A REVOLUTIONARY GREAT ALLIANCE

Walthamstow took no-one by surprise. Just two Tory parties so why bother to vote?
The result is "labour apathy", and Mr Wilson, like Mr Baldwin before him, goes on smoking his pipe.
The tradegy of Walthamstow is not the abstinence of thousands of Labour voters. Such refusal to vote for any of the squeeze-and-freeze candidates is on the contrary a step forward to recognition of reality, that Wilson is today's Tory-in-power, representing, like every Prime Minister since Walpole, the ruling section of the ruling class.
The tradegy of Walthamstow is that the thousands of disillusioned voters were given no opportunity to express their rejection of all the Tory parties, to cast their votes for a rejection of squeeze-and-freeze altogether, for the opposite policy of increasing production and national development.
The absence of a Working People's Party of England - there is already the beginnings of such a party in Scotland - is a shame to every English man and woman who claims to be a Marxist-Leninist, and a crippling handicap to the whole British people.
Such a party, even small, but with a clear correct mass line, a concrete immediate programme to put before the people as the alternative to squeeze and freeze, could in a few weeks have changed the Walthamstow by-election from a dull flop, a useless whimper, to a resounding challenge to both the Tory Parties. All that was needed was a positive alternative programme and a forceful organisation to fight for it.

How can any English Marxist-Leninist claim to be a revolutionary, who does not bother even to fight a Parliamentary by-election in a working-class constituency at a critical stage in this prolonged economic and political crisis?

How are our loudly self-proclaimed anti-revisionists any different IN PRACTICE from the rump in King Street, if their only concern is to inherit the King Street mantle, merely seeking another baton, another patron?

The London Workers Committee has made a resolve: never another Walthamstow. It is necessary NOW to prepare to fight for a new Britain wherever the destructive class and national enemy is active - on the front of trade unionism and the struggle for wages and working conditions, on the front of imperialism (the squeeze and freeze exists to maintain it) and also on the front of electoral struggle. Under conditions of capitalist pseudo-democracy any revolutionary party that neglects electoral struggle is not serious, but just phoney.

Our task, on all these fronts, is to launch a Revolutionary Great Alliance that will unite all those who can be united against the main enemy, presentimg here as the policy of freeze and squeeze. Freeze and squeeze, in all its loathsome aspects of the means test,

child poverty, geriatric wards and the looming return of that horror of the 1930's, mass unemployment, is what the mass of the people see, feel, and deeply resent.
It is also what they will violently reject once they are shown an alternative.

This alternative therefore is THE MAIN THING in a revolutionary immediate programme. A British 5-year Plan becomes IN THESE CIRCUMSTANCES a call to revolution, because only workers power can make such a plan possible.
Even Cousins began to recognise this a year ago when he said "Without the support of the ordinary men and women in industry nothing can be achieved by our Labour Government, with them behind it in a massive production drive NOTHING is impossible" (Mr Cousins italics
As we commented at the time, "Our Labour Government" will achieve nothing anywat but disaster, but to a Working People's Government it is perfectly true that almost nothing would be impossible.

Even the T.U.C. last month RESOLVED on a change of economic policy. But of course the Government, and the City financiers on whose behalf it governs, will take as little notice of this as it did of Mr. Cousins in 1966. And of course both the T.U.C. and Mr. Cousins are and were well aware of this: they were simply putting up a show.

What is needed now is not a show, but a showdown.

Wilson and his millionaires have to be told, and shown, that the British people refuse to maintain imperialist profits at the cost of unemployment at home.
To fight a by-election in a working class constituency can help to mobilise the working people., help them understand that
THOSE WHO WORK MUST HOLD POWER to organise that work to suit themselves, no a handful of rich exploiters.

It is to the interest of the overwhelming majority of the British people, including millions of Tory voters, to fight for such a Workers' National Plan.

It is even most definitely to the interest of thousands of capitalists, to all those more interested in production at home than exploitation abroad.

The working class, fighting against wage cuts and unemployment, can only win through POWER TO ORGANISE PRODUCTION. To do this, it can and should offer a NATIONAL ALLIANCE to all those who wish to increase production instead of reducing it, to organise production instead of unemployment.

The condition for any such planned increased of production is WORKERS' POWER.
Can anyone contest this?
It is this condition which makes this the necessary immediate programme of any serious revolutionary party.

We need a Revolutionary Great Alliance of the People against imperialism, for a National Plan.

As we go to press, two new developments.
The first is the multiplicity of storms in the Trade Union struggle - in the docks, on the London building sites, again at Roberts-Arundel in Stockport, at Vauxhall's and on the railways.

The tragedy is that these struggles, various in type, are uncoordinated, whereas they need to be united.

