

the Red Mole



It for the Workers, the Irish, the Blacks, the
habitants of every country oppressed by British
perialism, there is no way forward except

REVOLUTIONARY STRUGGLE

WHAT TO EXPECT AFTER THE ELECTION

If you believe everything Labour and Tory politicians tell you, this election is going to solve all sorts of problems. "Put us in," they say, "and we'll get you a job, take you out of your slum and make you a citizen of Europe." Balls. The real problems are going to start after the election when they've quit selling their shoddy wares and can get back to running British capitalism.

There are all sorts of unfinished jobs that Labour has left, either to have another crack at them, or to let the Tories have a go. Since these problems don't figure in election manifestoes, they don't have to pretend that they have big differences on how to solve them.

Incomes & Productivity

British capitalism has a long-term strategy for dealing with the factories. After the Second World War they got left behind in developing new techniques. This, combined with the upsurge of a powerful shop stewards movement, which was able to operate independently of the Union bureaucrats, and which pushed up wages through militant action, has meant that they now have to decisively cut the costs of production through lowering the amount they lay out in labour costs, and introducing new techniques and working practices.

There are two arms to their policy, "Incomes Policy" and "Productivity Deals". Incomes policy means the integration of wages into capitalist planning, the elimination of any independent action by the working class to re-divide the surplus value in their favour; in the long term it means a lowering of real wages for the mass of the workers. No one should be deceived by the recent spate of wage increases. The bosses are content to allow these temporarily, knowing they will soon be eliminated by inflation. They want a breathing space until after the election. After that the real fight will be on.

Closely linked to incomes policy is the strategy of productivity deals—already these cover something like 30% of industrial workers. They quite simply mean that workers are induced to "sell" some of the privileges they have gained through struggle over the years, and accept all sorts of modern techniques, usually involving total submission of working life to the needs of the machine, and always meaning a major attack on those aspects of control which workers at present operate over aspects of life in the factory. The price got by workers for these deals is then washed away by inflation.

The stalemate reached between the Government and the TUC over *In Place of Strife* ended in a partial retreat by the Government over incomes policy, but a retreat by the "left" union leaders on the question of productivity. After the election, whichever party is elected, the offensive on the incomes policy front will

be resumed. Militant shop stewards should be preparing for tough battles ahead. Revolutionaries should be preparing for solidarity action with more and more stormy strikes of the Pilkington type.

The Common Market

In the modern world the important markets are in the advanced capitalist countries. The strength of U.S. big business makes the penetration of the transatlantic market difficult for the British bosses: they have got to get a piece of the West European market. That means entering the Common Market, and that's why Labour in office got its road to Damascus conversion to the EEC. To compete, they have to cut living standards here. Everyone knows this, and that's why, strictly for the election season only, both major parties are kidding people into believing that they are trying to get suitably painless "terms". Don't believe a word of it—after the election they'll be in the first chance they get. We must start now to prepare for a class struggle on a European scale.

The Fight Against Racism: Black Power

Racism in Britain stems directly from the old days of empire. To get the support of the British population for foreign conquests and wars of repression, the ruling class instilled the concepts of Anglo-Saxon superiority, and the need to run the lives of wogs who were incapable of fending for themselves. These are changed days and they now need some of these wogs to look after their investments for them. So they now pretend to be horrified at racism, and to believe in "integration". But the reality of imperialism means that they cannot really eliminate racism, although now it takes a subtly different form—they must try to maintain the feeling amongst black people themselves that they are inferior. This is why they are uptight at the growth of Black Power.

They would like the black people here to be a docile, cheap work-force, convenient for taking the blame for housing and hospitals. The example of the struggle of black people all over the world, and especially of the Afro-Americans is inspiring a growing Black Power movement here. This is just what the bourgeoisie fear—black people standing up, proud and defiant. They had hoped that Powellism and skinhead attacks would drive the black people behind Uncle Tom leaders docilely to seek the protection of the British bobby, and keep quiet for fear of deportation. But the response of a growing section of the black people has been to organise themselves for self-defence and to develop a strategy to combat racism by organising the black communities. Comrades who participated in the Black Panther demo. in Notting Hill on May 31st report that they received a warm reception from the black people. It was for these reasons that the police launched their vicious unprovoked assault on the black militants after the joint VSC/Black Panthers demo on April 26th. It is for these

reasons that the Black Power movement is going to grow, and will be subjected to even harsher repression. So far the response from the British Left has been minuscule, if not contemptible. The SLL's *Workers Press* carried substantially the same report on the April 26th demo as the *Daily Express*. Solidarity with the black people is an urgent necessity. They must not be left to fight alone.

