

Socialist Outlook

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3d.

TORY POLICY MEANS WAR ON LABOUR

Unemployment Being Engineered To Fill The War Factories

THIS is a time for plain speaking in the Labour Movement. Churchill's visit to Washington has brought the war much nearer. Butler's economy measures are a recognition of that fact. The Tory leader has been promised steel and dollars . . . but only on the condition that he destroys the Welfare State built up by the Labour Movement and, on its ruins, constructs a military state and a war economy. Mr. Butler wields his axe to demolish all that Labour stands for.

First to suffer are the old people, the sick, and the children. They can't work and they don't produce much profit so, with every available man and woman wanted for the arms factories, their care is considered by Tory minds to be a downright extravagance. That is the meaning of the new charges on dental services and doctor's prescriptions, and it is the reason for the decision to stop all school building.

TORY STRATEGY

There's worse to come with the Budget in March—but already the pattern of Tory policy is clear enough.

All the "non-essential" industries—that is, all which produce things that ordinary people can eat and wear—are to be deprived of steel and other raw materials. This will create unemployment AND THAT IS WHAT THE TORIES WANT.

Put bluntly by the *Financial Times* (30/1/52) . . . "Allocation of raw materials

Editorial

according to a strict system of priorities will create redundancy . . . then it will be up to local employment officials to persuade the redundant workers into 'first preference' jobs." That is, into war jobs.

The persuasion is to be done by means of Sir Walter Monckton's new "Notification of Vacancies Order." Under this Order, the deliberately created unemployed will be "guided" into the arms factories. There won't be any compulsion (yet) . . . but if you won't be "guided" you'll soon go hungry, because there'll be no work outside what the Labour Exchange has to offer.

WHAT IT WILL MEAN

What is all this going to mean in terms of health and happiness? Briefly this. Less food at higher prices. No new schools and hospitals, and ALL buildings (including homes) falling into ruins because the labour required for their maintenance will have been "guided" into the arms factories.

To further its re-armament aims, this Tory Government will not only reduce our standard of life . . . it will export, or turn into guns, the very roofs over our heads!

NO CO-OPERATION

Yet the Labour Movement, if it has the will, could smash this whole rotten structure of Tory policy almost overnight, for the Tory plan has a fatal weakness. To carry it through, the workers must be 'persuaded' to transfer their labour from the production of useful things to the production of arms. It is on this point—and on this point only—that the Tories fear opposition.

Churchill doesn't mind how many speeches are made about his failure to keep his election promises, and he will talk his way



"We must put our best foot forward"
(Arthur Deakin)

out of any amount of censure motions on his China policy . . . BUT HE COULDN'T TALK HIS WAY OUT OF A SERIOUS OPPOSITION TO SIR WALTER MONCKTON'S DIRECTION OF LABOUR.

That is the point where Labour's great strength can be felt. That is where opposition would really hurt, for without trade union co-operation in this matter, the whole evil plan must collapse. And that is why we said it is time for some plain speaking.

All those who claim to be against the Tories and want to bring them down must answer this question . . . *Are you prepared to oppose the transfer of labour to war production?*

If you can't answer 'Yes' to that question, all your opposition won't be worth a light. So long as you ride along with the Tories on this main question of making guns, you can shout your head off for all Churchill will care. And that, unfortunately, is the position of many of the leaders of our Movement. Take, for example, the General Council of the T.U.C.

Far from opposing direction of labour to the arms industries, they actually co-operated with the Tory Minister of Labour in bringing it about!

"Unions Back Plans For Jobs Switch," proudly proclaimed the *Herald* (24/1/52).

LABOUR MUST LEAD

But it can't end there. Thousands of workers are tasting unemployment and short-time working, and everyone of us will soon begin to feel the effects of Butler's cuts and orders. There is bound to be widespread resentment and opposition—but it can't come

A resolution at the 'Socialist Outlook' Conference will call on the Labour Movement to
Force the Tories to Resign!

SUNDAY, FEB. 24th — HOLBORN HALL — 2.30 p.m.

Has your Labour Party—Trade Union—Co-op sent delegates? Visitors Ticket 1/- at door

WAR MOVES BRING UNEMPLOYMENT TO BIRMINGHAM

REPORTED BY HARRY FINCH (A.E.U.)

THE Tory Government is deliberately trying to create a temporary pool of unemployed workers from which they can draw upon for the arms factories when the war contracts are handed out.

