

Parliament: Better off hung?

Some opinion polls have indicated that the coming election may result in a so called hung parliament, where neither of the main political parties have overall control. Here, **John Loveless**, argues that could be the best result for Britain

IS THE coming election one of those rare occasions, with a first-past-the-post electoral system, when we get a hung parliament? Many of the recent polls are pointing that way. What are the implications for us progressives who propose a third way that is neither socialist nor capitalist—but Georgist? Could a hung parliament turn out to be a good thing or will it again end by being discredited after a hiatus of a few months, with politicians unwilling or unable to work together in a show of national unity to restore our bankrupted public finances? I think the crisis and the emergence of a third party, which might be able to eclipse one of the two main parties –not this time but next- gives us real cause for optimism.

The last time the Liberals were as strong as they are today, it can be argued, was in 1909 when the magnificent Lloyd George and the young Winston went barnstorming through Britain, demanding the end of the oppression of the working classes by the rentiers and ushering in the famous 1909 People's Budget, the titanic contest between the robber barons of the House of Lords and the disenfranchised dirt poor masses. Perhaps again we will soon see a similar meaningful assault on the still strong bastions of privilege by the long suffering wage slaves of Britain and then the rest of the capitalist world. Yet the disastrous ignorance of the great majority of wage slaves as to the true nature of their economic plight will, in all probability, enable the rentiers to continue to milk their bovine herds awhile longer. However, consider this: the advent of the internet and Wikipedia; the shameful behaviour of our political leaders—which must lead to a massive clean out of the stables; the parlous state of the public finances; the near collapse of the Western banks and the way the cost of it has been imposed on ordinary honest citizens, small shareholders and pensioners. If the voters don't wake up to all this now, when will they ever wake up?

Perhaps, our poor huddled middle classes might just lift their eyes from their treadmills this time, long enough for the light of enlightenment to dawn in their minds and enable them to see that there is a third way and that it is better. But it will never be easy. Compare the bleaker facts of the present situation. In 1909 "Progress and Poverty" was still being bought, read, discussed and understood by thousands in Britain. Books

like Engels's *The Condition of the Working Classes in Britain* were still moving the hearts of many to advocate strenuous action to remedy the pain of the blighted lives of the Britons depicted therein. But the House of Lords is still unreformed 100 years after Lloyd George attacked it, like Jack did the Beanstalk and almost bearded the giant in his castle. There is no certainty of success yet, but there is a moment in time when progressives might just lift the veil of secrecy and shine the light of truth into the minds of the mostly apathetic or deeply dyed red and blue majority of voters.

We must work intelligently to promote the third way. Let the greens and the true liberals

emerge as a new political block to be reckoned with and we have a better chance of true tripartite discussion instead of the dreadful stalemate of the trench warfare between capitalists and socialists, which has been the stuff of politics for as long as most of us can remember. We must put flesh on the bones of the third way. Georgists have failed in the past because they have not laid out a complete agenda of policies for the community. **L&L**

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