Attack On Youth

Repression in the universities, colleges and schools is on the agenda whoever occupies 10 Downing Street. Technological capitalism needs a highly skilled labour force; the education system must produce this for them. The radicalisation of youth puts this in jeopardy—therefore political files, expulsions, etc. etc. But the strategy they are working on is reflected in the DES proposals for re-structuring the higher education system. Loans instead of grants, home-based students, a cut-down in the number of overseas students, re-structuring of courses. All designed to re-tool the education system to serve the monopolies more and more directly, and to undermine resistance from the students. A mass student movement will be needed to smash these plans. Militants in the universities, colleges and schools must prepare now for these battles. The present lull in the struggle while comrades are being victimised must be overcome.

The Irish Struggle

One of the unexploded bombs left lying around from the days when the sun never set on a British colony is the Irish problem. The civil rights movement of the last two years may have seemed to many people to have blown it up, but it only lit the fuse. The treaty setting up the Free State in 1922 aborted the national/democratic revolution which was sparked off by the Easter Rising of 1916. The repressive N. Irish state was set up based on Orangeism—a reactionary ideology fostered by British imperialism.

After Bogside and Falls erected their barricades, British troops were sent in, not to protect the Catholics from Orange extremists, but to directly restructure N. Ireland in the interests of British imperialism. Britain wants a neo-colonialist solution to the Irish problem, and therefore is trying to get a close alliance with the Lynch wing of Green Toryism in Dublin. This means that while they will quell the excesses of Paisleyism or even buy the reverend doctor over, their faces are set more sternly against those who want real freedom for Ireland; an Ireland united and owned by the workers and small farmers. The swing to the left in Sinn Feinn, their increasing commitment to political and social issues, the emergence of a small Marxist vanguard in Ireland, the increasing militancy of workers' struggles over there (recently a ship trying to ship in cement to break the cement strike in the Republic had to turn back after being stoned by hundreds of

men, women and children in Newry, N. I.—all put this strategy in danger.

This means repression against Irish fighting more Irish prisoners in British and Green jails, more exchange of information between London and Dublin. The need is for an effective solidarity struggle with the Irish militants, all the more since the sharpening of the struggle over there is going to radicalise large numbers of Irish people here. The British Left must overcome its woeful ignorance of Irish history and politics and construct solidarity with the Irish fighters.

War & Revolution in Indo-China

Britain's contemptible support for the U.S. escalation of the war in Indo-China will continue on June 19th. The escalation in China is the signal that imperialism is not to give an inch to the revolution in the Third World; there will be more Song My's, the more Cambodia's. The fall of Sihanouk the involvement now of the Thai government indicative of the fact that there can no longer be any standing on the sidelines in Asia, Africa or Latin America. No more "neutrality" or more pacificism, the choice is either/or; either you fight on the same side as the NLF against imperialism, or you submit completely to the requirements of the world's greatest and most brutal power, the United States of America.

This means that solidarity with Third World struggles, particularly the Indo-Chinese, is more vital than ever, and yet the British Left has allowed this tremendous change in the world situation go almost unnoticed, apart from a demonstration. Solidarity with these struggles is their necessary corollary. We can never come to understand the international dimension of their struggles; we can never do that unless we are passionately involved in these battles ourselves.

Build The Vanguard

These are some of the struggles facing us in the elections, but it is not enough to see them as a separate series of issues; they are closely inter-related. That means that in fighting them we must attempt to link them, to use one struggle to help another, and to attack the enemy on the weakest front at any given time. It is useless to link them merely on the level of propaganda—what is required is organisational assessment of these issues and construct a strategy to fight them, and which has the authority and experience necessary to give leadership to all who are involved in the struggle. This means a revolutionary vanguard, the kind of organisation that Lenin built. A vanguard, which, dealing with a world enemy, is itself international. That is the challenge we face. The problem that this election will not solve is

LABOUR'S RECORD

The Practical Task

It is not the job of the Left here or on the Continent just to beat its breast in horror and indignation at the role played by the Labour Party or the Social Democracy. We must also face the practical task of all revolutionaries in these countries—to break the ideological grip of such parties (and the reformist Communist Parties as well) on the organised working class in the process of building a revolutionary alternative.

