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Research Article

A Criticism of the British Left in Trevor Griffiths's *The Party* in Light of '68 Paris Student Riots

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ABSTRACT

Among the political playwrights of the post-war British drama, Trevor Griffiths is known for his commitment to socialist ideals and his continuous search for an ideal social(ist) structure in his works. Coming from a working-class background and having met many notable intellectual socialists prior to his dramatic career, Trevor Griffiths dedicated his playwriting to debate about the present and future of socialism in Britain and elsewhere. Despite Griffiths's loyal attachment to socialism, his works provide a criticism of the left, left-wing parties, lack of unity among the proletariat, and lack of support and cooperation of the leftist parties in his country. *The Party* (1973) is one of those plays in which he provides a dialectical approach to an ideal understanding of socialism that is based on unity between the workers, the party as an organisation and the intelligentsia. Griffiths's main concern is to lay out some of the reasons for the failure of the left and claim that a true socialist revolution can never be possible unless a commitment is achieved by all involved parties. This paper discusses socialist Trevor Griffiths's play *The Party* as a criticism of the left in relation to prevalent concerns of Britain in the 1970s. While evaluating the reasons for Griffiths's criticism, the discussion of the play is also related to the Paris student riots as a case-in-point failed socialist revolution attempt due to similar problems Griffiths observes in his country.

Keywords: Trevor Griffiths, Socialism, Left-wing, *The Party*, Paris student riots

Introduction

Trevor Griffiths is one of the second-wave British political dramatists who were closely interested and involved in the political events of their day. In the words of Jenny S. Spencer (2001), "Trevor Griffiths was actively involved in the New Left movement of the early sixties and an articulate presence during the alternative theater movement of the seventies" (p. 469). Griffiths comes from a working-class family and he is a supporter of socialism, and in many of his plays, his main motive is to question ideologies of socialism on the stage. Stanton B. Garner observes a correlation between the playwright's background and his career: "Griffiths's working-class background, and the 'educations' provided by a decade of social activism in Britain, influenced Griffiths's choice of form and subject matter, including his intense personal engagement with the history, politics, and psychology of the Left" (qtd. in Spencer, 2001, p. 469). As Michael Billington (2006) further elaborates on the background of the playwright: "He had . . . worked as a teacher and a further education officer for the BBC, and also spent a lot of time in the New Left movement of the Fifties and Sixties, which brought him into contact with left-wing intellectuals such as Raymond Williams . . . [and] Stuart Hall" (p. 210).

Griffiths's dedication to socialism and the left movement in his country is quite evident. However, this dedication does not make him a dramatist who always supports the left-wing without scrutiny. On the contrary, he is among the most critical dramatists of the left despite his own leftist background, and he voices the disillusionment of the leftists in the country with the not-so-socialist practices of 1970s politics. Christopher Innes (2002) compares Griffiths to his contemporary political dramatists like Howard Brenton, David Edgar, and David Hare, and observes a much more radical self-criticism on part of the Left in Britain in his works (p. 351). A profound example of this is seen in his 1973 play, *The Party*, in which Griffiths criticises the futility of the left-wing struggle in Britain and the Labour party's lack of commitment to socialist ideals. The criticism of the left-wing in the play is so obvious that in some reviews from the leftist press, the play was attacked as "anti-socialist propaganda" (Billington, 2007, p. 212).

British political dramatists mainly consist of those who describe themselves as socialist. This would suggest that their works mostly pose a criticism of the right-wing and they act as proponents of leftism. However, when the works of British political dramatists in the Seventies are observed, most of them are written by leftist writers

such as John McGrath, David Hare, Howard Brenton, and David Edgar and some of their plays seriously criticise the left-wing. In the words of Michael Billington, "the political dreams of the late Sixties had not been fulfilled and . . . the failure of the hoped-for revolution of 1968 had led to the entrenchment of established authority," which caused the British theatre of the Seventies to be "intensely political; but the voluminous product was based on disappointment, disillusion and a pervasive sense of despair" (2007, p. 210). Correspondingly, the fast-flourishing movement known as political drama started with the leftists and paradoxically it turned into an attempt to criticise the failed promises of the leftist leaders and their lack of establishing a socialist order in the country.

