

Utopia on the Rocks

Sniping for 1950 Votes On in England; Parties Differ Mainly in Spirit

Neither Group Too Specific in Platform; Neither One Telling People How Desperate Plight Is

There is no fixed general election day in Great Britain. Any time up to next July there will be a general election, to pick a new House of Commons. The majority of that House in turn will select a government.

The present government has been in power since July 26, 1945. It got about 12 million votes out of a total of 25 million; therefore it polled a slight minority. Conservatives got nearly 16 million votes and Liberals two million and a quarter. Communists polled less than 100,000.

But the Socialists won a big majority of Commons—393 out of 640 seats—so they have had free rein since then.

E. T. Leech, who has spent a month in Britain for the Scripps-Howard Newspapers, discusses the coming political campaign in today's story, the 11th of a series.

By E. T. LEECH, Scripps-Howard Writer

LONDON, Aug. 25.—"Both at home and abroad they have squandered the reserves and resources which had been gathered in the past, and have darkened and narrowed the future of every man, woman and child in this famous island."

In those words Winston Churchill lashed out at the Socialists to open an election campaign which may be the bitterest and perhaps the most fatal in England's long history. Harkening back to his phrase when he buried defiance at the Nazis, while Britain stood alone, he shouted:

"Never before in the history of humankind has such great havoc been wrought by such small men."

"Socialism is proving itself to be a dangerous fallacy," he said. "Nationalization is a failure."

PRIME MINISTER Clement Attlee quickly struck back with a charge that the Conservative platform, issued the day Mr. Churchill spoke, is "one of the most dishonest documents I have ever read."

Herbert Morrison, leader of Commons and top politician in the Labor Party, called it "a not very honest Tory program."

"It plumps for more public expenditure and lower taxes, which taken together constitutes an impossible proposition," he said.

Health Minister Aneurin Bevan, the wildest man in the Attlee Ministry and leader of the Labor Party's extreme left wing, had recently called the Conservatives "vermin."

So opened the 1950 campaign, which will tell whether England takes over her great steel, cement, sugar and insurance businesses, and swings still further left. If the election is delayed to next summer, it will be a long time to keep up that pace.

A Familiar Ring

ON A HOT Sunday morning after all this happened, I took the numerous London Sunday papers over to Hyde Park, to read about it in greater comfort.

To an American, it had a familiar ring—especially the platform. It will retain the security plans of the present government, with additions. It will pay bigger pensions, more to the armed forces, and equal wages to women in public service. But it will cut costs by greater efficiency and a reduced payroll.

It was something hauntingly familiar. There, amidst perhaps a hundred thousand men and women sprawled on the chairs and lawns of London's vast park, seemed to be a ghost from back home.

British party platforms, like American, are aimed at catching votes. They aren't too specific or detailed. So maybe it was understandable to expect too much of the Conservatives. It was certain to less honest than the Labor Party platform. This haled its four-year record as one of such vast accomplishments that it made you wonder why Sir Stafford Cripps and other government leaders keep talking about some grave crisis.

THE PLAIN facts are that neither party is fully telling the British people how desperate is their plight. Sir Stafford Cripps has done so in guarded and scholarly economic jargon. Mr.

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