WORKERS' BROADSHEET has referred to the great General Strike of 1926 before this, and will certainly do so again. An analysis of its lessons for the working class that seeks power to reorganise our society for the workers, is much overdue.
In 1926 the ruling class through its Government - just as today - sought to reduce real wages. The working class, through an alliance of its strongest Unions, decided on united resistance.
The strike was an overwhelming success. It ultimately failed because its leadership never intended it to succeed - never in fact had intended that it should take place at all. The leadership therefore capitulated, disgracefully, to avoid a challenge to the state power of the capitalist class.
Had the leadership been prepared to challenge the power of the capitalist state, the General Strike would have led to a working class seizure of power - the precondition for socialism.
At this moment the capitalist state, led by Wilson, is directly challenging the free existence of any Trade Unions, or any other working class organisation that seeks to conduct actual struggle - as opposed to mere verbal disagreement - against Wilson's Tory policy.
Mr Heath and Mr Wilson are both determined to tie up all Trade Unions and to destroy any that continue to resist the Governments Tory policy.
This policy is itself aimed to maintain the export of capital - the economic aspect of imperialism - at whatever cost to the whole British people.
Wilson, whether he wishes it or not, is moving steadily towards a fascist state, with Trade Unions allowed to exist only as part of the state apparatus of class rule, as in Spain or Greece.
If the Trade Unions that have been leading resistance to the freeze - ASSET, DATA, SOGAT, and in patches the TGWU - wish to survive as independent working class organisations, they will be compelled to join our call to all Trade Unionists to unite to fight the common enemy: this Government of freeze and squeeze, of imperialism, fascism and national subservience to the U.S., this anti-working class Government, this Tory Government in Labour clothing.
To do this, they will have to put forward a positive alternative to freeze and squeeze, and this can only be a plan of national development in the interests of the people - as WORKERS' BROADSHEET has been putting forward since we first appeared a year ago.

It is clear that the workers - dockers, engineers, building and transport workers, railwaymen - are overwhelmingly ready to fight.
All that is lacking is a leadership, and how urgently this is needed

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is shown by a quite small item of news that hardly made the headlines - Bank Rate has been pushed up again.

Interest rates are also going up again in the U.S. and it is probable that the £ and the $ will simultaneously be devalued before long.
There is only one democratic way out of the capitalist crisis - Workers' Power to make possible a Workers' National Plan, supported by a revolutionary Great Alliance of the People.
The official trade union apparatus is clearly incapable of leading such a fight. This can only be successfully organised through the representatives of the workers on the shop floor - the shop stewards, and it is a primary task of socialist workers to ensure that their representatives fight for their true class interests.
And such a movement can be organised nationally and led politically only by a Working People's Party, fully and clearly basing itself on Marxism-Leninism, not afraid to face and raise openly the question of POWER.
There is one other aspect of the situation that every socialist must fully recognise. The main enemy is not at the present time the domestic capitalist, but the imperialist finance capitalist, who is also necessarily racist.
The workers' movement, based on its own shop stewards in every place of work, can succeed only by forming a close working alliance with the movement against racism and imperialism.
Workers' Power that does not include Black Workers' Power would be phoney and would rightly never get off the ground.
Irishmen, Scotsmen, Welshmen, Caribbeans all have their national culture and their national rights. But Workers' Power must mean brotherhood of man in reality, not just in hypocritical theory
A Working Peoples Party must abolish racism in its own ranks if it is to unite all those who can be united to defeat the main enemy - imperialism and Wilson its agent.

.LONDON WORKERS COMMITTEE.

A WORKERS BROADSHEET SUPPLEMENT.
SOCIALIST ALBANIA by MICHAEL McCREERY

Price 6d plus 3d postage.
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ON POWER

1) A political party represents a class and seeks power for that class. A Marxist-Leninist Party in England will represent and speak for the working class, and seek to lead that class to power. Such a transfer of power from one class to another has never in all history taken place without violent struggle, and the British working class must prepare for such struggle, and in particular its Marxist-Leninst party must thoroughly prepare for it.

2) Since the transfer of power could not be attempted, or even if successful could not be maintained, without the transfer being made effective throughout the British Isles, the problem is one that will require a joint programme and joint action of the Marxist-Leninist Parties in Scotland, England, Wales and Ireland and will therefore require a united leadership for such overall political planning and action.

3) A serious revolutionary party must do everything possible to strengthen the revolutionary forces and everything possible to weaken the counter-revolutionary forces. This means that it must always seek to unite all those who can be united against the main enemy in any given situation.

4) In Briatin today the main enemy is imperialism, led by U.S. imperialism supported by the weaker and subservient British imperialism. The main party of British imperialism (and therefore the main representative of U.S. imperialism in Britain) is at present the Labour Party, under Wilson's leadership. On all main questions of policy-wage restriction, restriction of production, support of U.S. foreign policy, and getting into the European Common Market - there is agreement between the main forces in both the main parties of British imperialism (Labour & Tory) with no significant disagreement from the Liberals.