Trevor Griffiths also voices his concern with the current situation of his country and expresses the frustration of the many leftists in the 1970s whose demands were not met by the dominant leftist establishment of the period. Drawing on the dilemma in Griffiths's political ideology and the ideas he deals with in his works, Innes (2002) observes that "Griffiths' approach was self-critical and objective from the start" (p. 351). The most important reason for his criticism of the left is the lack of commitment and unity among the members of the party and socialists in the country. Benedict Nightingale (1982) explains Griffiths's concern about this issue as follows: "The problem with talented people on the British Left . . . is lack of genuine commitment: they will bite the hand that feeds them . . . It is, he thinks, a moral imperative to resist being bought off by, or absorbed into, a capitalist society he persists in believing unjust and exploitative" (p. 448). As it can be seen in *The Party*, Griffiths makes a critique of the lack of solidarity in the socialist groups, which is exemplified in the contradictory remarks of the socialists in the play. In line with these ideas, this paper analyses Griffiths's play, *The Party*, as a criticism of the left-wing with references to socio-political problems of Britain in the Seventies, and discusses the critical statements of the socialists about the left in relation to the 1968 Paris student riots Griffiths designates as the background of the play.

The Party in a Socio-Political Context

As seen in Howard Brenton's *Magnificence* (1973), David Hare's *Fanshen* (1975), and another play by Trevor Griffiths, *Occupations* (1970), political dramatists are inclined to portray a criticism or evaluation of the real historical events of their time in their works. Trevor Griffiths is no exception in that sense as he is also dedicated to commenting upon the political standing of his country in his works. In *The Party*, for instance, Griffiths deals with the student riots in 1968 in Paris (*Les événements*) as an issue, and basing

his work on this background, he criticises the lack of action of the British left by presenting their failure.

On May 10th of 1968, the date which is also referred to in Griffiths's play, as a result of the conflicts between the police and the students, and as it was prohibited for the students to protest in their campus at Nanterre University and Sorbonne University, a riot broke out among students with leftist opinions "demanding the fall of the government under Charles de Gaulle" ("1968: Workers", 1968, par. 2). As the main objective of the students in Paris is reported in the news, "[l]eft-wing students - no doubt inspired by similar protests in the United States and the spring pro-democracy riots in Prague - want reform of the 'bourgeois' university system and an end to the 'police state '" ("1968: Workers", 2013, par. 7). To reach their target, they executed violent demonstrations on the streets outside the university campuses. Peter Steinfels (2008) from the *New York Times* expresses the violent nature of the struggle between the police and the students at the time as such:

> By May 10, the number of student demonstrators was estimated at 20,000. At every street leading to the Sorbonne, they found their way blocked by vans and ranks of riot police. This time, the students did not disperse. As darkness fell, they began prying up cobblestones, ransacking building sites and turning over parked cars to construct their own barricades facing the police . (p. 1)

This event is used in Griffiths's play in the background as the characters debate about the current state of socialism and offer their ideas in terms of achieving a successful socialist revolution. In the "Prologue" part of *The Party*, a film that shows Paris students marching and demonstrating, and a display of a clenched fist on the screen both indicate the play's direct affiliation with this event. Similarly, the *Newsreader* in the play, representative of a news broadcast, also gives actual information about the last-minute details in Paris: "Some 15.000 demonstrators have already begun their anti-government march, and informed sources claim double or even treble that number will be in action before midnight" (Griffiths, 1996, p. 111).