Labour's Crimes

We can list some of the crimes perpetrated by the Labour Party against the British and international working class:— the wage freeze; the calculated re-introduction of unemployment; the campaign of calumny against the Seamen, the 1966 dock strikers, and the Ford workers of 1968; the subordination of British foreign policy to the strategic demands of American imperialism; the capitulation to racism in its legislation on immigrants; the continuing attempt to hamstring the shop-stewards committees by passing them through productivity deals while integrating the T.U. leaders more firmly into the state apparatus; the attacks on the Welfare State. This list is long and painful, and we should of course utilise these and other examples in fighting the Labour Party and especially Labour Ministers.

What the Bosses Wanted

But more than anything else, we must understand exactly what the ruling class expected of

the Labour Government when it took office in 1964; and how the Labour Party acts as an instrument of the ruling class embedded in the lives and organisations of the working class; how it has been used during the last six years to try to carry out policies which the ruling class did not feel it could impose through the Conservative Party without a head-on collision which might have created tremendous explosions, even a general strike. The Balance of Payments crisis of 1964 was certainly partly due to an artificial pre-election boom. But that crisis was far more the result of a long-standing and deepening crisis of British capitalism which could only be eased by a big modernisation and concentration of British industry, a renovation of management technique and a drastic reformulation of British capitalism's investment habits.

It was the task of the Labour Government to come to the help of this ailing capitalism. For six years now, every action of this Government has proceeded from its total rejection of the class struggle (of the necessity to ally itself with that class which elected it to office) and instead again and again we have seen it speak and act in the name of "The National Interest" which has logically meant nothing more than "What is good enough for British capital is good for British workers too."

To "make Britain viable" has meant something else to the majority of workers in this country; what the whole idea means is an increase in the rate of profit and of the rate of exploitation of labour power, or in other words, less wages per unit of work and more units of work per hour. But the trade-union movement, accustomed to 20 years of full employment, and with the shop-steward movement as its backbone, has been a tremendous obstacle to this process. The bourgeoisie preferred a Labour Government to try and handle the job because

it thought Wilson could erode and break working-class resistance to the solution to their problems more easily than Heath *precisely because of the illusions that the majority of the working class still had in the Labour Party.*

The Wilson Strategy

The Wilson strategy was not a simple confrontationist one. If he had done that, then maybe he would have laid the basis for such widespread disillusion in his party that in all probability it would have split and we would now be seeing the emergence of a Left alternative and perhaps even a revolutionary one. No. He worked through the trade union leaders. His object was always to make a distinction between official and unofficial strikes and try to widen the split between the T.U. bureaucrats and the shop stewards. It must be emphasised that the attack on the workers' organisations was not some aberration, some absence of mind on the part of the Wilson regime. It was, and remains, the corner-stone of its whole strategy for modernising British capitalism. For it is one of the distinctive features of modern capitalism that it has to plan ahead—years ahead—before making its investment decisions. And wages have to be included in that plan. But how can capitalist planning co-exist with free wage bargaining on the shop floor? It can't. The shop stewards have to be broken either by law, by coercion, or by being by-passed, by productivity deals. We have seen all methods tried in the last six years. The result so far has been a sort of stalemate with the defeat of the penal clauses in May '69 but an undertaking by Vic Feather and others in the TUC to "keep their own house in order". The rank-and-file response to this attack has been the election of left-sounding trade-union secretaries, notably Jones and Scanlon and also a growing militancy and strengthening of the shop stewards committees. But these latter can find no support in their fight against

productivity deals from the "left" trade-union bosses.

