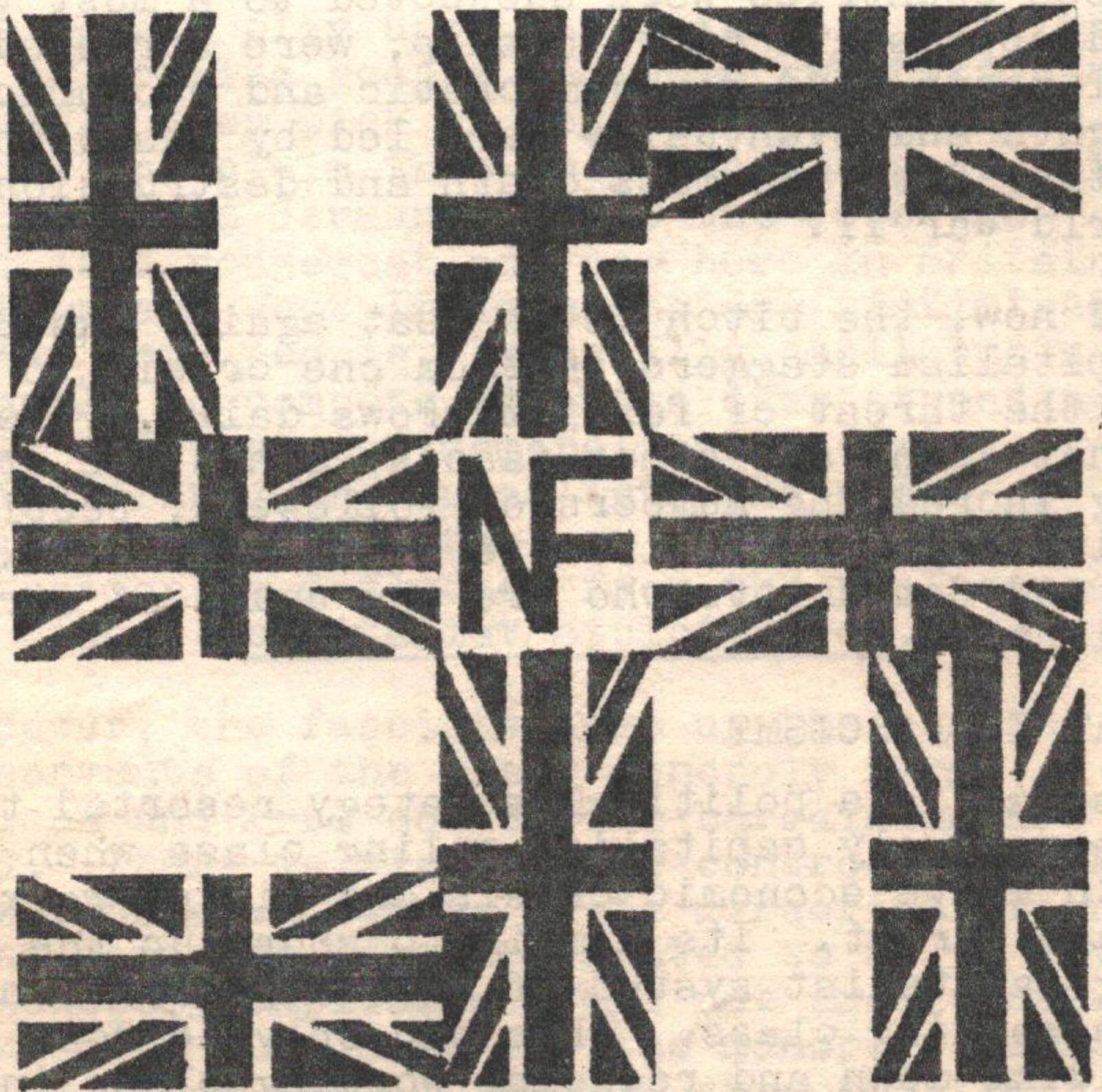


THE THREAT OF FASCISM



NOTTINGHAM COMMUNIST GROUP

Once again, Britain and the other capitalist countries in the world are sinking into a deep economic depression. Mass unemployment is steadily rising, living standards are falling and social services spending is being ruthlessly cut. The effects of the world depression are most acute in Britain because here we live under the oldest and thus most decayed capitalist economy.