That was the conclusion reached by a Conference of 200 Birmingham Shop Stewards called by the Confederation of Shipbuilding and Engineering Unions to discuss with Birmingham's Labour M.P.'s the situation arising out of the recent cuts in steel allocations.

These cuts have been as high as 50% in some cases, and small engineering firms are threatened with a complete shut-down. Short-time working is already operating in most of the big firms. The Rover Works at Lode Lane, for example, has 4,000 workers on three days a week.

SUSPICIONS AROUSED

All the delegates were well aware of the Government's intention to switch over to a war economy, and most of them expressed their hostility to this plan to make guns instead of the useful things the people need. But these Shop Stewards were also aware that, so far, hardly a single arms contract has been placed with the firms suffering the steel cuts.

This fact drew from the Labour M.P.'s



to anything UNLESS LABOUR IS PREPARED TO LEAD IT AGAINST THE CAUSE OF ALL OUR TROUBLES—THE ARMS DRIVE AND THE REACTIONARY WAR IT IS MEANT TO SERVE.

We shall be free to fight this Government to the end, and bring it down, only when we can come before the workers and declare:

"You are suffering a reduction in your living standards because of the war preparations of the Tory Government. The war is not our war—it is a war to prevent the colonial peoples gaining their freedom; it is a war to re-introduce capitalism into the Soviet Union; it is a war against the working class. We do not support it and we shall not co-operate in any of the measures the present Government takes to further it. We shall not support the transfer of labour to armaments. Instead we shall demand a programme of public works for the welfare of the common people of the world. With this policy we ask for your support to bring down the Tory Government."

That is the lead that the workers are waiting for. That is the policy that Labour's Left Wing must fight for if we want to end this Government and avert the Third World War. It will be a hard fight—but we can win.

ARMS AND THE CHILD

By ALF ROSE

(National Union of Teachers)

THE reports of Education and Labour organisations alike show that a saving of 5% in Education costs cannot be made, as the Tory Government claims, without damaging 'the essential fabric of the system.'

Churchill once summed up Tory policy as "patriotism by the imperial pint." Now that armaments to safeguard imperialism demand more millions of money, his slogan is "a quart of economy from the educational pint." Let us look at what is happening.

Warwickshire Education Committee has recommended cuts of £60,000. A third of this saving will result from closing the County's eight nursery schools and classes not, be it noted, because of shortage of teachers, buildings, or equipment but on financial grounds alone.

The committee has also recommended the discontinuation of swimming instruction in the schools. This will provide a few more drops to help Britannia rule the waves even if it doesn't put much into the sinking fund to pay off the war debt of £25,000,000,000!

The National Union of Teachers reports (*Schoolmaster* 10/1/51) that one local authority has decided to cut the estimate on the dental service . . . another has decided that the establishment of teachers is not to be increased . . . and yet another proposes to reduce the number of teachers employed.

"With the effect of the increased birth-rate", says the N.U.T., "showing itself more and more in our schools, classes will in any case increase in size. If more teachers are not employed, there will be much mass instruction but little education."

The Lancashire Education Committee proposes to save £30,000 on furniture; £30,000 on part-time teachers; £25,000 on upkeep of buildings; and £20,000 on fuel, light and cleaning.

Cold, dirty, and ill-lit schools are the price the little children must pay for the privilege of a re-armament programme.

That's what the Tories are doing. What of Labour? There are eight County Councils and twenty-six County Boroughs controlled by Labour which have the power to resist these cuts.

Birkenhead has given a good lead. They have "rejected the Ministry of Education's request to cut down their financial estimates." (*Birkenhead News*, 23/1/52).

The whole Labour Movement will rally to the support of its elected representatives if they will follow the lead of Birkenhead. This is a fight for the children and a fight against war.

gramme to fight redundancy:

"The trade unions should insist that the Government make it unlawful to discharge any worker without prior consultation with the Shop Stewards or, where no Shop Stewards exist, with trade union officials."

"All overtime should be banned while redundancy is operating."

"The Government should be forced to pass a law insisting that until workers have been found other employment their average earnings should be paid by the firm out of profits."

Is this a tall order? I don't think so. Birmingham workers are not demanding "something for nothing". They are only asking that the employers give them back some of the huge profits they have taken out of engineers over the past twelve years or more.