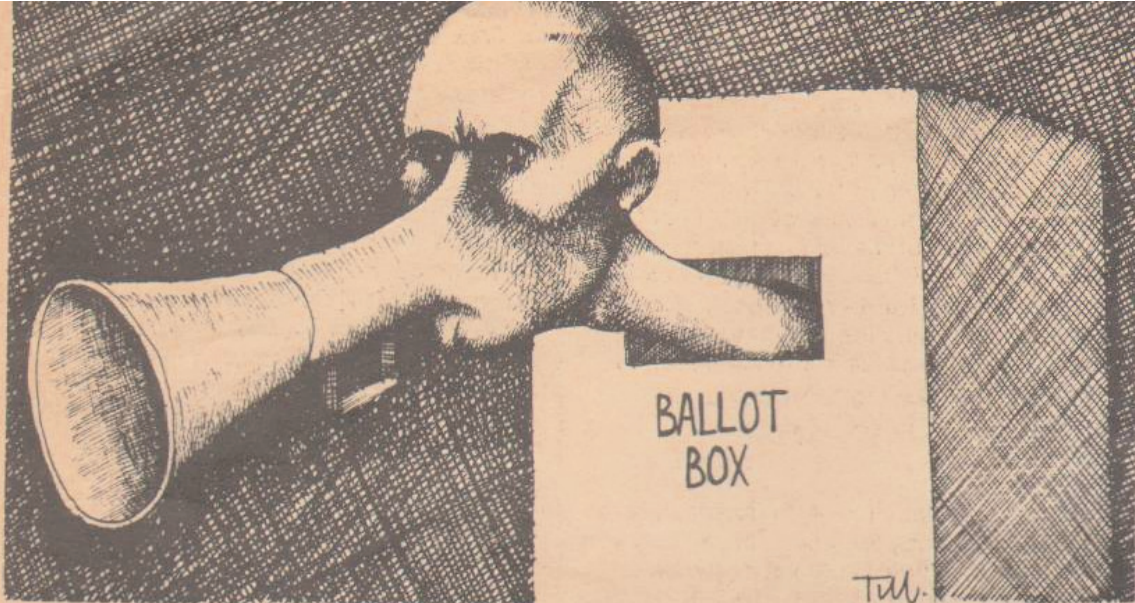
A Responsible Government?

And abroad, the Labour Government has shown itself to be a very "responsible" government—responsible, that is, to the interests of international and British capital. When vacillating reformists come under pressure to the right, they move to the right fast. The record on Vietnam, Laos, Cambodia and the murder of American students in Ohio, etc. needs no comment here. On its own account the Labour Government has sent troops to the Caribbean and fought a war in Aden; even it is napalming liberation forces in Dhofa Persian Gulf. It has funked in Rhodesia, lost to Zionist-American pressure in the Middle East and played the Imperialist in Northern Ireland as adroitly as Lloyd George ever did.

Let no one get away with the argument supporting Labour "To keep the Tory Bores out", or even worse, "They've had a very difficult situation to deal with". The Labour Party in and out of office has always principally served the interests of the ruling class. The reforms it has fought for in the past have undoubtedly made it more effective in doing just that. It survives on the illusion of the class which elects it continues to have an alternative to it from the Left. What the last six years have shown is that the crisis of British capitalism has not allowed the Labour Party to grant any reforms at all; and without these reforms it can only lose all credibility.

If we want the Labour Party to win the election, it is for one principal reason—because in office it can hang itself quicker than a cat in an office. But our main task is build the revolutionary party to finish off the job.

John Weal



2nd COMINTERN THESES ON PARLIAMENTARIANISM

The following theses, drafted and introduced by Bukharin, were adopted by the Second Comintern Congress in August 1920. They were directed both against parliamentarians who became part of the bourgeois state machine and against the anarchists and syndicalists who opposed parliamentary activities on principle.

1. THE NEW EPOCH AND THE NEW PARLIAMENTARIANISM

From the very first, at the time of the First International, the attitude of socialist parties towards parliament was to utilise bourgeois parliaments for purposes of agitation. Participation in parliament was viewed from the standpoint of developing class consciousness, that is, of awakening the class hostility of the proletariat towards the ruling class. This attitude changed under the influence not of theory but of political developments...

The attitude of the Communist International towards parliament is determined not by any new theory, but by a change in the role of parliaments themselves. In the preceding epoch parliament, as an instrument of developing capitalism, accomplished work which was to a certain extent historically progressive. In present conditions of unbridled imperialism, however, parliament has become an instrument of falsehood, deception, and violence, an enervating talkshop. In the face of the devastation, looting, violence, robberies and destruction committed by imperialism, parliamentary reforms lacking system, durability and order, lose all practical significance for the working masses.

Socialists who, while inclined towards communism, point out that the moment for revolution has not yet come in their country, and refuse to break away from the parliamentary opportunists, are in fact arguing from a conscious or semi-conscious assessment of the approaching epoch as one of relative stability of imperialist society, and assuming, on this basis, that practical results can be obtained by a coalition with the Turatis and Longuets in the fight for reform. But communism must start from a clear theoretical analysis of the character of the present epoch (the culmination of capitalism, imperialist self-negation and self-destruction, uninterrupted spread of civil war, etc.). The forms of political relations and groupings may be different in different countries, but their essential nature is the same everywhere. For us the question is the immediate political and technological preparation of the insurrection of the proletariat for the destruction of bourgeois power and the establishment of the new proletarian power.

