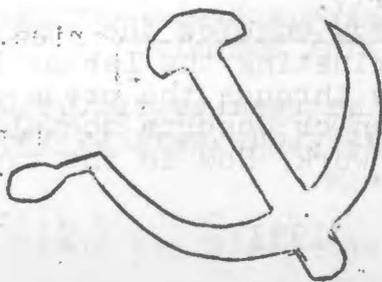


Finsbury Communist

AN ANTI-REVISIONIST JOURNAL



Nº 360 JAN 1995

WHEN IS A TOFF NOT A TOFF?

"Islington resident Tony Blair, the leader of the Labour Party, proposes to send his son to London Oratory School in Fulham, seven miles away from where he lives. In his defence, Mr Blair points out that the school is not fee paying, is grant maintained, and is the best there is.

How would Islingtonians like it if Islington had one of the best schools there is and toffs, such as Mr Blair, sent their children here from all parts of London, depriving Islington children of the opportunity? The Tory 'reforms' have made it possible for schools and parents to 'cherry pick' regardless of where a child actually lives.

Mr Blair, though no doubt a clever lawyer, does not appear to realise that the non-fee paying nature of Fulham's London Oratory School makes the situation even worse. He is getting the best education for his child without even paying for it.

It is always their privileges and lifestyle which give such champagne socialists away".

(Letter published in Islington Gazette, December 15th. Underlined parts were deleted by the Editor. "People" substituted for "toffs, such as Mr Blair" in original).

HIGHER EDUCATION. FAIR SHARES OR BLAIR SHARES

Mrs Shirley Williams, at that time in the Labour Party, was famous for introducing comprehensive schools. Before that time a working class child could pass an exam at eleven to go to a grammar school. At 16 he could pass another exam and go into a job with prospects where he could advance while learning on the job and taking professional exams. Or he could go into the sixth form with a maintenance grant and take an exam at 18. He could then either get a rather better job with prospects or go to university with a full maintenance and tuition grant. Upon leaving university he was eligible for a whole range of good jobs.

Comprehensivisation meant that all children went to comprehensive schools at eleven without examination. This was a relief to the parents of backward middle class children who had previously had to choose between secondary modern education or fee-paying private schools for their offspring.

Comprehensive schools varied. Some became good. Some are average. Some are sink schools.

There has always been an element of choice, not to say wirepulling, in where to send one's child. To be middle class oneself is not a disadvantage.

How did Tony Blair get London Oratory School to take his son?

By and large, working class children end up in average or sink comprehensives. Although there are now five times as many university places as there were before school comprehensivisation, working class children stand even less chance of getting a place. The Tory "reforms" have made things even worse.

The universities are packed out with middle and upper class youth. Their parents can pay for them. The Tories make sure they will pay for them. Grants no longer cover full maintenance and tuition.

Is leaving school at 16 or 18 a good option for the working class? No. Good jobs usually insist on graduate entry. The middle class have pulled up the ladder.

THE ABSTENTIONS HAVE IT

Here are the results of the Dudley West by-election on December 15th with the previous results from The Times. Percentages of electorate are shown.

	1992	%	1994	%
Tory	34729	40.1	7706	8.8
Labour	28940	33.4	28400	32.3
Abstentions	15505	17.9	46674	53.0
Liberals	7446	8.6	3154	3.6
Others	<u>Nil</u>	<u>Nil</u>	<u>2047</u>	<u>2.3</u>
	<u>86620</u>	<u>100.0</u>	<u>87981</u>	<u>100.0</u>

THINK NATIONALLY, ACT LOCALLY

We were delighted with the reaction to our strategy to eliminate the Labour Party.

The Socialist Workers Party, the New Communist Party and Camden Communists give the Labour Party credibility by canvassing for it.

The provisional Communist Party of Great Britain shares our attitude to the Labour Party. But they give the Labour Party credibility by standing against it and getting only a few dozen votes.

Our strategy enables the smallest group, or even an individual, to start eliminating the Labour Party locally by pointing out, by leaflet or through the press or whatever, whenever it lets local people down or deserts socialist principles. This is, of course, hard sustained work. Now is the time to start.

WHY COMMUNISTS STAND FOR FREEDOM OF CHOICE

We don't support Tories, Liberals or Labour. But we support multi-party parliamentary democracy. Why? Because it gives communists the right to exist and propagate their views.

