

THE PROGRESS OF BRITAIN IS UNITED TO THE STRUGGLE FOR SOCIALISM

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There is no room for the development of the Communist Party in Britain, but there is plenty of room for the development of the Labour left. In the British Communists, some of them pose the need to turn all their efforts towards the base of the Labour Party. This opens a debate, but it shows what a big crisis is shaking the Communist Party.

Although they must address the Labour Party's base, of course, the Communists must discuss programmatically. And this is what the Labour base cannot do. The Communists must make analyses aimed at discussions in the leading circles of politics, where news and publications circulate, where the Communists can influence. The comrades must debate and write on all the questions of Socialism.

To deal with all the questions of Socialism, it is necessary to show that Socialism is the solution: the planned economy, workers control and the State monopoly of foreign trade, insisting on the need to have the working class rise as the essential factor of leadership. None of this can be done quickly.

More than stating it, the Communists must prove the superiority of their Party. The Party's analyses must explore the depth of the capitalist crisis and insist on the superiority of the Workers States. When they refer to the Soviet Union, China and Cuba, they must demonstrate in what way these are superior, how they changed their economic base and how they resolved all the problems that capitalism could not resolve.

The era of capitalist progress has ended. Do not expect

improvements in the economy of the capitalist system. Capitalism can no more improve the economy or the human condition. It distributes the national wealth as it does, and it has no other way to do it. You can see the difference quite clearly when you compare the Workers States and Britain. In Britain, the Labour leadership tells us that capitalism is very democratic because people can speak; everyone is allowed to speak ... except those who struggle for the socialist revolution and defend it. In capitalism, the latter do not even qualify to the title of 'dissidents'.

There is a scandalous level of poverty in Britain. There are still houses without bathrooms and miners die of inhaled dusts and fumes. Because the policy of retaining a part of the empire is seemingly unshakable, the country continues to assassinate in various parts of the world. In relative terms, the conditions of life for the population are of the lowest in the history of Britain. Some items of daily use can be cheap, but food is expensive. In 1977 Britain, the standard of life is low and transport is horribly dear. It is not true that people live well, and even less true that they have democracy. There is no democracy. There is the democratic right to join the dole queue! Is 'democracy' the right to join the dole queue?

**Britain has still to overcome private property
but the Soviet Union has already done it :**

We are told in every day's news that there are 'dissidents', 'a dictatorship' and 'assassinations' in the Soviet Union. But if you travel to the USSR, you see no such things. It is not possible to discuss the existence of 'dissidents' or the absence of 'democratic liberties' in the abstract. What has happened in the Soviet Union? What is available to the working class there? What social changes have been made, and who benefits from them?

Britain has still to overcome the system of private property, but

this feat has been accomplished in the Soviet Union. The latter is now engaged in building the political leadership that you need when you have overcome private property. Everything that happens in the Soviet Union has lessons to teach in this matter. We explain this ourselves and we propose that the Communists do the same. To the public that we want to influence, we must give time to understand these matters. One must write deep and general articles first, and then follow these up with lots of articles explaining each aspect.

Following the question of "*Where is Britain going?*" posed by Trotsky in his texts¹, we look back upon these and give the answer for today: "*Britain goes to Socialism, the only road to progress*". There is no more human progress to come to Britain outside the struggle for Socialism. People understand this conclusion easily because this is the experience of their lives. They see that capitalism does not, and cannot cater for their needs. Every economic and human right has to be re-fought for. Capitalism opposes every improvement. On our part, it is not enough to eulogise the Soviet Union, China and Cuba. One must explain that the only response of capitalism to its crisis is increased exploitation, with more disasters as a result, more work accidents, more unemployment and the continuing deterioration of life.

Among the effects of unemployment, there is not just the economic suffering. There is the moral torment of feeling below par, diminished, useless, no longer wanted. If this has not worse effects, it is because the unemployed see that Trade Unions exist, workers' parties, Workers States, the Soviet Union. This helps with the depression. It helps in staying sane. Now however, it is the bourgeois class that gets depression. It sees itself with no solution. Whilst it could always fall back on war in the past, liquidating any number of millions of people in the

¹ See more on Trotsky's *Where is Britain Going?* at the end of this document.

process, it no longer has this option these days. Its next war means its own liquidation, and it knows it. In the mentality of capitalism, this produces a moral decay, a disposition to senseless and desperate actions. In the arguments which it employs, the bourgeois class hardly uses reasoning any more. It is like paralysed in the head.