For communists, parliament today can in no circumstances serve as the centre of the struggle for reforms, for improving the lot of the working class, as it did at certain times in the preceding epoch. The centre of gravity of political life has now been completely and finally removed beyond the confines of parliament. On the other hand the bourgeoisie are compelled, in virtue not only of their relation to the working masses, but also of the involved inter-relationships within the bourgeois classes, to put some of their measures into effect, in one way or another, through parliament, where the various cliques bargain for power, display their strength and betray their weakness, show themselves up as they really are, etc.

Therefore it is the immediate historical task of the working class to wrench this machine from the hands of the ruling classes, to destroy and annihilate it, and to put in its place new proletarian organs of power. At the same time

parliamentarians... The disgusting traditions of the old parliamentary tactics have however impelled some revolutionary elements into the camp of opponents of parliament in principle (the IWW, the revolutionary syndicalists, KAPD). The second congress therefore puts forward the following theses:

2. COMMUNISM, THE FIGHT FOR THE DICTATORSHIP OF THE PROLETARIAT AND THE UTILISATION OF BOURGEOIS PARLIAMENTS

1) Parliamentarianism as a State system became a "democratic" form of the rule of the bourgeoisie who, at a certain stage of development, needed the fiction of a popular representative body, which from the outside seems to be an organisation of the "popular will" standing outside classes, but is in essence an instrument of oppression and subjection in the control of ruling capital.

2) Parliamentarianism is a particular form of the State order; hence it cannot be the form of communist society, in which there are neither classes nor class struggle, nor any State power.

3) Nor can parliament serve as the form of proletarian State administration in the transition period from the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie to the dictatorship of the proletariat. When the class struggle has come to a head in the civil war, the proletariat must build up its State organisation as a fighting organisation to which representatives of the former ruling classes are not admitted. At this stage the fiction of the "popular will" is directly harmful to the proletariat. The proletariat needs no parliamentary division of powers, which is harmful to it. The form taken by the proletarian dictatorship is the Soviet republic.

4) Bourgeois parliaments, one of the most important pieces of machinery in the bourgeois State apparatus, cannot as such be won permanently, just as the proletariat cannot win the bourgeois State. The task of the proletariat is to shatter the bourgeois state machine, to destroy it, and to destroy with it parliamentary institutions, whether republican or deriving from a constitutional monarchy...

6) Consequently, communism repudiates parliamentarianism as the form of the future society, as the form of the class dictatorship of the proletariat. It denies the possibility of winning parliament over permanently; its object is to destroy parliamentarianism. It follows that communism can be concerned only with exploiting bourgeois State institutions with the object of destroying them. In this way, and only in this way, can the question be conceived.

7) Every class struggle is a political struggle, for in the final analysis it is a struggle for power. Any strike which spreads over the whole country endangers the bourgeois State and therefore assumes a political character...

8) Consequently the question of political struggle is by no means identical with the question of the attitude to parliament. The first is a general question of the proletarian class struggle, in which small and partial struggles mount up to the general struggle for the overthrow of the capitalist order as a whole

developing actions which become more and more acute in form and logically lead to insurrection against the capitalist State. In this mass struggle which develops into civil war, the leading party of the proletariat must as a rule secure all legal positions, using them as auxiliary centres of its revolutionary activity and incorporating them in its main plan of campaign, the campaign of mass struggle.

11) One such auxiliary centre is the rostrum of the bourgeois parliament. It is no argument against participation in the parliamentary struggle that parliament is a bourgeois State institution. The communist party does not enter this institution to function there as an organic part of parliament, but in order by action inside parliament to help the masses to shatter the State machine and parliament itself...

12) This activity inside parliament, which consists chiefly in revolutionary agitation from the parliamentary tribune, in exposing enemies, in the ideological mobilisation of the masses, who, particularly in the backward areas, are still encumbered with democratic illusions and look to the parliamentary rostrum, must be wholly and completely subordinate to the aims and tasks of the mass struggle outside parliament.

Participation in the electoral struggle and revolutionary propaganda from inside parliament are particularly important in the political approach to those sections of the working class, such as the agricultural working masses, who have up to now been remote from political life...