Remember that the A.E.U. recently demonstrated that the employers make £3 per week out of every worker employed!

R. I. P.

THE FREE HEALTH
SERVICE

Murdered Jan. 30th, 1952

STOP THE WAR IN EGYPT!

BY THE EDITOR

THE refusal of successive British Governments to evacuate British troops from the Suez Canal Zone threatens to involve the British people in a full-scale war against Egypt.

It has already led to the cold-blooded massacre of forty-eight Ismailian policemen, and the consequences of this dastardly action have inflamed a revolutionary situation throughout all Egypt and the Sudan. Vast troop concentrations and naval re-inforcements suggest that Mr. Churchill is quite prepared to march on Cairo, bringing death and destruction to Egyptian peasant and British conscript alike rather than concede to the legitimate national aspirations of the Egyptian people.

He has already appealed to the rulers of the United States for help . . . and he will get it. First, because the Suez Canal is of vital strategic importance in the war which all the imperialist powers are preparing against the Soviet Union; and, second—even more urgent—because the movement of national liberation which is sweeping across the Arab world is threatening to turn into a movement of SOCIAL liberation against poverty, inequality, landlordism and capitalism.

WHAT THEY FEAR

All the capitalist press was quick to detect the mark of the *working class* in the recent Cairo "riots". Not only were British clubs and hotels attacked, but so also were the sumptuous playgrounds of the rich and corrupt rulers of Egypt itself.

"The lower levels and labourers have taken over!" said Sir Miles Thomas, after the plane in which he was escaping was rushed by Egyptian air-port labourers. The note of ruling-class fear in his statement has been echoed by every big capitalist and landlord throughout the world—not excluding Egypt where Farouk promptly sacked his Cabinet and imposed a curfew and Martial Law.

No wonder the *New York Times*, in discussing Churchill's proposal to send American troops to Egypt, agreed in these words . . . "the bell tolls for us also!"

Indeed it does. After centuries of the most horrible exploitation which has reduced millions of working people to a depth of poverty incomprehensible to most British workers, the masses of the old colonial empires have been forced to take desperate measures to secure bread for their empty bellies. Like our own Chartist forefathers, inscribed on their banners is the slogan . . . "Bread or Blood!"

Imperialism cannot compromise with such a movement. They must shoot it down. Or, to put it more correctly, they must get YOU to shoot it down. And this is what they are now doing . . . in Korea, in Malaya, in Indo-China, in Morocco, and now in Egypt.

NOT OUR WAR

Yes, for all the representatives of capitalism and imperialism "the bell tolls".

If we allow ourselves to be overcome by the fumes of "national unity", if we unite with the Tories in trying to stop the inevitable, then we, too, shall go down to the destruction which surely awaits this imperialist system.

And, in that case, we shall deserve to. For

MALAYA

THE Grimsby and District Trades Council "in the firm belief that the use of force to quell the aspirations of the Asiatic peoples for independence has no place in the modern world", has called upon the General Council to "press the Government to take immediate steps to bring about an armistice in Malaya . . ." The Council also calls for free elections and negotiations to "decide the date on which independence shall be granted."

what does the Egyptian peasant and worker want? Bread and land for himself and his children and a country free from foreign domination. How can Labour deny him these things which we accept as a right for ourselves?

Labour has nothing to fear from the Egyptian people. They do not want to impose any burdens on our backs. They do not want to drive us into war factories, shatter our social services and reduce the educational standards of our children. It is the Tories who want to, and must, do all these things so that we shall build the tanks and guns with which to shoot down the peoples of Egypt, Korea and Malaya.

Shame on our Movement if it accepts this

ghoulish Tory proposition! We shall be laying a rod for our own backs. How can we snatch from the Tories the guns which are undermining our standard of life, if we agree that these guns should be used against our fellow-workers in Egypt?

If we are REALLY opposed to Toryism, if we REALLY want to bring them down and thus secure another, and better, Labour Government, we shall do all in our power to frustrate these Tory plots against the freedom of the Egyptian people.

The poor farmers and workers of Egypt and the Sudan are our people. The British Tories are not.

Stand by the Egyptian people! Withdraw all British troops!

BRITAIN IN THE SUDAN

BRITAIN occupied the Sudan in 1898 ostensibly to 'avenge General Gordon', who had been killed by the Mahdi's followers during the revolt against the rule of the Egyptian Pashas in 1885.