During the last economic slump, back in the 1920s and 1930s, fascist movements emerged and grew in all the European countries, including Britain, and came to power in many places such as Italy and Germany. The working people of these countries were subjected to a most vicious and oppressive dictatorship, were stripped of all their hard-won democratic and economic rights and eventually were led by Mussolini and Hitler into the mass death and destruction of World War II.

And now, the bitch is on heat again. As British capitalism staggers on from one crisis to another the threat of fascism grows daily. The National Front and other fascist gangs are attracting increasing numbers of followers, people deceived by the fascist lie that it is black people and Communists who are the cause of our plight.

WHAT IS FASCISM?

Fascism is a political strategy resorted to by the monopoly capitalist ruling class when faced with grave economic crisis and rising working class unrest. Its aim is to shore up the decaying capitalist system of mass exploitation of the working class. This can only be done by holding down and reducing working class incomes so as to increase capitalist class profits. At first, the capitalist class try to bring this about by using trade union leaders and social democratic movements, such as the Labour Party, to deceive the working class and trick us into

voluntary acceptance of cuts in our living standards, as in the case of the Social Contract. It is only when this strategy fails to work, when the working class stops co-operating and starts resisting, that the capitalist class turn to outright fascism. Then they begin to pour money into organisations such as the National Front, use the police and army in an increasingly oppressive way and eventually place a fascist government in power which proceeds to quickly and violently smash any working class resistance and abolishes our democratic and economic rights.

In order to attract a mass following, fascist movements have to conceal their real aim - the perpetuation of capitalism. Instead, the fascists whip up and play upon nationalistic feelings as a way of drawing people to their swastika banner. Usually they pick on some conspicuous minority group and claim that they are the cause of our problems. In Germany it was the Jews who were used as a scapegoat and now here in Britain it is Asians and West Indians who are victimized. In this way some people, especially small businessmen unable to compete with the ever-expanding monopolies and the most demoralized sections of the working class, are lured into the ranks of the fascist storm troopers. At the same time their attention is deflected from the real cause of their misery: capitalist exploitation.

Once in power, the fascists take up their main role as servants of the giant monopoly firms. Trade unions and free collective bargaining are abolished. There is rigid state control of working class incomes. Strong state direction of industry and commerce are implemented so as to favour the monopoly capitalists and not small businesses. Massive subsidies for the monopoly firms are provided from public funds. Any opposition to the fascist state, however mild, is crushed by means of the torture chamber and concentration camp.

RACISM AND FASCISM

Racism, which is the belief that some peoples are inherently inferior to others, is often mistakenly seen as the main feature of fascism. It is true that the fascists usually, but not always, stir up racist feelings as a means of gaining a mass following. But racism is something that appeared long before fascism. Racism is a product of imperialism, i.e. the domination and exploitation of one nation by another. The idea that the peoples of Asia, Africa and Latin America are inferior to Europeans first arose several hundred years ago when the capitalist classes of Western Europe began to invade, conquer and exploit these continents. This false racist claim provided the capitalists with a bogus moral justification for their killing and looting. It was also a way in which the working people of the European countries were conned into willingly fighting colonial wars for the capitalists' benefit. Imperialism is still very much alive, (witness the vast interests of British capitalism in South Africa), and so too is racism which is now used as a tool for dividing white and black workers within Britain. Racism will only finally disappear when imperialism is defeated and that means when the working class overthrow capitalism.

THE GROWTH OF CORPORATISM

Back in the 1930s Sir Oswald Mosley, the father of British fascism, wrote:

"The main object of a modern and Fascist movement is to establish the Corporate State."

The function of a corporate state apparatus is to direct a privately-owned capitalist economy and to discipline the working class. Benito Mussolini, the Italian fascist dictator, outlined the key elements of the corporate state as follows:

1. State control of wages, prices and foreign trade.
2. Prohibition of free collective bargaining.
3. State direction of industry and commerce.
4. State subsidies for large-scale private firms.

5. Establishment of industry-wide corporations with compulsory membership for owners and workers, i.e. "industrial participation". Now these policies sound familiar because they are precisely those which have been introduced by recent British governments, especially Labour governments.

In Italy and Germany the setting up of the corporate state followed the fascist seizure of state power. In Britain it has been happening the other way round. Since the early 1960s a whole series of government measures of a corporatist kind, designed to prop up an ailing capitalist economy, have been put into practice. The National Economic Development Council, the Industry Act, the National Enterprise Board, the Social Contract and the Bullock Report are just a few examples. Here in Britain the emergence of a corporate state has preceded the setting up of a fascist regime. So far the capitalist class have been able to maintain the facade of parliamentary democracy and have not yet found it necessary to resort to authoritarian dictatorship. Corporatism is fascism with a human face!