III

16) "Anti-parliamentarianism" on principle, that is, the absolute and categorical rejection of participation in elections and in revolutionary parliamentary activity, is therefore a naive and childish doctrine which is beneath criticism, a doctrine which is occasionally founded on healthy disgust with paltry parliamentary politicians, but which is at the same time blind to the possibility of revolutionary parliamentarianism. Moreover, this doctrine is frequently connected with a wholly false idea of the role of the party, which pictures it not as the centralised vanguard of the workers, but as a decentralised system of loosely-connected groups.

17) On the other hand it does not at all follow from the theoretical admission of parliamentary activity that participation in actual elections and in actual parliamentary sessions is in all circumstances absolutely necessary. That depends on a whole series of specific conditions. In certain circumstances it may be necessary to walk out of parliament. The Bolsheviks did that when they left the pre-parliament in order to destroy it... In certain circumstances it may be necessary to boycott elections and to remove by force both the entire bourgeois State apparatus, as well as the bourgeois parliamentary clique, or it may be necessary to take part in elections while boycotting parliament itself, etc.

18) The boycotting of elections or of parliament, as well as walking out of parliament, are permissible primarily when the conditions for the immediate transition to armed struggle for power are at hand.

19) The comparative unimportance of this question should always be borne in mind. Since the centre of gravity lies in the struggle for State power waged outside parliament, it is obvious that the question of the proletarian dictatorship and of the mass struggle for that dictatorship cannot be placed on the same footing as the question of the utilisation of parliament.

20) That is why the Communist International emphasises most strongly that it considers any split or any attempt at a split within the communist party solely on this question a serious error...

3. REVOLUTIONARY PARLIAMENTARIANISM

...2) After elections, the organisation of the parliamentary fraction must be completely in the hands of the central committee of the communist party, whether or not the party as a whole is at the time legal or illegal. The chairman and presidium of the communist parliamentary fraction must be confirmed in their office by the central committee. The central committee must have a permanent representative in the fraction, with the right of veto, and, on all important political questions, the fraction must seek in advance guidance from the party central committee. The central

request of the party central committee, so that in any given situation resignation from parliament can be carried in unison...

4) The communist member of parliament obliged, on the decision of the central committee, to combine legal with illegal work. In those countries where communist deputies enjoy immunity under bourgeois law, this immunity must be used to support the party's illegal activities in the fields of organisational propaganda.

5) Communist deputies must subordinate their activities in parliament to party activities outside parliament. Demonstrative legislative proposals should be regularly submitted in accordance with the instructions of the party and its central committee, not with the idea that they will be accepted by the bourgeois majority, but for the purposes of propaganda, agitation, and organisation...

8) Every communist member of parliament must bear in mind that he is not a legislator seeking agreement with other legislators, but a party agitator sent into the enemy camp to execute party decisions. The communist deputy is responsible not to the loose mass of the electors, but to his communist party, legally and illegally.

9) The speeches of communist deputies in parliament must be readily understandable to every ordinary worker, every peasant, every washerwoman, every shepherd, so that they can issue his speeches as leaflets for distribution in every corner of the country...

11) Communist deputies must use the parliamentary rostrum to expose not only the bourgeoisie and their avowed followers, but also the social-patriots and reformists, to expose the indecisiveness of the "centrist" politicians and other opponents of communism, and to conduct propaganda for the ideas of the Communist International.

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The Sawdust Circle: What Revolutionaries Should Do

General Election & World Cup

Nothing could have been more timely than for Harold Wilson to call the General Election during the World Cup frenzy that is likely to develop up to June 18th. No one knows better than he how to exploit the national obsession, or cast crumbs of camaraderie to the party workers by a mention of last night's match. In politics as in football results, to use an old cliché, there is no such thing as a certainty. But in England victory in the semi-finals on June 17th may not be an unimportant factor in deciding this election, in which the battle between the parties to highlight "issues" is matched only by their determination to suppress them.

The Sawdust Circle

Elections are traditionally the occasion for politicians to don their false noses and rush around proclaiming loudly about great British traditions or about the needs of the working class. But in this year's circus the make-up is patchy: Labour seem to have left their noses at home, and the Tories keep swapping theirs, appearing now fiercely behind riot-control gas-masks, now benignly as John Bull, while the snout of the Wild Boar of Wolverhampton, unofficial but indispensable to the act, snuffles in the background. The contest is firmly contained within the sawdust circle, its terms reduced to those of the fight between two corpulent individuals for the post of ringmaster.

