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MAY DAY IN ALBANIA 1975

At the end of the 19th century the Utopian Socialist, William Morris wrote a book called "News from Nowhere" in this he related a dream about what it would be like on the Morrow of the Revolution. Many of us have had similar dreams at some time or other but, as workers, in our day to day struggles with oppression and exploitation we know life is a very real experience and dreams have no substance whatever unless we are prepared to work hard to turn our aspirations into reality.

Socialist Albania is no dream world nor is it some kind of Utopian Garden of Eden, that came about by any accident of history. Also it would be wrong for us to just sit back and admire through rose coloured spectacles, all the great advances made, in a country where they have seized history by the throat and are forging the new epoch in the history of mankind.

Invitations were sent to delegates from Marxist Leninist parties, workers and fraternal Trade Unions by the Albanian Trade Union General Council to attend the May Day celebrations.

As Marx said, 'The history of all hitherto existing society is the history of class struggles'. This is certainly true for Albania, and for us workers in Britain with over 200 years of class struggle and as yet we have not had our Socialist Revolution, the experience of the Albanian people, their struggles and what they have achieved is of great interest and importance to us.

The liberation of Saigon on April 30th set the emotional tempo for the May Day celebrations as everybody's spirits soared at the news. Our delegation was having a meeting with the leaders of the Trade Union Council when we were told that the Liberation Army had entered Saigon, had expelled the last of the American gangsters and their puppets. At last the long heroic and bitter struggle of the Vietnamese people had come to fruition. In the delegation we had with us two Vietnamese Comrades from the North and South and you can imagine the joy we all felt.

In the evening we took part in a demonstration of solidarity in Skanderbeg Square, packed solid with 100,000 workers who with just a few hours notice had taken to the streets singing and shouting their joy. We were addressed by Government, Party and Trade Union leaders as well as the Vietnamese Charge de Affairs. Telegrams of

congratulations and further solidarity were read and endorsed to be sent to both North and South Vietnam.

The next day was May 1st, a beautiful sunny day on which we witnessed the magnificent demonstration of what has been achieved in Albania over the last 30 years. In material production the advances were boasted for the past year by workers from all the various industries and agriculture. Everywhere the picture is one of not only increases on last year but also of targets as set by the workers themselves, in many cases being exceeded and even higher targets set for the next year.

The high level of ideology and politics of the workers was shown in the variety of slogans they displayed. Internationally there were pledges of solidarity with the peoples of the world and emphasising particular struggles such as the Palestinians and Cambodians with pride of place going to the heroic Vietnamese. The Imperialist role of the two 'super powers' America and Russia was exposed as was their aim to carve up and exploit the world resources for their own ends together with the new tool of the capitalists, Soviet Modern Revisionism.

Conscious understanding, loyalty and discipline was shown towards the ideologies of Marxism Leninism and the Party. Great love and affection was demonstrated for Enver Hoxha not only in the banners but also as each group of workers passed the rostrum they just stood and showed their affection very strongly, at times the marshals of the march had a job to move the people on, and in fact at the end of the parade they just gave up - the last contingent was of youngsters about 10 to 14 years of age, 800 to 1000 of them waving flags and flowers, shouting and singing, and nobody was going to move them. When they were ready they moved off under their own discipline to join the rest of the parade.

The big struggle for workers in Albania at the moment is the fight against bureaucracy of which we saw many examples on our various visits, and on the demonstration there were many calls for an intensification of this fight together with calls to study and develop politically as part of the drive to create the Socialist Man.

Also on the parade were the various cultural groups of dancers and musicians that showed various aspects of life and traditional costumes.

The fitness and military preparedness was demonstrated by students and workers both in athletic kit and uniform and bearing

teachers, pupils, parents, factory workers, cooperatives and so on, always keeping in mind the aims of socialist education to prepare the masses not an elite. Also to arm the masses with a deep understanding of society so that they will further the building of Socialism and to develop a communist outlook on life and strengthen the unity of people. They developed an intergrated three fold scheme involving learning of general subjects, involvement in production, physical and military training. A special emphasis is laid on the link between theory and practice. For instance already at the nursery school children learn natural science in connection with gardening trips in the countryside. The aim is to develop the pupils self reliance and critical mind so that they can apply their knowledge in life.

Involvement in production assumes a particular importance to strengthen the dictatorship of the proletariat. One month of the school year is devoted to production work alternating between farm work and factory work. Here the younger generation will learn the values of the working class, respect for manual work and collective work. They will apply to production what they have learnt on the school benches. They will have an opportunity to develop skills and make a better choice of a job.

Secondary school education is completed by one compulsory year's work at the point of production which will enable the work collective to give advice on the pupils candidacy for further education. Surely their work mates are in the best position to decide whether their skills will be used to benefit the people and the building of socialism or to further personal ambitions.

Another important feature of education in Albania is that it does not end when the pupil has left school. On the contrary all adults are encouraged to study and they are given paid leave for study at all levels (some factories even have a branch of the University on their premises) and all of them have a school that workers can attend one day a week and during the evening. 80% of all workers are involved in some sort of study.

There is much more to say about education in socialist Albania. However this brief description shows well enough the discrepancy with education in capitalist Britain. The Albanians put education at the service of the people and the dictatorship of the proletariat. Education in Britain is organised to increase the bosses profit.

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ALBANIA SHOWS BRITAIN THE WAY FORWARD

'Albania shows Britain the way forward'. This immediate response to such a bold statement would be one of surprise. How could this little known country, sandwiched between Yugoslavia, Greece and the Adriatic and with less than two and a half million people show the way forward for Britain, the oldest of the industrial capitalist countries? The answer can best be summed up in one sentence. The people of Albania - factory workers, teachers, scientific workers, collective farm workers - are in control of the development and destiny of their country so as to make it the only Socialist country in Europe. Their effort and determination are an example to workers in Britain of what can be achieved once the hallmark of capitalism, the exploitation of man by man, is ended.

On November the 29th the Albanian people will be celebrating 31 years of Socialism. In Britain there will be no celebration of over 200 years of capitalism, as the results of those 200 years for the vast majority of people in Britain are falling living standards brought on by high inflation, unemployment racing to the 2 million mark, inadequate housing, massive cuts in the provision of health services and educational facilities, declining production and lack of industrial investment. In stark contrasts are the achievements of the Albanian people in 31 years of Socialism. 'Self reliance' has always been their watchword, for it has enabled them to preserve their independence and freedom ever since they routed the fascist troops occupying their country during the last war (in fact Albania was the only European country to rid itself of fascist occupation without recourse to outside help.)

Today Socialist construction in Albania continues on its road of improving the standard of living and the cultural well-being of the Albanian people as a whole. There are no frenzied dashes by Albanian ministers to attend summit conferences aimed at overcoming the latest crisis to befall European capitalist society. While industrial production in Britain falls below 1970 levels Albania can boast a rate of increase in industrial production and investment which not only surpasses that of Britain but that of many other European countries. It may come as a surprise to learn that Albania is an important oil producing and exporting nation. The exploitation of oil and other raw materials such as chromium, copper and iron, nickel ore is undertaken only through the application of Albanian skill and expertise. One of the fastest growth industries at present is the pharmaceutical industry which will ensure that Albania will

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