Just how they "avenged Gordon" has been described by the great French historian, Elie Halevy, in the following words:—

"On September 2nd, he (Kitchener) was before Omdurman, and his 23,000 men (among whom was Mr. Churchill—Ed.) found themselves faced by the Khalifa's army of 50,000. . . . It was a massacre rather than a battle. On the Anglo-Egyptian side fifty were killed and 300 wounded. Of the Dervishes, 30,000 were killed and only 4,000 wounded. Kitchener had, it seems, given the order that no prisoners were to be taken.

"That same evening Kitchener's troops entered Omdurman and the ruins of Khartoum. The Mahdi's corpse was taken from its coffin, and his head, severed from its trunk, was sent as a present to a nephew of General Gordon, and the officers of the expeditionary force made souvenirs of his nails. These were the orgies with which imperialism avenged Gordon's death."

The first proclamation of the British army was: "Until, and save so far as it shall otherwise be determined by proclamation, the Sudan, with the exception of the town of Sawakin, shall be and remain under Martial Law."

After more than 50 years of British rule, the Sudan is still under Martial Law and ruled by a Governor who simultaneously represents the executive, legislative, and judicial authority, and who does not hold himself responsible to any power.

LAW AND ORDER

In 1921 a revolt in the Nyala district against this military rule resulted in the death of the District Inspector and all his police. The revolt was suppressed by a British force which went to the village where the revolutionaries had lived (they had already given themselves up!) surrounded it with machine guns and then shelled the site for three hours. **All the village—men, women, and children—were annihilated.**

As for freedom of the press, it just doesn't exist in the Sudan. Under Article 4 of the Sudanese Law of the Press, the Administrative Secretary "has the right to refuse to authorise any newspaper. . . . He also has the right to stop or suppress any paper. . . ."

EDUCATION

There is no free education in the Sudan.

Up to 1946, the number of primary schools did not exceed eleven in the whole of the Sudan, accommodating only 1,763 boys.

The Sudanese Budget of 1946 revealed that of the £39,000 expended on education, £31,000 of this amount was obtained by school fees—leaving only **£8,000 actually provided by the Administration.**

WAGES

In Western Sudan, the wages of Sudanese workers vary from 5d. to 7½d. a day. It rises to as high as 1/- in other parts, but in Southern Sudan the average wage is as low as 2½d. a day!

771 European employees of the Government receive 61.3% of the Government's wage bill. The 5,530 native employees dividing the remaining 38.7% between them.

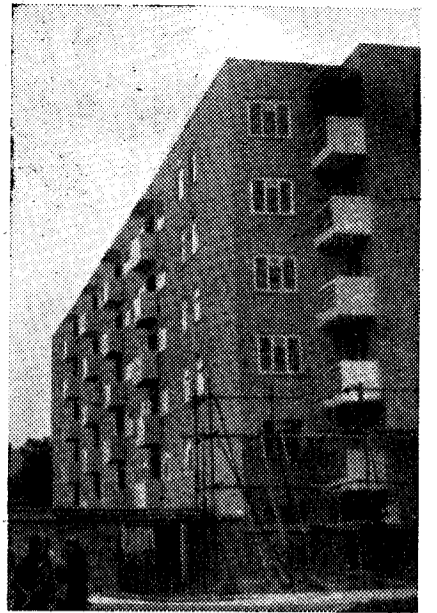
The terrible poverty of the Sudanese masses finds its expression in diseases directly attributable to malnutrition. The Medical Department's report for 1942 revealed that 8,072,080 people attended hospital as out-patients. The total population of the Sudan is 8,000,000!

In view of these facts, it is not surprising that the people of the Sudan do not believe the story that Britain is holding the country in subjection merely until "it is ripe for self-Government."

In the first place, the Sudan was an independent people as long ago as 2,000 B.C.! It would be an independent people now—and needs no lessons from the Omdurman butchers on how to govern itself—if all British troops and authority were withdrawn.

That they aren't withdrawn has got nothing to do with desires to "help the Sudanese" or "defend them from the Egyptians"—it has to do with the fact that the country is rich in gold, ferrous ores, lead, limestone, alabaster, and timber. And now—most significant fact of all—rich uranium deposits have been discovered!