For what else is the campaign about? The Tory claim to power is expressed in terms of "sound and honest British traditions" of government and the need for "a new way of running our national affairs". An assault on the "price explosion" is given pride of place in the manifesto, which also puts forward a programme of revamped proposals for placing the costs of "growth" more squarely on the shoulders of the working class, while throwing up a somewhat transparent smokescreen in the form of an attack on the Government's record in the social services.

"The National Interest"

How does Labour reply to this shoddy apology for a policy? "We have got out of the red in our national accounts", their manifesto proudly says; the Government has "given Britain a more credible and realistic position in world affairs than we ever enjoyed under the last Tory administration". The New Britain, we are told, can be built by drawing on "our deeply rooted

democracy, our tradition of tolerance and fairness, our confidence in ourselves." The Labour Party is in fact campaigning on the claim that it has created a *national government*: policies are defended in terms of the *national interest*, and the Government cannot decisively rebuff Tory attacks because over a long period it has become quite incapable of posing the issues in class terms. The newly-appointed Minister of Housing, for one, is quite frank about his acceptance of the norms of bourgeois politics. "I want," he announced on his first day in office, "to make Britain a great property-owning democracy." So did Disraeli. And it should come as no surprise that it is now possible for top banking peers to say in television interviews that they favour a Labour victory because the present Government is better able to handle labour relations "in the national interest."

The Tory Crisis

The contest between the two party leaders has to be seen in the context of this shift on the part of the Labour Government to open campaigning on the middle ground of bourgeois democracy. In the 1970 election the pollsters and pundits are confined to spending happy hours calculating whether the virginal smile of the Tory leader contributes more to the chance of a Labour victory than Wilson's puffing complacency detracts. The crisis in the Conservative Party is indicated by the universally embarrassing presence of Edward Heath and the flight back to industry and finance of more able Tories, who see their interests as safe under any variant of parliamentary government. (But there must still be some men of talent at Central Office. Who, one wonders, was the tactful soul who managed to dissuade Heath from continuing with the slogan he hit upon in the first throes of election fever? "Under Labour"—squeaked the Tory leader repeatedly—"you've never had it!" Hecklers' comments are not recorded.)

Politics Not In Command

The nauseating consensus over the area of conflict in the election gives both parties an interest in damping down the issues, even while they manoeuvre for room to snipe at each other. The discussion on wages reaches its fullest extent when the Prime Minister mutters something in an obscure corner about future controls being "voluntary". And he puts the industrialists' line on productivity better than anyone. Enoch Powell will no doubt continue to make provocations on the race issue during the election period. But both parties want to keep him out of the centre of debate:—Labour

so that they don't actually have to do anything about racism.—Conservatives because, while they need him to drum in votes on the Right, they are fighting hard to regain the middle ground of parliamentary politics.

Labour's campaign too is now tied to the middle ground. The party's electioneering tactics show a contempt for the working class: Harold's West Riding accent is trotted out in a grotesque parody of the Churchillian style of drunken oratory. Tories can learn from Labour's methods; taking a leaf from the book of their opponents, they have now found that they too can produce propaganda in Urdu and abandon the Pakistani workers to the mercy of the militant right for the rest of the year.

What to Do?

In spite of the crumbling of the facade, it is unlikely that polling on June 18th will vary very much from the normal class voting patterns. The majority of organised workers will still vote Labour—we don't doubt with reservations!—because as yet their discontent has taken no ideological or organisational shape. The marginal variations will be interesting to watch. For Wilson's Government and his bankrupt Labour Party survive and can only continue dangerously near the margin where traditional, false class loyalty threatens to spill over into open class hostility against these supports of capitalism, which have now abandoned even the pretence of a class programme, and closed all avenues to the working class.