Communists are atheists. All religion is antiquated claptrap used to divide the working class. Yet communists support freedom of religion. They do not support Orthodox states, Catholic states or Islamic republics. If communists do not stand for their own right to exist without victimisation, what do they stand for? Such existence is almost impossible in a one religion country.

ALL THOSE IN FAVOUR

Harpal Brar has not commented on the figures we produced for him in our December issue. Here they are again.

<u>Year</u>		<u>Workers</u>	<u>Peasants</u>	<u>Intelligentsia</u>
1952	Party	32.9%	17.6%	49.5%
	Population	44.5%	38.0%	17.5%

There were 6 million Communist Party members in 1952 out of a total Soviet population of 200 million. From the above figures we can work out that 2.2% of the working class, 1.4% of the peasants and 8.5% of the intelligentsia were in the party.

Suppose there was a factory of 1000 employees with average proportions but, of course, no peasants. You could expect to find 40 party members, of which 16 were workers and 24 intelligentsia, probably the top management. Meetings of the factory party branch must have been interesting.

The intelligentsia consisted not only of former workers and peasants who had bettered themselves but also of the offspring of the former privileged classes who had been radicalised by the October Revolution. The latter type of people often have a deep-seated contempt for workers, acquired from their parents.

HOW DID IT HAPPEN?

We have received a review copy of the book "How Did it Happen" The Dialectics of Counter Revolution" by Ernie Trory. (Crabtree Press, 4 Portland Avenue, Hove, BN3 5NP, £3.75 plus 50p postage).

Trory writes "It is more important to make this contribution now, perhaps still in an embryonic form, than to wait until a huge tome can be offered covering the whole period, by which time I may not be in a position to publish it". Quite right. Speak up now.

As the title implies, Trory's is a materialist approach. He identifies "mistakes" but these are all in the post-Stalin era. We in FCA have always regarded Khrushchev's promises of communism (an abundance of goodthings) as eyewash designed to show Stalin as outdated. Trory takes these promises seriously and shows how they conflict with the

actual practice of the Soviet Union.

At first, Trory locates the demise of socialism in the Soviet Union in the Gorbachev era. Then, in Appendix III, he writes "The watershed between revolutionary advance and incipient counter-revolutionary retreat came sometime between 1953 and 1956". Trory could have come closer. The Soviet economy moved away from the Stalinist principle of reducing prices as soon as Stalin died. Emphasis was placed on material incentives such as piecework which divide the working class. Books such as "The Thaw" and "The Spring" by Ilya Ehrenburg came out in 1954 and 1955 inducing people to complain about local leaders to the new people in Moscow who would replace them by others.

Trory, in an excellent chapter on Dialectics, maintains that "the gradual numerical addition of factors in a given situation results in a sudden qualitative change into something completely different". Exactly. That's what happened in 1953.

Trory could have looked into the social composition of the CPSU or the increasing desire for Western living standards among the people.

We can't write a tome either. Get the book or order it at the library.

Here's a quote about the 20th Congress of the CPSU in 1956:-

"Chu Teh, the Chinese fraternal delegate, read out a message signed by Mao Tse Tung, referring to Stalin as 'the teacher of the communists'. At that point there was a burst of applause that seemed to surprise the Presidium".

CHECHNYA

In 1939 Nazi Germany was on the verge of bankruptcy. What would Hitler do? The answer came on September 1st. Germany invaded Poland.

Yeltsin's Russia acts on the Nazi principle "When in difficulties, invade somewhere".

Until recently, Russia needed the support of the Chechens, and the other North Caucasus peoples, in its campaign to dismember Georgia. Abkhasia (population prior to "ethnic cleansing" - 536,000) was detached from Georgia. The leaders of 90,000 ethnic Abkhassians were militarily encouraged by Russia to declare independence from Georgia and evict 250,000 Georgians. Abkhasia is about the size of Corsica and is strategically placed on the Black Sea. It used to be a favourite holiday resort for the Soviet Russian elite.

The Chechens and the other North Caucasus peoples are now well off for weapons. They have no scruples about using them against Yeltsin and Co.

Communists look forward to the day when the Russian industrial working class do the same.

READERS LETTER. We thank our anonymous Edinburgh reader for his letter.
SUBSCRIPTION RATE. The subscription rate to Finsbury Communist is £3 per annum.

Printed and published by Finsbury Communist Association
72 Compton Street, London EC1V 0BN