", Medzon for short. This body had representatives from all the nations involved in mine-clearing operations - with one exception, - the British would not allow Albania to be represented.



Partisans who liberated Albania from Fascist invasion. The same spirit today defends socialist Albania under working class state power

Albania was the only occupied country in Europe which had rid itself single-handed of the German and Italian invaders, and so it was symptomatic of the new world a-dawning that she was excluded, while Italy, the former enemy, was not only on Medzon, but was the headquarters of the Board.

The Royal Navy had decided to clear the Corfu Channel of mines and proceeded to do so in 1946, neglecting with the disdain of an imperial power to inform, let alone ask the Albanians about it. To put this in perspective in these days of 200 mile limits, we must remember that the Corfu Channel separated Greece and Albania in many parts by less than a few thousand yards. Indeed, the Clearance operations were carried out within a few hundred yards of the shore.

Faced with what appeared to be a large marine invasion force steaming into their harbour, the Albanian shore batteries opened fire. All shots missed. The Albanians sent an immediate protest at this invasion of their territorial waters - and the British sent a protest asking for the officer responsible to be "severely punished" and for an immediate apology. The Albanian Government answered in - after a fashion -. The captain in charge of the shore battery, Skander Beck, was immediately promoted!

GUNBOAT DIPLOMACY

The Admiralty then sent a cable to their local defender of democracy, one Admiral Sir Algernon Osborne Willis, KCB, KBE, DSO, Atlee's brother-in-law etc. etc., that in effect asked him to stage a provocation, by sailing back through Albanian waters in order to find out "whether the Albanian Government have learned to behave themselves". It was while carrying out this instruction that two British destroyers were severely damaged by mines, with a loss of 45 lives, a mere 1000 yards from the Albanian shoreline.

With the doublethink of diplomacy, the British then protested to the United Nations, in which she had up until then successfully campaigned against Albania's membership. After much wrangling Albania agreed to go to the World Court in the Hague, still loudly denying responsibility.

The World Court, after a long session, decided by eleven votes to five that Albania was "guilty" and awarded £843,947 compensation to be paid to Britain. The crucial evidence was provided by an ex-royalist Yugoslav Naval Deserter, who claimed that the mines were laid by Yugoslav navy ships from Kotor. This renegade

has since disappeared, and on the face of it, it does seem like something out of Alice In Wonderland - that a dubious witness to Yugoslav guilt should be accepted as the means to find Albania guilty. For one thing all parties agreed was that even if she had wanted to mine the straits, Albania in her devastated condition just did not have the wherewithal to do so. This latter point was reinforced when Britain asked the Albanians for the money - the answer was quite simply that she didn't have any!

THE MONEY GOES ROUND AND ROUND

Britain cast about and discovered that the fleeing Germans had cannily fled with the Albanian Gold Reserves, which were about equivalent to the claimed compensation, and were now in the hands of the Allies. As if to reinforce the point that the spoils don't always go to the victors, when Britain tried to get the money, the World Court awarded it to Italy - which had invaded Albania in the first place!

A veritable Judgement of Solomon - after he had spent a night on the booze with his thousand wives!

Thus it is that Albania, the most independent state, and the only Socialist one, in Europe, is not now recognised by the Mandarins of the Foreign Office.

THE BACKGROUND

Many people who have only heard the official version of the war, may wonder at the seeming paranoia of the Albanians. Why should they suspect the intentions of the British, who had, after all, been their Allies in the war against Fascism?

The suppressed incidents of this period gave them every justification for suspicion. It was at this time that, for example, Lord Mountbatten landed in Vietnam, where the VietMinh under Ho Chi Minh, like the Albanians, had just liberated themselves. Lord Mountbatten put Japanese prisoners under British officers and used them to attack the Vietnamese and pave the way for a return of French rule in Vietnam.

Similarly, the British Army was being used just south of Albania, in Greece, to put down the communists who had led the struggle against the Germans during the war. The British were trying to reestablish the monarchy in Greece, whose main support had come from those collaborating with the Nazis. Even more sinister was the fact that the same Greek regime had publicly laid claim to the southern third of Albania, in Paris in 1946.

Since that time Philby's memoirs detail the attempts by the United States and Britain to overthrow the revolutionary people's power in Albania. Right through the 1940s, agents and arms were parachuted in to the reactionaries in Albania.

The Corfu Gulf incident is merely the excuse for imperialism's unceasing hostility to Albania. It was there before and it continues now - the hatred of the ruling classes for working-class power anywhere in the world.