Active discouragement of the predicted class vote would at this stage be a mistake for revolutionaries: at best it would cause confusion, and could foster the development of a cynical, a-political attitude in the class. On the other hand it would be quite wrong to help keep the blinkers of social democracy over the eyes of the working class by actively campaigning for the return of the Wilson Government, counterposing to it the Tory threat, or by suggesting that such a Government could solve any of the problems facing workers. Giving spurious credibility to the electoral fraud will not help turn the working class organisations to revolutionary politics. Campaigns on issues of basic interest to the class can only be conducted outside of the electoral farce, in the factories and on the streets. Political mobilisation of this kind clearly endangers the Labour Party's electoral prospects: it was for this reason that the South African tour was called off, for this reason too that Wilson hopes to get the election over before the Irish situation can again explode. But the issues on which revolutionary propaganda and action can begin to mobilise the class span the whole range of its interests: the increased rate of exploitation of large sections of the working class through productivity deals and similar techniques; the deliberate creation of the biggest unemployment since 1940; the preparation of a new formula to curb T.U. power—no less effective than the Tories;—support for U.S. imperialism in S.E. Asia; denial of the right of national independence for the Irish; refusal to combat racist violence against black people—the list could be indefinitely extended. And these are all the issues which are blocked in the petty electoral war of the bourgeois party leaders.

Judith White

governments go, but the police and arms remain". Beside the fact that *the State is a permanent power*, the survival of democracy is seen in that the bourgeoisie can at any time "rearrange" the ground it has chosen in the first place to fight its own convenience. (See for instance the gerrymandering necessary in Ireland because the choice is not just between practically identical forces.)

The second major reason why the parliamentary game is the *obliteration of social reality of the electors*. Any parliament (priests, retired colonels, bosses...) has weight as those of the producers, and not all of them can vote. Very democratic we have the "right" to sweat and toil in a factory or office and create surplus-value (the boss) immediately on leaving shift only when we have been well enough in the system are we courteously invited to the game.

"Democracy"

In other words, parliamentary election is undemocratic not because those who run it are cunning or evil (gerrymandering) but in essence: because they do not take account of the relationships of production, also because democracy in our society is *formal* (that is, simply written in the constitution): freedom of the press?—how? Or of means of production can get together funds to set up a press. Freedom of movement? In a council house kitchen?...

When revolutionaries say that the path to socialism is not through the ballot-box because they are hungry for violence, it is because the Marxist analysis of the State demonstrated to them that the overthrow of the capitalist system is not possible without smashing it. Along with theory, history has shown that nowhere in the world there has been a peaceful overthrow of the capitalist system: for instance, decades of social democratic government in Scandinavia have strengthened capitalist property relations.

The Use of the Farce

But though the State is an instrument in the service of the ruling class for the purpose of maintaining the domination of that class, it does not mean that the workers should be indifferent to the *particular form* that it takes. Between parliamentary democracy, military dictatorship or fascist dictatorship it is obvious that the workers would find it easier to defend their ideas and organise themselves under the former. Therefore the workers should defend their democratic rights against every attempt to curtail them or crush them.

We recognise parliamentary election as a farce, but as millions of workers have it we cannot dismiss it by abstract attack: parliamentarianism. We must use the election to develop class consciousness and show that political struggle is part of the class struggle. To spread revolutionary ideas, all means must be used, even the elections; especially when the situation is not yet ripe for the working class to experience *directly* the domination of the ruling class.

Marie-Therese Ligougne

*"The state is by no means a power for society from without ... Rather it is a product of society at a certain stage of development. It is the admission that this society has become entangled in an insoluble contradiction with itself, that is, has split into irreconcilable antagonisms which it is powerless to dispel. In order that these antagonisms, classes with conflicting interests, might not consume themselves and society in fruitless struggle, it becomes necessary to have a power standing above society that would alleviate the conflict, and keep it within the bounds of "order"; and this power, arisen out of society but placing itself above it, and alienating itself more and more from it, is the state."—*Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State*.



FARCE... FARCE... FARCE

"The State is the product and the manifestation of the antagonisms of the irreconcilable classes." Lenin: *State and Revolution*.

The Farce

For Marxists, the essence of any bourgeois election is the manipulation of workers' consciousness in the interests of the ruling class. Not only the choice presented, but above all the framework of the choice, corrupts the working-class, reducing it to passivity and inertia.

The Elections are a Farce

They are a farce for two major reasons. The first one is the deeply ingrained illusion, very much reinforced by the ruling-class and the reformists at election times, that parliamentary election is a *democratic conquest of the working-class*. True universal suffrage is a democratic institution which we must defend from Fascism and Bonapartism. It was substituted for suffrage for property owners only. But suffrage became universal only when new factors were there to cancel its potentiality; when Parliament, because of a certain number of other institutions, was not really doing the governing. The army, the police, special police, secret police, the top administrators of government departments, the national security bodies, the judges etc... are functioning completely independently, away from the influence of universal suffrage. Today, everyone knows that the Government cannot

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