



NEW
ALBANIA
SOCIETY
BULLETIN

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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

arms. In a country that has suffered foreign invaders for 300 years and where the people are not in control of their own destiny, they do not view lightly the possibility that one day someone may try to oppress them again.

All in all May Day was a very exciting day, for me a very memorable day; on its own it would be just that, but with the visits and opportunities to meet workers on their own ground made it something more.

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At the present time education in Britain is under attack. Teachers Training Colleges are being closed, Newly qualified teachers cannot find jobs even though there are still many large classes. The educational budget has been cut. Let us see how Albania is coping with the education of its people.

EDUCATION IN ALBANIA

Education is a weapon in the hands of the working class. That is why the Albanian Communist Party set itself as a major task to wipe out illiteracy ; a resolution adopted at the National Conference of the Party held in March 1943 instructed its members 'to spread culture throughout the countryside by organising courses against illiteracy to give the broad masses of the peasants access to the culture they were denied by the former regimes'.

Between 1955 and 1965 illiteracy was virtually eliminated and courses kept on thereafter. Fantastic progress was made-there are now 32% of the population involved in studies compared to 5% before the liberation, 30,000 teachers (1,349 before lib:), 155 secondary schools (11 before lib:), 1600 kindergartens (23 before) There was a great need for specialists and skilled workers, but education was not developed haphazardly. In socialist Albania it has been developed in harmony with the growing needs of the country and the people.

However it was not sufficient to improve education in quantity. The Party of Labour of Albania always kept in mind that education had to serve the working class. Under the encouragement and supervision of the party the revolutionisation of the school system became the problem of the entire people. Everything was discussed on a nation wide basis over a two year debate involving

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

be self sufficient in its requirements for medical and health care. Albanian industry and commerce is certainly not at the mercy of Texaco, Hoffman, la Roche or any other multinational despite the smallness of its size and population.

The motive force behind Socialist construction in Albania is people not profit. While we in Britain are witnessing unprecedented reductions in living standards and high unemployment, prices in Albania continue to fall - monetary crisis inflation and unemployment are phenomena which are unknown to Albanians. Emphasis is put on the need to improve the quality of life; hence one will not find cuts being made in the provision of health, education and housing - on the contrary each of the 5 year plans since 1944 has provided for even greater expansion in these areas. First class health care is even available in the remotest of regions; there are no city slums and education is provided for children long before the age of five.

Of particular significance is the place of women in Albanian society. In Britain this year the Equal Pay Act takes effect and the Sex Discrimination Act has just come into force, but no matter how many acts are passed there will be no fundamental improvement in the position of women in our society. 'Thus as long as there is no true freedom for women in the society of a country, there cannot be genuine freedom in that country.' (Enver Hoxha) With generous provision of kindergartens and creches the Albanian mother can play an active role in the political, economic and social life of the country. This is only one example of how Albania creates 'true freedom'.

Thirty one years ago the Albanian people, led by the Party of Labour and leader Enver Hoxha, surveyed the destruction of their country after the victorious ousting of the fascist invader. They faced what must have seemed at that point impossible odds in their desire to build Socialism in their country - industry was non-existent, poverty, illiteracy and hunger were rampant. Their achievements in 31 years despite threats and blockades from their revisionist 'communist' neighbours and the capitalist countries are a powerful encouragement to us in Britain to follow their example.

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