And let us not be under any illusions as to who represents the ruling class. It was a Labour, so-called socialist, government in power in Britain when all this happened.

One possibility overlooked at the time, but revealed by subsequent events, should be considered. There is a country that had everything to gain by isolating Albania. This same country has since been revealed as having plans to take over Albania completely, and very nearly succeeded in doing so, if it had not been for the actions of Albanian leader, Enver Hoxha, backed by the then still socialist USSR and Stalin. Yugoslavia had a lot to gain from providing imperialism with a welcome excuse to isolate and weaken Albania. Perhaps, after all, the Yugoslav deserter the British produced as their star witness was telling the truth?

FIGHT FOR RECOGNITION

Albania has survived years of non-recognition by the ruling-class of Britain. The People's Republic of Albania has had, instead, the recognition of progressive people everywhere, who see in Albania a beacon, demonstrating that socialism can overcome the most daunting obstacles.

But it is long past time for British workers to demand recognition by the British government for Albania. It is our loss, not Albania's! We can attempt to make amends for what we let our rulers do, by initiating a campaign for the recognition of Albania, and the dismissal of the so-called debt.

Already the Liverpool Trades Council has called upon the government to do so. The C.W.M. calls upon all workers, all progressive people to take up the cry.

REMEMBER

THE PARIS COMMUNE

First Ever Proletarian Revolution



Marx said of the Paris Commune that its real value was "its own working existence". Whatever historians and politicians from every camp may have said about the events, this basic fact is undeniable. From March 18th to May 28th, 1871, the workingmen of Paris took the organisation of their own lives and labour into their own hands - with incredible success.

In the summer of 1870, in a desperate bid to stave off the revolutionary tide which was threatening his rule, Napoleon III, Emperor

of France, gambled on war with Germany. The main French army was rapidly defeated and the Germans surrounded Paris. Against its will, the new bourgeois government was obliged to arm the workers for the defence of the capital. But in reality, the government was more afraid of the armed Parisian workers than it was of Bismarck and his troops. An armistice was signed with Germany in January, 1871 and the war came to an end. But the Parisians were armed.

The attempts of the government to disarm the people met heroic resistance and the bourgeois government fled from Paris in a panic, leaving the city without councillors, without administration, without police. The workers of Paris showed they could run things themselves. This was the Paris Commune.

The Achievements of the Communards

The main achievements of the Paris Commune, which was proclaimed after city-wide elections in March, 1871, were in the field of education and industry.

Education was a desperately urgent problem, when only one worker in ten could read and write. The Communards, under their young and energetic Education Minister, Eduard Vaillant, immediately organised free compulsory and secular schools in every area. The teachers were artisans, craftsmen and workers who came from their workshops and factories to provide not only technical, but also political education for the Parisian children. Special technical schools were set up and for the first time ever state education was provided for girls. Many of the Commune's educational experiments were later taken up in China.

Industry was a major concern of the Commune. Many bourgeois factory-owners had fled the capital and the plant and machinery lay idle. In a series of revolutionary moves, the communards embarked on the long task of changing the structure of trade and industry to serve the people. Municipally-commissioned work:- production of building materials, uniforms for the National Guard etc. - was given direct to the "Syndicats" (the trade unions) rather than to bourgeois middle-men. The previous State-Monopolies (arms and tobacco factories) - which had been run as little in the interests of the people as the so-called nationalised industries are today - were taken over by the workers and run as producers' cooperatives. Eventually, the many factories and workshops were expropriated, taken over and run by the unions.

The significant thing about the Commune, however, was the harmony between what the people were doing and what the Commune Assembly was saying. The taking-over of the factories happened physically at the same time as it was decreed politically by the Assembly. This was the value, educationally and politically, of the Commune's working existence that Marx spoke of.



Why it Didn't Succeed

And all of this happened in just ten short weeks. It is not difficult to imagine how far the people might have gone had not the masters of international capital burst in on them with bayonets and cannon, and drowned their socialist construction in a sea of blood.

One of the main reasons for the defeat of the Commune was its leniency towards the bourgeoisie, towards the owners of wealth and industry. They let them keep control of the banks and of the press. The newspapers thus continued to pour out propaganda to dishearten the Communards. They failed to smash the whole apparatus of the bourgeois state. They allowed the bourgeoisie to flee to Versailles and the time to muster their forces and reorganise the army which was to march on Paris. What the Communards lacked was a Party of the workers to carry through the revolution to success. So they were defeated by their well-organised enemy.

But, the 20,000 murdered Communards did not die in vain. Their example lives on today.It must never be forgotten....



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