

Notes on the Election

MORALE in the Communist Party of Great Britain has never been so low, yet it is a sure sign of social democratic degeneration, that the Party only comes to life at election time. After the election, the C.P.G.B. returns to its somnolent torpor.

We know well enough that the Trotskyists are always exaggerating the militant mood of the proletariat, making out that we are on the verge of a revolutionary situation. That is left wing opportunism in the working class movement. But what about right wing opportunism, which is at the present time the more serious danger? The *Daily Worker* and the C.P. press paint an absolutely false picture of the mood of the electorate. They are supposed to be fighting mad, determined to get rid of the Tories at all costs. On October 10, Saturday's *Daily Worker* headlines screamed, "Tories Shaking in Shoes. Final push for a Labour and Communist Majority." Who did they think they were kidding? In Monday's editorial (12/10/64) we get this characteristic example of the subjective thinking of the revisionists:

"If Mr. Wilson were to say he will lead a campaign to prevent the M.L.F. coming into existence and to stop any schemes with the same aims, the tide against the Tories would turn into a raging torrent."

Apart from anything else, most people don't even know what the M.L.F. is. Where is the evidence to support such wishful thinking? We spoke to some Party members who had been out canvassing for Sid French in the Mitcham (Surrey) constituency, and they most certainly did not share the *Daily Worker*'s absurd optimism. Obviously, then, the *Daily Worker* writers are stating as realistic facts what are merely idealistic hopes. They are dreaming.

Like the notorious subjectivists they have become and in common with their brother opportunists, the Trotskyists, they are substituting subjective wishes for objective facts.

What is really the mood of the electorate? The plain fact is, and this was especially true among the youth, the General Election was a big bore. There was very little to choose between the three main parties, and the young voters knew that whoever got in, it was not going to make much difference to them. One paper claimed that only 25% of new voters would go to the polls. Another paper interviewed some women, who said that they would vote if it was a nice day and if somebody looked after the children, but that the household chores came first. The indisputable fact is that there was widespread cynicism about the election, in spite of all sorts of gimmicks which were dreamed up in order to put some life into it.

Nor was it true that the capitalists were shaking in their shoes at the thought of a Labour victory. This was utter nonsense. Actually, they were quite cool, calm and collected. My mate was reading the *Daily Express* (Monday, 12/10/64). After looking through it, he threw it down saying, "I always thought this was a Tory paper, but now it is difficult to tell who it favours. It is getting harder and harder to tell the difference between the various newspapers and parties." The *Economist* came out in favour of a Labour government, while *The Times* was non-committal until the very eve of the election, when it almost apologetically declared itself for the Tories. The oldest and craftiest capitalist class in the world are no mugs, and they knew they were on a winner, no matter who got in.

Let us, therefore, ask ourselves why the revisionists vie with the Trotskyists in painting such a false picture of the Tories shaking in their shoes, cowed and unhappy, with the working class ready for a left lead, and eager and anxious to defeat the Tories. The first answer which comes to mind is that they are trying to rally the troops, to boost the low morale of the activists. This is an old trick of the C.P.G.B. leadership. We remember how in one election after another they told us that if we worked our fingers to the bone, we could get Pollitt or some other candidate into Parliament, when there was not the remotest possibility that they would even save their deposit. But this is not the whole story. The fact is that the C.P.G.B. has completely lost faith in the working class. Therefore, they are no longer concerned about power; like other petty bourgeois elements in the

Labour Party, for example, they want to use their following to win them offices and positions, particularly in Parliament. They have no revolutionary perspective; the sum total of their ambition is to merge themselves in the Labour Party by becoming a left-wing ginger group. The only trouble is that, grovel as they might, the Labour Party doesn't want them or need them yet. In other words, the revisionists have degenerated into left-wing social democrats, and as such, they are behaving more and more like parliamentary cretins. All their criteria is social democratic criteria, so electoral success is now of supreme and overriding importance.

We are not saying anything new when we state that bourgeois ideology is the prevailing ideology—this is particularly so in this country. Revisionism is the contamination of proletarian ideology by bourgeois ideology. In these circumstances, it is not particularly difficult to achieve a measure of electoral success by submitting to bourgeois pressure, by abandoning one's principles, and by adapting oneself to the already deep-rooted bourgeois ideas and petty bourgeois illusions of the masses. This is success for a social democratic party, but it is not success from the standpoint of working class power, from the standpoint of Marxism-Leninism. The reformists and revisionists both get their votes by exploiting the subjective hopes and aspirations of the masses, by pretending to be what they are not and by sacrificing principles. But the reformists have most of the cake—the revisionists are left with the tiny crumbs. What they are after is a bigger slice of the cake, and so they vainly hope to get it by trying to push the reformists to the left. Right throughout the period of this election campaign, they have made grovelling appeals to the Labour Party. "Wilson must do this," screams the *Daily Worker* editorials, "Wilson must do that." He takes not a blind bit of notice of them, nor is he ever likely to except to rub their noses in the dirt, yet they stubbornly persist. They go in for wishful thinking in huge dollops. Dear Harold, if only you would adopt our policy, you would sweep into power. Dear Harold knows different. He doesn't live in fairy land. Harold knows where the votes are, and he can rake them in all right without the assistance of the revisionists.

Some of the C.P. canvassers with whom we spoke agreed with the nature of our criticism, but maintained that, with conditions as they are at present, a Marxist-Leninist policy would gather even less votes than a revisionist policy. This may be so. We do not behave in the unprincipled manner that the revisionists do. We do not say, "adopt our policy and everybody will vote for you, and you will make spectacular gains." What we do say, however, is that gains made by compromising principles are no gains from a Marxist-Leninist standpoint, and such victories are only pyrrhic victories. But truth is invincible, even though it may take a long time for truth to triumph. Successes gained by abandoning principles are ephemeral successes—they will not endure. Hard-won successes gained by standing by principles are real successes—they will endure.

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