5) There is both the main parties of British imperialism a dissident or potentially dissident wing. In the Labout Party there is "the Left", a variable group who claim to be socialists, who criticise foreign policy (while stille passively supporting it) and who also criticise home policy (the wage freeze especially) claiming that a different policy could run the present-imperialist system more successfully. This is also the proclaimed policy of the revisionist Communist Party.

6) But there is also another group, who make no claim to be socialist and do not criticise the anti-Trade Union actions of the Government, but criticise its foreign policy, and therefore are forced also to a critical attitude to U.S. policy. The views of this group are similar to those of a dissident (or potentially dissident) wing of the Tory Party, led by Enoch Powell, who criticise both the

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incomes policy in the name of free capitalism, and the foreign policy dictated by the U.S. as being impracticable and in fact suicidal. Both these groups have a policy comparable to that of De Gaulle's for French capitalism.

7) A revolutionary party of the working class will seek an alliance with both these dissident groups, irrespective of their Party allegiance, and also with the Liberal Party if it should be prepared to join such a common front of anti-imperialism.

8) But of course such a common front could only be formed on a real anti-imperialist programme, and in no circumstances whatever on a programme that compromised with imperialism.

9) Two things are essential for such an anti-imperialist alliance to become a practical possibility:
first, the working class party itself muct become strong enough in action to impress critics of the present imperialist policy within the two main parties.
second, events must further discredit this policy, e.g. further U.S defeats in Vietnam, and/or other successes in national liberation struggles.
Or finally it could become a practical possibility if the British workers revolt so much against the wage-freeze that some capitalists begin to look for an alternative, as is already beginning to happen.
10) It is in any case necessary that from the beginning a Marxist-Leninist Party should clearly and unequivocally campaign for such a united anti-imperialist front, presenting planned production under working class power as its practical alternative to the wage-freeze and the production squeeze.

ON THE SEIZURE OF POWER

11) A serious revolutionary party must consider this question in a detailed and practical manner.
First, it must be understood that readiness to take power is itself an important factor, the determination to take power when the opportunity arises, e.g. the French C.P. made no attempt to reach power in May 1936, and both the French and Italian C.P's relinquished the claim to power on behalf of their respective peoples in 1945 when the workers were armed and at least in as favourable a situation as were the Chinese people at the same time.
12) Secondly, it must be understood that a revolutionary party does not wait for the opportunity to seize power, it works to make that opportunity by mobilising the widest possible support for a mass line that millions can see must be supported, who will therefore support it up to and including seizure of power.

A historical example of this, within the memory of comrades still active today, was the General Strike of 1926.
The General Strike of 1926 showed:

13) First, that is is possible to mobilise the whole British working class in its own defence, in its own economic interest, up to and including readiness to seize power by force: the workers in 1926 were quite unconcerned with whether their actions were " constitutional", they saw the whole matter practically, and were therefore practically ready to do whatever they themselves could see to be necessary to achieve their aim.

14) Secondly, the G.S showed that a national mobilisation for a Trade Union (economic) aim alone could not be successful unless it also had had the political aim of power. Therefore there has to be a revolutionary political leadership - absent in 1926.

15) Since 1926, and especially since 1964, the T.U.'s have become increasingly a part of the State apparatus. A mass mobilisation of the workers today cannot be done thro' the T.U. apparatus which would never make such a call.

16) this can only be done thro' the shop stewards, who therefore need to be nationally organised. Although the shop stewards also are today to a large extent part of the existing capitalist system, yet they are essential for any such mass mobilisation. They are necessarily in close contact with the workers they represent (unlike the T.U. apparatchiki) and therefore must remain largely responsive to pressure from below. The winning over of a large proportion of shop stewards or their replacements by better ones thro' pressure from the workers, is essential to a revolutionary movement.
Any revolutionary party that does not win over the shop stewards can never achieve a change of class power under existing conditions of capitalist partial democracy. Any party that does not try to win the shop stewards over to a revolutionary programme is not a revolutionary party.

What the Soviets were in Russia on 1917, the Shop Stewards are in embryo in Britain today.

.THE LONDON WORKERS COMMITTEE.

August 1967.

We are also opposed to "Left" phrase-mongering. The thinking of "Leftists" outstrips a given stage of development of the objective process; some regard their fantasies as truth, while others strain to realise in the present an ideal which can only be realised in the future. They alienate themselves from the current practice of the majority of the people and from the realities of the day, and show themselves adventurist in their actions.

Mao Tse - Tung 'On Practice' July 1937

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