Whether the Sudan should eventually unite with Egypt is a problem the Egyptian and Sudanese masses will solve themselves. But one thing is certain—**NOBODY OTHER THAN THE BRITISH ADMINISTRATION WANTS THE CONTINUATION OF BRITISH RULE.** As British workers, our duty is to support the Sudanese demand for complete and immediate independence.



Flats nearing completion at Lansbury, Poplar

LONDON — NEW OR NEVER?

By DAVID GOLDHILL, A.R.I.B.A., A.M.T.P.I.

A BRIGHT new London with enough houses for everyone, no more overcrowded buses and tubes in the morning trek to work, no more traffic chaos, and plenty of room for the children to play in. That was the vision which inspired the Labour-controlled London County Council to draw up the famous "Abercrombie Plan" for the re-planning and development of London. Today that vision has faded into a thing of "ifs" and "buts".

The Twenty Year Development Plan of the L.C.C. brings the original vision down to earth—to an earth which is privately-owned. It is not the planners' faults. They have stated their difficulties honestly enough and it all boils down to this: unless the Government transfers money and materials from war production to useful public works, unless industry is planned and controlled, and unless the land which London is built on is taken out of the hands of the private landlords, there is not much future for London's millions of workers.

COSTS

A large part of the cost of the plan is immediately swallowed by the high price of London land and the consequent high price of compensation to the landlords. As for materials, the Ministry of Transport has already banned indefinitely any work on major road improvements.

Because of the shortage of building sites in London itself, the housing programme—and virtually the whole Twenty Year Plan—depends on 311,000 people finding houses in the new and expanding towns around London. The Chairman of the Planning Committee has already warned that the new towns and other Housing Authorities are not building fast enough to allow the plan to be carried out. They must build well over 4,000 houses each year if London is to clear even its Emergency Housing List, but the latest reports show that from 1947 up to last March they have built altogether only 706!

CONTROLS

The New Towns are themselves hamstrung because they have no powers to move factories. It is obviously useless moving a family to Stevenage if their jobs remain in East London. For the same reason, the L.C.C.'s industrial proposals will remain largely on paper.

The Council does not know what private industrialists plan to do and even if it did, has insufficient powers to control their movements. In some cases the Government is helping industrialists to oppose the Council's plan because they are good "dollar-earners" or are essential to re-armament.

There are some 100 areas of decayed and blitzed buildings in London where nearly everything must be completely rebuilt. But the Council is forced to admit that money and materials is available to reconstruct only eight! Even the war scars cannot yet be removed.

WATCH THE TORIES

Nevertheless, despite these difficulties, it is no mean achievement of the Labour Council to have produced the Plan. It is sure to be opposed by the Tories on the L.C.C. because it reveals quite clearly what is holding up London's housing. Under the existing system of private enterprise, the carrying out of such a Plan is either prohibitively expensive or legally impossible. And this lesson will surely not be lost on the Labour Movement.

The urge to reform and improve living conditions is there. What is now needed is the recognition that these reforms—as the Plan admits—cannot be carried out until the private ownership of land with its high prices, heavy compensation and legal delays, is ended; until Labour has power to control the disposition of industry; and until we have returned a Labour Government which will put all its efforts into reconstruction for peaceful purposes instead of preparation for another terrible world war.

DOWN THE DRAIN WITH HUGGINS!

HUGGINS—Sir Godfrey Huggins—is the Prime Minister of Southern Rhodesia. He hates Africans and he hates Labour. He once said of the Africans—over 2,000,000 of whom he has the power of life and death!—"It is time for people to realise that the white man in Africa is not prepared to accept the African as an equal, socially or politically."

The *Daily Mail*, and all the old ladies of South Kensington, love Sir Godfrey. They

think he's wonderful. Particularly do they admire the way he stood up to the Labour Government when they insisted that in any talks about the possible Federation of North

by "THE LEVELLER"

and South Rhodesia, and Nyasaland, the Africans should be represented.

"It's a terrible thing," said Sir Godfrey on that occasion, "that people who were elected to look after the drains in Shoreditch should have control over huge territories in Africa."

Now the people "elected to look after the drains in Shoreditch" are Labour people, working people. The workers elected them because they found that when Sir Godfrey's ancestor's ruled the place it was one vast cesspool of dirt and disease. In fact, until the workers of Shoreditch elected members of their own class to look after the drains . . . there weren't any drains at all. The only

one for London was the Thames, which was described in an official report of the time (1848) as a "foul, foetid ditch, its banks coated with a compound of mud and filth and strewn with offal and carrion."

