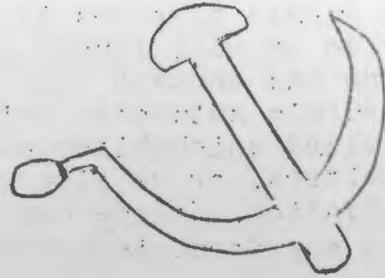


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THE POLISH WORKING CLASS FIGHTS BACK

Of all Russia's allies, Poland has one of the shakiest positions. Up to its ears in debt, mostly to the West. A party and government with no room to manoeuvre between the conflicting claims of various sections of the population and the demands made upon it from outside. A people who have never been keen on communism, genuine or otherwise; under the influence of the Roman Catholic church with a great dislike for Russia.

It is good to see that Poland's working class and farmers are not prepared to suffer a reduced standard of living, no matter what reasons are supplied by their rulers; and interesting, too, is the demand for free trade unions, something which was achieved over 100 years ago in Britain.

There is nothing to choose between the Polish official trade unions which the workers have rejected, and their counterparts in the rest of Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union. They are all nothing but transmission belts for party directives. As for the Polish Workers' Party, even the Morning Star editorial of September 1st is amazed about how out of touch that is with the working class.

But the most important thing that the action of the Polish working class demonstrates is that there are not, after all, just 500 million zombies behind Brezhnev's Iron Curtain. A break-up is not impossible, provided the pressure is kept up.

TWO LETTERS TO THE ISLINGTON GAZETTE

The following letter appeared in the Islington Gazette for August 1st. Similar views have also appeared in the Gazette editorial column, PUBLIC EYE.

"Even if you accept Mrs. Wagland's belief (Gazette, July 18) that Russia in an expansionist power, her arguments in favour of Britain's nuclear deterrent break down when you try to imagine how it could be used.

Suppose Russia proposes to annexe West Germany, we inform them that if they do we will launch our Tridents or whatever. Russia pays no attention and annexes West Germany. What next? Either to prevent our attack Russia saturates Britain with nuclear devices, leaving the whole island uninhabitable even for those who may have survived in deep shelters, or we fire our Tridents first and she does the same in retaliation. No way can we use nuclear weapons and survive. Nor is there any force in a threat you cannot carry out.

The only sensible policy is to work for a nuclear-free European zone, which might spread to other parts of the world and preserve the human race. Any other policy for Europe is suicidal". - John Bailey, N.I.

The following reply was sent to the Islington Gazette on August 4th. Underlined are three paragraphs of the letter which were deleted by the Gazette editor without consultation before publication on August 15th.

"John Bailey (Gazette, August 1) has got it slightly wrong, Russia never "proposes" to annex any country, it just goes in. If Russia tries to annex West Germany, as one supposes he means, the peoples of the West must resist conventional warfare by conventional and guerilla warfare, aided incidentally by Czechs, Hungarians, Poles, Estonians, Ukrainians, etc, who have had enough of Russian domination.

If Russia escalates to nuclear warfare we let them have some nuclear nuclear missiles back.

Forty years ago all countries had poison gas. No gas was used. Only the USA had the atom bomb, The atom bomb was used.

The possibility that John Bailey overlooks is that Russia may use nuclear weapons first just to put the fear of God into us. The only ways to cope with this from a Civil Defence point of view are (a) A real measure of decentralisation and devolution of government from London (b) More deep shelters including plans for using the Tubes, (c) Fall-out shelters.

Ho Chi Minh said "Much as we love peace, we love freedom more".

Angolans, Eritreans, Kampuchians and Afghanis are already fighting expansionism. The people of Britain will do the same if necessary.

In the meantime, nuclear-free zones are not a bad idea. One in the USSR. And one in the USA."

The editor's deletion looks particularly inappropriate at a time when everyone has been worried stiff, for various reasons, that Russia would put the tanks in against the Polish workers.

Most people get the Gazette to read the crime, scandal, sport and adverts. For those few who are interested in politics, no doubt the "if only we were all nicer to one another, we'd all have more money to spend on homes and hospitals" line has its appeal. People get a

newspaper because it contains what they want to read. The editor prints only such stuff as the readers want. And you have a nice cosy situation.

Such is life and we are not grumbling about it. Certain views are given acres of space. Critics are given an inch or two to reply. This not only puts the critic at a disadvantage. It also makes him appear "dogmatic", a kind of literary heckler who can only state his viewpoint, but cannot substantiate it. And to appear "dogmatic" does one no good at all politically.

In fairness to the Gazette, it must be added that all mass media, newspapers, radio, television and even public meetings, exist to put over a certain view of life. To this purpose they will even use parts of opposing views of life. Anyone who believes he can use the mass media to develop his own view of life is sadly mistaken.

THE LEFT PRESS

Many people have realised that, to develop their ideas and those of their associates, they need their own publications. Hence the vast number of journals, particularly on the Left. None of these has a wide circulation. All of them cost more to produce than they bring in in terms of sales and adverts.

Most of the sales are to the converted, to convince them once again that they are correct. Some are bought by people who have to buy them. Public libraries, research departments, political opponents, etc. And a very few are sold.

It is through those that are sold that the organisation hopes to expand its regular sales and, hopefully, its membership. So something has to be done to make the paper attractive. If there is a miners' strike on put "Everyone behind the miners" on the front page and, if possible, tout it round a miners' meeting or two. If there is a National Front rally coming put "All out against the Front" on the front page, and take it round left or student meetings. If necessary, both the front and back page can be used.

As well as this, the faithful, and the overseas readers, must be reassured that the basic speciality has not changed. Thus the Morning Star will print a picture of workers' flats in Kishinev to show that it still likes the Soviet Union. A trotskyist paper will slip in the occasional mention of permanent revolution or nationalisation without compensation under workers' control. All this can be stuck well out of the way where it will not ruin the selling qualities of the publication.

The better-off papers can resort to selective bribery. Many people like seeing their names, their views or their writings in print.

What better way of winning somebody's support than printing an article from him?

Very rarely is any convincing connection made between the basic speciality and the "popular" news items and articles. Probably it would be impossible to do so.

The average Left paper therefore presents the appearance of a dog's breakfast.

Why on earth should somebody support permanent revolution because you claim to support his strike or print his views?

AN ULTRA-LEFT PUBLICATION

The Revolutionary Communist League of Britain (RCLB) produces a paper called "Class Struggle" which claims to be revolutionary and Marxist-Leninist.

On the front page of its July 24th - August 20th issue is its popular article "Steel Cutbacks will be resisted". On page 3 it asks for more money to print more contributed articles.

On page 5 is something about supporting the "three worlds theory" without making any connection between said theory and the rest of the publication.

On page 7 readers learn that "Coal miners in socialist China have had their working day reduced from eight hours to six".

Class Struggle has an extensive exchange circulation, if not readership, among comrades abroad. A quick look at the words "three worlds theory" and "socialist China" will convince said comrades that CS has not gone astray.

The RCLB has however, a basic speciality which it does not advertise in its paper. This is the belief that Britain is now at the stage of socialist revolution. So in the article "STEEL CUTBACKS WILL BE RESISTED" no thought-out concrete alternative is put forward. CS simply says. "This Durham community doesn't want to be the Jarrow of the 1980's and that "Sir Keith Joseph, and the rest of his ilk, must go".

AN SPREÁCH

Marxist-Leninist publications from Ireland and China are available from An Spréach book service, PO Box 965, 70 Thomas Street, Dublin 8, Ireland. (Personal callers: Saturdays only, 2.00 - 5.30).

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