The use of projections and audio-visual material that illustrates Griffiths's direct allusions to the Paris student riots are also exemplary of his use of Brechtian epic devices in his work, which is also characteristic of the 1970s' British political drama. It is known

that Brecht's influence on British drama is immensely felt since the first tour of Berliner Ensemble to London in 1956 (Patterson, 2003, p. 44). As the forerunner of political drama together with Erwin Piscator, Brecht's proposal to use epic devices and the alienation effect to enable critical engagement of the audience have shaped and defined political drama not only in Germany. British political dramatists were also influenced by the methods introduced by Brecht as they provided the ground for a theatre designed for and targeted the working class and distribution of socialist ideology. As Michael Patterson sums up the contribution of Brecht's epic theatre in terms of activating the intellectual involvement of the audience in a play: "In Brecht's non-Aristotelian theatre the spectators are encouraged to judge and make choices, so that they enter into a critical dialogue with the stage action" (2003, p. 19). Amelia Howe Kritzer also underlines the role played by Brecht's epic theatre in the development of political drama: "Brecht sought to create a theatre that rejects a static dramatization of political arguments, and instead solicits audience interpretation of the situations presented" (2008, p. 17). Brecht's use of epic devices, his principal target audience being the working class and his aspiration to activate intellectual perception rather than emotional response influenced the playwrights of later generations and countries who also attempted to realise social and political change with their art. Griffiths's use of projection in *The Party*, therefore, also illustrates an example of Brecht's impact on British political drama.

In a similar manner, the prologue part of the play displays pictures of several real historical figures related to socialism. Before the beginning of the play, a character named Groucho Marx, an American comedian appears commenting upon Marx, Trotsky, and Lenin by showing their pictures and reading from their writings to create "a sense of political consciousness" (Bozer, 2011, p. 13). The projection of such historical figures' pictures makes it evident that the play is going to be based on the ideologies of socialism propounded by these people. Groucho Marx reads certain quotations that belong to these characters all of which target criticism of capitalism and the bourgeoisie that increasingly gained momentum at that moment in history. An example of these statements reads: "The bourgeoisie cannot exist without constantly revolutionizing the instruments of production, and with them the whole relations of society" (Griffiths, 1996, p. 98). Another quotation poses a criticism of materialism: "Money, since it has the property of purchasing everything, of appropriating objects to itself, is therefore the object *par excellence*" (Griffiths, 1996, p. 99). Similarly, after Marx finishes his reading, another man comes and comments on the power of gold and talks about its potential

to change everything: "[M]uch of this will make black white; foul fair; wrong right; base noble; old young; coward valiant" (Griffiths, 1996, p. 99). From the beginning of the play, the words of socialist philosophers and thinkers are employed to comment on the power of capitalism and materialism in the face of socialist struggle.

When the 1970s' Britain in which this play was composed is analysed closely, economic problems, rising inflation, unemployment, and increased violence with The Troubles that mark the armed conflict between England and Ireland stand out. Michael Billington (2006) describes the early 1970s led by the Conservative Edward Heath as characterised by a "continuing crisis marked by industrial chaos, social division and international instability" (p. 206). In this decade, the economic condition of the country was worse than before since the Second World War and this led the working class to strike continuously, which put the nation on a "three-day week" (Billington, 2006, p. 206). The working-class struggle was mostly left unnoticed by the leading party members, and their problems remained unsolved to a large extent. This unrest caused some political dramatists to reflect on these economic struggles of society in their works. In the words of Chris Megson (2012), "[t]owards the middle of the decade, with inflation nearing 30 per cent, trade unions compliant with the Labour government's pay policy and socialists defeated in the referendum on Britain's entry into Europe, there was disillusionment and increasing bitterness on the left" (p. 58). Accordingly, Griffiths's work, *The Party*, poses an example of the tendency to use drama as a medium to criticise the left bitterly in this period.

