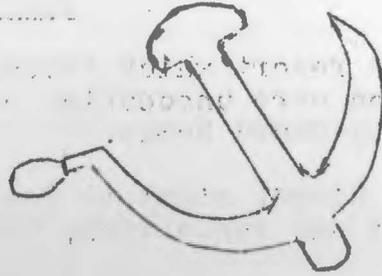


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INVOLVING THE PEOPLE

A constant refrain at Islington council and self-styled "tenants" meetings is that the council has deliberately thrown away money. Further investigation reveals that, if the council pays for a small proportion of the cost of a project, the government is bound to make up the difference. On occasions, the council has not spent its share and so has lost the government's share. Or it could mean that the council, despite its best efforts, has not managed to spend all its government grant in time and has, therefore, lost it. Upon the Left wing of the Labour party no greater crime is known than losing government money. No matter that someone had to earn that money, no matter that it could be better used elsewhere.

One is therefore not too annoyed to hear that the government has proposed to cut its grant to Islington Borough Council.

Council expenditure and white collar staff have been multiplying at an alarming rate since 1965. Services, on the other hand, have been continually cut. One has about a 50 : 50 chance of getting even an acknowledgment to a letter sent to a council official.

As Engels put it about the State, the council is a "power, arising out of society, but placing itself above it, and increasingly alienating itself from it".

The council is now faced with the choice of making further cuts in services, demanding additional rates, or cutting its white collar staff.

As regards the last alternative, the difficulty is how to set about it when said staff are far better organised than Islington ratepayers and tenants.

Some of these staff are rude to callers; others do not bother to reply to letters. Perhaps a start could be made by sacking those about whom a great number of complaints are received from the public.

THE HOUSING PROBLEM

The same report which revealed that thousands of council homes in Islington were unoccupied pointed out that this applied also to many privately-owned homes.

It is a dismal sight to see an empty house getting more and more derelict and vandalized, when it could provide a home.

Consider a house worth £30,000 vacant possession. Twenty years ago it was probably worth £3,000. In twenty years' time, if inflation continues, it could be worth £300,000.

If it were let, the maximum permissible rent would be about £1,000 per annum. If the landlord sold it for £30,000 he could invest this in Government stock to bring him in about £3,900 a year. Or he might prefer to keep it empty, an inflation-proof, tax-free investment, a kind of super "granny bond". This is probably the best bet of all.

There is not a lot of point restricting rents unless landlords can be forced to let.

A RADIO-ACTIVE CINDER

The following letter appeared in 12th September issue of the Islington Gazette:-

"I am 69 years of age and in the normal course of events I cannot expect to live for many more years, but my life is still valuable to me and I see no reason to die in horrible agony before my allotted time.

William Whitelaw now proposes to spend a further £45 million pounds, in addition to the massive sum of one thousand million pounds already being spent on nuclear weapons. Ah, he says, this is for our defence. I am not likely to appreciate this fact when I am a radio active cinder. End this madness before it ends us". Mrs. Mary Abrook, Vulcan Way, N7.

Comrade Abrook may be seen at the yearly meetings of Morning Star shareholders solemnly proclaiming the joy with which the Czechoslovak people greeted the Russian "fraternal assistance" in 1968. If the Russians do ever get over here, Islington "reactionaries" would be well advised to end Mary Abrook before she ends them. Despite the tone of her letter, she is certainly no pacifist.

Time and time again, we are fed with the same old story. It is no good resisting. Next time it's just a matter of somebody's finger on the button and we shall all be wiped out.

Yet history is full of examples of people resisting who had very little chance of survival if they resisted. If it had not been for such people we should all be slaves by now.

Britain may, of course, be like Czechoslovakia and collapse without a fight. But this seems unlikely.

Resisting Russian aggression with the Russians already here and the Mary Abrooks going around putting the finger on dissidents could well prove just as costly in terms of lives as threatening Russia with retaliation if it doesn't keep out in the first place. Whether it is nicer to go singly in a labour camp, torture chamber, psychiatric ward or execution ground or altogether in a nuclear explosion is a debatable point.

If more people follow the example of the Afghans and the Poles and bust up the happy unity of the "socialist camp" perhaps we shall not need to find out.

But as a famous one-time communist put it "It is better to die on one's feet than live on one's knees".

ULTRA-LEFTIST PROPHECIES

Do you remember the headline in the July 24th - August 20th issue of Class Struggle published by the Revolutionary Communist League of Britain?

"STEEL CUTBACKS WILL BE RESISTED"

The reference was to Consett where a few weeks later, the workers meekly took their redundancy money.

The headline is typical of ultra-leftists. Like militant butterflies, they flit around from struggle to struggle, mouthing optimistic but futile slogans.

HAVE YOU READ "THE MARXIST"?

Marx and Lenin would turn in their graves to see the literature produced by Marxist-Leninists today. In the whole of the British Isles there is only one journal devoted to serious in-depth analysis. This is "THE MARXIST" produced by the Marxist Industrial Group.

No.36 is just out and contains well thought out articles on The Defence of Western Europe and Nuclear Power, plus some succinct comments on the British economy and on Poland.

The comments on Poland are a bit too succinct since they could give

the impression that Poland is "a workers' state", whatever that is.

"THE MARXIST" may be obtained direct from T.Hill, 11 Barratt Avenue, London, N.22 (25p post free); or from Collets' bookshop, Charing Cross Road.

SPEAK TO ME IN ENGLISH

England's armies conquered over a quarter of the world at one time or another. For the convenience of the conquerors it was necessary that English-speaking administrations be set up. The local educated classes were left with two choices.

- 1) Rebellion which would have been hopeless at the time
 - 2) Learning English and becoming part of the English administration.
- Naturally enough they took the second course, sooner or later.

Following that it became necessary for everybody who wanted to get on to learn English.

The United States of America is no exception. English-speaking colonists threw out English occupiers. But they enforced the English language on future immigrants and the native American population.

All new ideas begin in the educated classes. Thus, in the 18th century, when nearly all the Irish spoke Irish, progressive ideas were expressed entirely through English writings. Irish was reserved for religion, folk tales, music, etc.

There is nothing remarkable about this. The same can be said of English in relation to Welsh, Bengali, Malay, Iroquois, Swahili, etc.

As England developed into an imperialist manufacturing and commercial country, it needed an educated British Isles population who were literate in English to man the factories, armies and offices.

After 1870, English education was enforced on the children of Wales by such delightful means as the Welsh Not. The teacher gave any child heard speaking Welsh a board to hang round his head. If the child heard another child speaking Welsh he passed the board on. At the end of the day, the child left with the board got a beating.

Two World Wars and the Depression of the Thirties also contributed to the spread of the English language. Soldiers and emigrants from Wales had to pick it up.

Large English-speaking populations exist throughout the world. This creates the basis for wide circulation, English language, mass media - popular novels, newspapers, films, radio and television of high technical standards; and gives English an advantage over minority languages.

Welsh speakers are forced to leave home in search of jobs. Their homes are often bought by rich English pensioners and holiday home owners.

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