THE ROLE OF THE LABOUR PARTY

The governments formed by the Labour Party since 1964 have taken the leading role in gradually assembling the corporate state machine. The Tory government of 1970-74 simply followed in their footsteps. But the Labour politicians have an advantage over their Tory colleagues because Labour Party leaders such as Michael Foot and Anthony Wedgwood-Benn proclaim their anti-working class corporatist measures as "socialist"! They try to deceive us by claiming to serve us with "socialist" legislation when in fact they act in the interests of the monopoly capitalist class. Of course, there is nothing new about this type of socialism. It was forcibly imposed in Germany during Hitler's time and called "national socialism" or for short - Nazism. Here in Britain it is introduced by stealth and called "democratic socialism".

Not only has the Labour Party been in the lead in bringing in corporatism but it has consistently pandered to racism. To give just one of many examples, in 1968 the Labour government introduced an Immigration Act which denies the right of residence in Britain to British passport-holders without parents or grandparents born in Britain. In other words, it is just a cunning way of keeping blacks out of the country without actually mentioning the terms "race" or "colour". What is more, Labour administrations have taken no measures to stop fascists holding mass marches which have the deliberate intention of provoking violent clashes, through areas where blacks live.

One important point must be made clear. It is not a case of the Labour leaders consciously being racists or wanting to bring about fascism. But their anxiety to gather votes in General Elections leads them on the one hand to give in to racist demands for anti-blacks immigration laws and on the other hand to mount feeble and insincere "campaigns" against racism so as to try to pick up the black vote. The electoral support of the working class for the Labour Party has been steadily falling since 1951. Labour needs all the votes they can get and they are not very fussy about where they come from and how they get them.

Also, the Labour leaders do not see their corporatist measures as being fascist in tendency. Instead, the circumstances of decaying monopoly capitalism, which they have tried to preserve, have forced them along the corporatist road. But what matters is not what the Labour politicians say they are doing but the objective consequences of what they actually do. And what they have actually done is to open the way for full-blooded fascism. Labour's immigration laws have had the effect of making racism respectable. Their economic measures have gone a long way towards implementing the economic policy of fascism. As a result, one thing is at last becoming increasingly clear to the working class - the Labour Party

is not our friend but our enemy. It does not serve us but them, the monopoly capitalists. Social democracy does indeed pave the way for fascism.

THE ONLY WAY FORWARD

Despite the corporatist policies of recent governments capitalism continues on its downward spiral. Workers are becoming reluctant to go on accepting redundancies and falling living standards. There is a rising tide of resentment and revolt against corporatist measures. Simultaneously, the forces of fascism are growing. The same conditions that produce feelings of revolt also strengthen the ranks of reaction.

So what is to be done? The only way forward is to build a truly revolutionary Marxist-Leninist party that will give positive expression and direction to our class's discontent. The only way out for the working class in Britain is to see through and expose the Labour Party and their supporters - trade union leaders, Communist Party revisionists and Trotskyists. Then we can go on to make socialist revolution, to throw out the monopoly capitalists and their social democratic allies, prevent the rise of fascism and begin the task of constructing a truly socialist society firmly under the control of the working class as a whole. Yes, revolution is our only way forward.

The alternative is the inevitable sporadic, uncoordinated and half-hearted revolt against the corporate state. Without a Marxist-Leninist revolutionary movement to lead us we would surely meet with defeat. The monopoly capitalist class would cast aside their liberal mask and turn to, support and build up the fascist National Front as the blunt instrument of their salvation. Don't imagine that it can't happen here. That's what a lot of people in Germany thought. Make no mistake. We have but one choice. Either reactionary fascism or revolutionary socialism!

WHAT IS FASCISM?

Is it a fat buffoon with a tassell on his hat?

Is it a little corporal with a toothbrush moustache?

Is it thugs and criminals dressed up in black shirts?

Is it jack-booted goose-stepping blond beasts?

No, not essentially.

Now, listen carefully.

It's what they do to us when they're in trouble,

It's their way of making us pay for their problems,

It's what they do to prevent us taking what is ours,

It's their way of stopping us from deposing them.

Tassells, moustaches, shirts and boots,

Are really not the essence of the brutes.

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