Discussion of the play and its dialectics

The Party takes place in the house of Joe Shawcross who is a member of the left-wing party but cannot live as a socialist, that is, he "struggles between the tension of his working-class background and his upper-class lifestyle as a television producer" (Bozer, 2011, p. 15). He organises a meeting in his house for the members of the leftist Revolutionary Party to talk about the problems in Paris and to find a solution to the increasing unrest among the British working class. In this group, there is John Tagg as the National Organiser of Revolutionary Socialist Party and Executive Council Member of the Fourth International; Andrew Ford, a lecturer in sociology at LSE; Jeremy Hayes, Susie, Kate, and Richard Maine, socialist students; Kara, a journalist and also Joe's ex-wife; Grease Ball, an anarchist; Louis Preece, a black activist; and lastly Malcolm Sloman who is a playwright. As it appears, these characters are out of harmony, and

each character is preoccupied with something else other than politics except for John Tagg and Malcolm Sloman. As a result, the party organised by Joe turns out to be rather fruitless in terms of finding any solution to the ongoing problems. Although it is suggested by Joe at the beginning of the party that he aims to show "what the left in Britain needs now more than ever is a united and coherent focus for its efforts" (Griffiths, 1996, p. 131), even the members of his own party lack a common agenda. Concerning this scene, Deniz Bozer (2011) observes that "[t]he diversity of the guests at the party reflect the fragmented nature of the Left" (p. 14). A common criticism of the left-wing in Britain in the Seventies provided in the play is the lack of unity. Therefore, the characters' varied interests and views at Joe's meeting are suggestive of the discrepancy observed in the actual leftist movement in Britain in these years on a microcosmic level.

Throughout this organisation, John Tagg and Andrew Ford debate about the nature and application of socialism, which leads the meeting to turn into a dialectics on socialism with the characters' alternating views. First, Andrew Ford, a New Leftist, elaborates on communism, which he sees as the ideal form of socialism:

> Communism is the definitive resolution of the antagonism between man and nature, and between man and man. It is the true solution of the conflict between existence and essence, between objectification and self-affirmation, between freedom and necessity, between individual and species. (Griffiths, 1996, p. 134)

In this speech, Ford offers communism as an encompassing solution to all kinds of atrocities around the world as he believes "[l]ogic, insight, courage and clarity . . . are the social qualities that would-be liberating classes must possess if they are to realize their full historical potential" (Griffiths, 1996, p. 135). Ford proposes communism as the ideal socio-economic structure for a future where workers constitute the leading class. Apparently, the current socialist climate is not adequate for him as he observes that the working class, in general, is slowly assimilated by capitalism, a process which he sums up as "the gradual absorption, the slow assimilation of European proletariats into the institutions of the reformed and super adaptive bourgeois state" (Griffiths, 1996, p. 135). For that reason, he does not see any western working-class revolution sufficient for a true reform: "[N]o German revolution; no French revolution; no Italian revolution; no British revolution" (Griffiths, 1996, p. 135). Instead, he points to the more rooted

socialist states for inspiration: "China, Cuba, Vietnam: these are the new centres of the world of revolutionary struggle" (Griffiths, 1996, p. 138). Michael Billington (2006) interprets these words as Ford's complaint of the Western world that has failed to accept and realise Marx's proletarian revolution. Therefore, according to him, centres of revolutionary struggle are only to be found in the Third World (p. 212).

In contrast to Marxist Ford's ideas, John Tagg, a Trotskyite, is regarded as "the only genuine Socialist in the play" (Bozer, 2011, p. 17). Contrary to Ford, Tagg believes that communism is still much more powerful than capitalism as he says, "we're entering a new phase in the revolutionary struggle against the forces and the structures of capitalism" (Griffiths, 1996, p. 149). Additionally, different from Ford, Tagg supports the attitude and struggle of the European proletariat: "The disaffection is widespread: in London, in Paris, in Berlin, in the American cities; wherever you care to look, bourgeois institutions are under sustained and often violent attack" (Griffiths, 1996, pp. 149-50). To prove his point, he shows examples of the revolutions that took place in Germany, Italy, Hungary and Bulgaria in 1919-20; in Spain and France in 1936; and Greece in 1944, which were all organised and led by the proletariat. As a response to Ford's pessimism regarding the efficacy of the working class, Tagg believes that "[t]he absence of revolution is not final evidence of the elimination of revolutionary potential" (Griffiths, 1996, p. 152). Evidently, he believes that the proletariat only needs encouragement to fulfil its potential. What it lacks, according to him, is a "new Revolutionary Party based on discipline, criticism and self-scrutiny" (Billington, 2006, p. 212).