A discussion is needed with the Communist comrades on the best way to win the Labour Party to Socialism. Some Communists think of simply joining Labour. These comrades will do this usefully if they preserve the right to write articles, make speeches and formulate programmes for the struggle. They must remain free to say that capitalism must be destroyed and that Socialism must be built. If they do not do this, their joining Labour will have no effect. They will enter a bureaucratic apparatus with no means to avoid becoming part of it.

The role of the British Communists and the Socialist Republic :

Divisions are developing in the British Communist Party and this must be discussed. There seems to be differences between them on matters of internal organisation. We reckon that there is much empiricism on all sides because we do not see huge divergences at political level. Comrades debate whether to enter the Labour Party. It is true that the British Communist Party had been allowed in the Labour Party in the past. That was when the Fabian origin of Labour was still allowing the presence of tendencies. The Communists were allowed in Labour for about two years, but this helped the Labour left very little.

There was a time in the 60's and early 70's when even ourselves could operate in the Labour Party. British imperialism felt confident then. It felt also that the inner workings of the Labour Party could keep the ideas of the left isolated. But things have changed. If tendencies are no longer allowed in the Labour Party,

it is because imperialism and the Labour's structures are no longer so sure of themselves.

It is not correct to think that the British workers are wedded to Labour. The important advances that they made under Labour caused them to put a lot of trust in that Party, but other factors intervened too. Stalin is to be found amongst those factors, him and his policies. Stalin's betrayal of the general strike of 1926 pushed the British working class back towards Labour, and this continued for years as Stalinism spread in the world and in the Communist parties.

If the Communists want to enter the Labour Party, we do not say that they are wrong. We just say that if they do, they must insist on retaining the right to speak, publish, give opinions regarding objectives, produce programmes and policies, etc. And they must work for the reunification of the world communist movement at the same time. To succeed in this, the comrades will have to really believe in helping the Labour left, and they will have to do this on the basis the programme for Socialism in Britain. What does 'the programme for Socialism' in Britain mean? It means the overthrow of the monarchy. It means putting an end to the oppression that the monarchy represents for Scotland, Wales and Ireland. It means to propose the Socialist Republic.

The only Republic possible in Britain is the Socialist one :

The struggles in Scotland, Wales and Ireland form part of the struggle for Socialism. The demand of each of these nations for self-determination can only find satisfaction in a British Federation. Because the capitalist regime does not permit any such progressive social transformation, the Federation will have to be socialist. The socialist Federation is in the power of the Workers State, not of capitalism. A Workers State has to be

made in Britain therefore, and it is the role of the Communists to say so.

The Communists must put all their efforts behind slogans of Workers Power to unite the city workers and those of the countryside. Regarding how this will pan out, do not expect a period where the abolition of the monarchy will be followed by a Republican stage, and then by a Socialist Republic. It is not going to work like this in Britain.

The stage of the Republic belongs to the bourgeois democratic revolution. The British bourgeoisie should have made the Republic long ago, but the social structures which it developed after its democratic revolution (1642) never allowed it. Because the stage of the bourgeois Republic has passed, the Republic will only happen as part of the socialist transformation of Britain. When this process starts, it will mean the Socialist Republic immediately.

You plumb the depth of the incapacity of capitalism in this matter of the Republic. The internal power structures of capitalist Britain developed as part of the subjugation of far-away countries, the oppression of nations and regions, the repression of languages. The capitalist domination of the home nations evolved within processes where the leadership of each nation integrated the overall structure of the capitalist system.

We must intervene with texts and analyses on these matters. There must be a discussion in the workers movement, in the Communist Party and in the Labour Party on the need to maintain the unity of Britain. This unity can only be preserved in a country that grants liberty to all its previous possessions and colonies; a country that does away with the monarchy; a Federation that ushers in the Socialist Republic.

This has to be the aim of the British Communist Party. Since it cannot lead this social transformation all by itself, the Communist Party has to support the Labour left. It has to produce texts and arguments for that purpose. It must help the Labour left to understand all this.

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Editorial Note:

**Trotsky's writings on Britain, main chapters:
in the New Park Publications, 1974, London**

Volume 1,

History and Culture of Britain
The Decline of British Imperialism 1908-1926
The Labour Movement 1906-1924

Volume 2,

Where is Britain Going?
Problems of the British Labour Movement 1925-1926
The Lessons of the General Strike

Volume 3,

From World Slump to World War 1929-1940
Trotskyism Versus Centrism in Britain
British Imperialism and National Liberation Struggles
 Ireland 1916
 Afghanistan
 India
 Britain and Mexico 1938