Tagg seems to be the spokesperson of Trevor Griffiths in the play as he voices his concern for the lack of unity among the members of the leftist group. He believes they are far from having real socialist opinions, and he accuses them of not displaying an active resistance against capitalism. He clearly does not see a possibly successful Revolutionary Party led by British intellectuals (Billington, 2006, p. 212). As other intelligentsia members in the group use their writings as a manifesto, Tagg criticises them for showing passive resistance:

> You're intellectuals. You're frustrated by the ineffectual character of your opposition to the things you loathe. Your main weapon is the word . . . [F] or a protest to be effective, it must be rooted in the realities of social life . . . (Griffiths, 1996, p. 150)

By talking about the proletariat as real socialists, he criticises the intellectuals' lack of action, and he compares this inaction to the real socialist workers' struggles like the London dockers' strike in 1919: "What can *you* do? You can't strike and refuse to handle American cargoes until they get out of Vietnam. You're outside the productive process. You have only the word" (Griffiths, 1996, p. 150). This shows that Tagg believes in and supports the potential of the workers and suggests his ideas relating to the necessity of having new "vital and revolutionary" (Griffiths, 1996, p. 154) leaders who will not betray the working class. Drawing on Tagg's criticism of the intellectuals' lack of potential to bring about a revolution, Bozer (2011) states, "the play problematizes the direction the Labour Party should take and the chasm between wanting a revolution and actually making one" (p. 15). This indicates that the intellectuals in the group are criticised by Tagg for only stressing the need for a revolution; however, they are, indeed, unable to realise one. Tagg's criticism of an inactive intelligentsia also echoes Griffiths's views on the inadequacy of passive revolution: "I can't accept that those who stay in the working class are stupid, idle or useless . . . because I have had it all around me, I know how lively and vibrant it can be. There's skill, there's talent, there's enormous energy. It's a resource, and at the moment it's simply going to waste" (qtd. in Nightingale, 1982, p. 450). Griffiths's words point to an urgent need for the establishment of a union between the proletariat and the intelligentsia of the left.

When compared to other characters, Tagg is more idealist in his conception of what a leftist party should be like, for that reason, Garner (1999) suggests that "[i]n its vision of commitment and involvement and its grounding in Tagg's working-class background, Tagg's speech asserts a powerful moral authority in *The Party*" (p. 88). For Tagg, "[t]he party means discipline. It means self-scrutiny, criticism, responsibility, it means a great many things that run counter to the traditions and values of Western bourgeois intellectuals" (Griffiths, 1996, p. 155). This indicates that his conception of the left-wing party is frustrated by the actual practices of the Labour party. A point where Tagg agrees with his opponent Ford is the inefficacy of the Left party in terms of collaborating with workers. He sees the lack of revolution in western states as a result of the failure of the western socialist parties to negotiate with the proletariat: "The European and American proletariats appear to have settled for the *status quo*, in my opinion, because they have been consistently and systematically betrayed by their leaders; and particularly by the Communist parties of the various European countries" (Griffiths, 1996, p. 154). For the same reason, he does not believe in the power of the students rioting in Paris either. Although it would be expected of Tagg to support the students in Paris as a socialist

individual, he sees the student riots as fruitless because he believes that the youth is unaware of real socialism, and he foresees that "those brave and foolish youths in Paris now will hold their heads out for the baton and shout their crazy slogans for the night. But it won't stop them from graduating and taking up their positions in the centres of ruling class power and privilege later on" (Griffiths, 1996, p. 155). According to Tagg, the students' violent revolution is like the silent revolution of the intelligent class in that both are ineffective as neither truly represents real ideals of socialism. However, what lies behind Tagg's lack of belief in the students' riot is the absence of a correct party to organise them. He calls their riot "*folie de grandeur* of a handful of petty bourgeois anarchists" (Griffiths, 1996, p. 164), which is interpreted by Janelle G. Reinelt (1994) as a "denunciation of the student rebellion as hopelessly bourgeois" (p. 155). Actually, Tagg's lack of belief in the Paris riots echoes Griffiths's own views following the finale of the uprising. As Griffiths voices his disillusionment with the initially promising riots after a while: "I was deeply involved with and deeply affected by the student unrest of the Sixties. The detonations set off then put revolutionary transformation back on the agenda of the society. But by 1970 one could see that it was all a failure, it was gone . . ." (qtd. in Billington, 2006, p. 211). Apparently, Griffiths was quite enthusiastic about the changes that might be brought about as a result of such an uprising, but they were not powerful enough to incite any remarkable change. In line with Griffiths's statements on this matter, Tagg suggests that without a unified socialist party, the revolution is impossible. To reinforce this argument, he suggests that "[w]hen the workers replace the students, and when the revolutionary party leads the workers, we will have a revolution" (Griffiths, 1996, p. 165). At this point in the play, Griffiths uses Tagg's words as a reference to the actual context in Paris 1968. It is noted that "[t]he students were joined by 10 million workers, half the French labor force, who shut down the economic machinery of France for several weeks" ("Paris Student Riots", 1998, par. 2). As Bruno Queysanne, an instructor at École des Beaux-Arts in Paris, noted the impact of this uprising on a larger scale, "[i]n the history of France it was a remarkable movement because it was truly a mass movement that concerned Paris but also the provinces, that concerned intellectuals but also manual workers" (qtd. in Rubin, 2018, par. 3). The wide influence of this event matches with Griffiths's point in the play as he supports the union of all forces, students, workers, parties, and intellectuals to fight for a common goal. However, it should be noted that the workers left their support of the students after a while by ending their occupation of factories and students were made to leave the colleges they had seized (Wegs, 1984, p. 229). In light of this event, there is a reference to the fact that the students could not struggle alone as the French Communist

Party and the workers withdrew their support. In Tagg's words, such a revolution is not possible in circumstances where the youth is not guided by an organised party. He even sees a revolution attempt as equal to suicide when it is not accompanied by an organised structure: "Unless there is a party with the correct line to organize and lead it [revolution], insurrection is simply another term for suicide" (Griffiths, 1996, p. 164).

The need to fight against capitalism together is also voiced by another character, Sloman, who is regarded as "the most discordant" character in the play (Garner, 1999, p. 89). Although he does not share the same ideas with Tagg, he is a devout supporter of communism, and he believes the only way towards a successful revolution is through union and organisation:

> The party in the last analysis is *always* right, because the party is the sole historical instrument given to the proletariat for the solution of its basic problems. I know that one cannot be right against the party. It is only possible to be right with the party and through the party . . . (Griffiths, 1996, p. 179)

Sloman claims that the biggest enemy of socialism is the party itself. He considers the leaders of the left as viral and asserts, "however many generations of workers are pumped full of antibiotics or the pink placebos of late capitalism, it will persist, the virus, under the skin, waiting" (Griffiths, 1996, p. 179). Sloman's ideas shed light on Tagg's observation as both characters emphasise the need to get the support and cooperation of the leftist party in the way towards a socialist revolution. To realise this, the first and utmost thing to do, according to Sloman, is to get rid of the dangerous, capitalist-leaning leaders of the left.

The criticism of leftism with a focus on the leaders of the movement is observed through the representation of the character, Joe as a member of the Revolutionary Socialist Party. Although Joe is introduced as a leftist party supporter, it is seen that he betrays his socialist ideals as he helps his brother, Eddie set up his enterprise, hence contributing to the development of a capitalist social structure. Joe is represented to be in a dilemma in this regard for a while as he knows that Marxist ideology does not allow one to set up a business as it will lead to exploitation of others: "Communism . . . is the positive abolition of private property" (Griffiths, 1996, p. 134). Based on his ideological background, he confesses, "[i]t seems illogical to use my surpluses to help set up a capitalist

enterprise . . . Our kid being the boss doesn't make it different or special. There'll be people working for him and he'll be making a profit on their labour, just as in any other capitalist enterprise" (Griffiths, 1996, p. 120). His words illustrate that he wants to act like a real socialist thinking that even if it is his brother to set up such an enterprise, this will in turn benefit the capitalist structure. However, although Joe is reluctant to lend Eddie the money, he consents at the end of the play and becomes a victim of capitalist ideology. With this example, the play shows that no matter how much one seems to be in favour of socialism in principle, it does not necessarily mean that they act like a socialist in practice. In such circumstances where party members betray their ideals and do not support one another, the reliability of the leftist movement is problematic.

Conclusion

By portraying these party members who all lack idealism and commitment to a common goal, "Griffiths savagely satirizes the parlor politics of the educated, establishment leftists" (Sternlicht, 2004, p. 181). Apparently, except for Tagg, other characters are not working-class themselves, and they only approach the issue of socialism as an ideological principle. Therefore, their idealism fails, and they cannot act in harmony, which is presented to be essential for the realisation of socialist ideals in the play. From the contradictory opinions voiced by the characters in the party, it is seen that there is no dialectics between socialism and capitalism. Each character is somehow socialist; however, their approaches to the subject differ from each other. In this sense, the dialectics of the play is related to finding a synthesis regarding an ideal approach and practice of socialism. However, there is not a clear solution to this in the play as the party members cannot agree on a common point. It becomes, rather, a dialectic between socialism and communism. Their debate, in a way, mirrors Griffiths's ideas concerning the conflict between socialism and capitalism:

> . . . my plays are never about the battle between socialism and capitalism. I take that as being decisively won by socialism. What I'm really seeking is a way forward. How do we transform the husk of capitalist meaning into the reality of socialist enterprise? The socialist future. (qtd. in Itzin and Trussler, 1976, p. 45)

Accordingly, Griffiths believes in socialism, yet he does not see the attempts of the left as adequate to have a successful socialist revolution. He asserts that the left is full

of talented, intelligent people that would lead the theoretical base of the revolution. However, the party which consists of these individuals need to work in collaboration with the proletariat, those who actually suffer the consequences of a capitalist structure, to ensure the success of the revolution in practice.

In conclusion, Trevor Griffiths, as a politically-charged playwright, deals with the dialectics of communism and socialism by portraying different characters in his play who discuss the means to make a socialist revolution possible. Coming from a working-class family, and having adapted socialist political views, Griffiths uses drama as a medium to express his ideas relating to the events happening in his day. His advocacy of socialism does not necessarily make him a supporter of the left, rather, he displays the problematic aspects of the left more radically by pointing out the lack of unity and commitment of the party members, and lack of collaboration between the proletariat and the intelligentsia of/in the left. His play, *The Party*, illustrates Griffiths's main criticism of the left with characters like Ford and Tagg who have discrepant opinions concerning leftism, and with those who fall prey to the sinister advancement of capitalism like the host Joe. With this play, Griffiths shows, in a way, how a socialist party should not be like. Socialism was an important matter of the 1970s in which Griffiths composed his play. Therefore, his criticism in this play also sheds light on the concerns and issues of and relating to the left in this period. Especially the failure of the Labour party to find a solution to the problems of the working class that repeatedly rioted for their rights makes the play's contextual relevance more evident. In addition to this, by using Paris student riots as the backdrop of his play, Griffiths attempts to illustrate the wrong practices of socialism through characters with failed idealism and blind attachment.

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