To get decent drains, the workers of Shoreditch had to fight the Huggins's tooth and nail. Today the African also is realising that he'll never get drains—or schools, or roads, or hospitals, or wages—until he, too, elects his own people to get these things.

And that's what frightens Sir Godfrey. He knows that the Labour Movement can't help having a sympathy with this point of view of the African. That's what is so "terrible" about a Labour Government. It inspires people who live in hovels to want . . . decent drains! And once people get the idea of securing a good, clean drainage system they get possessed also of the idea of clearing away filth generally—including the noble filth that hold in subjection 2,000,000 black workers in Southern Rhodesia!

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Stand Firm On Steel

By JACK STANLEY
(General Secretary C.E.U.)

IN view of the Government's decision to denationalise the Steel industry, it will be well for those connected with it—especially the workers—to study the implications of this proposed step.

It should be known that the Steel industry has rarely expanded except just before a war, during a war, and immediately after a war. And even this expansion was only made possible by Government subsidies which increased the value of shares with increased dividends and added emoluments for the directors.

In between the wars came the inevitable slumps with their disastrous consequences for the workers—mass unemployment, low wages and subsequent poverty. It was because of my personal experience of this side of the industry that, prior to nationalisation, I lectured up and down the country on the necessity for the State ownership and control of Steel.

Nationalisation is not everything that is to be desired—but it will safeguard the interests of the workers in time of peace and doesn't need wars to attain this end.

STAND FIRM

What is the reason for the Government's action? Is it window dressing, or is it the result of pressures both inside and outside Britain?

Whatever it is, the action of the Labour Party in threatening to re-take the industry without enhanced compensation, is the right one and has already had its effect. But what I am at present most concerned about is the

ECHOES

Sir Walter Monkton, the Tory Minister of Labour . . . "More production for the foreign market is the dominant need."

Mr. Arthur Deakin, General Secretary, Transport and General Workers Union . . . "everyone has the responsibility to do his or her best to develop a high state of efficiency in industry, for the price at which we are able to sell our goods is the determining factor in the race for trade."—(Record).

Sir Walter Monkton, Tory Minister of Labour . . . "Our fundamental need is to see to it that the progress of the national defence programme is not retarded by want of labour."

A. E. Tiffin, Assistant General Secretary, T. & G.W.U. . . . "there is no other course open to us but to spend heavily on armaments."—(Record).

Sir Walter Monkton, Tory Minister of Labour . . . "Good relations between employer and workers are essential."

Mr. Alfred Robens, Labour M.P. . . . "Trade unionists must work just as hard (under a Tory Government) and there must be co-operation with management. (Workers) must never use the industrial weapon to aid the industrial urge."—(Daily Telegraph).

Yes, sir, Sir Walter, sir!

use of the industry for armaments instead of for the production of useful goods.

Already the constructional engineering trade, as well as others, is feeling the effect. Vital jobs on gas plants, electricity undertakings, workers' flats, and commercial buildings are being help up and the workers are being made redundant. And this is only the beginning.

The ultimate aim is the forced transference of these workers to rearmament projects.

Whoever else denationalisation will benefit, it will not be the workers. Otherwise the Tories would never have proposed it.

No more bonus shares of 200, 300, and even 400 per cent as in 1918/19 and which led to slump and poverty for the workers in 1925/33.

NO RETURN TO PRIVATE ENTERPRISE!

Forgotten Men on Churchill's Ladder

By E. C. PRICE
(Norwood Labour Party)

THIS article concerns some forgotten men who contributed much to the country's wealth and who suffered and fought for the much improved conditions that the miners enjoy today.

These men no longer work in the pits but carry inside their lungs evidence of the weary years they spent at the coal face.

In medical terminology, they are suffering from *pneumoconiosis*, which means that, over the course of years, the fine coal dust has filtered into the lungs making every breath a struggle and any great effort causing a hæmorrhage.

Between 1931-1948 over 22,000 men were completely disabled by pneumoconiosis.

Provision is made at present for all miners and ex-miners who are totally disabled with this dread disease. Other schemes provide for partially disabled miners and ex-miners who claimed within five years of leaving the pits—but there is no compensation for those ex-miners who, after the five years' time limit had elapsed, discovered that they were suffering from this disease.

The number in the last category is variously estimated between 5,000 and 40,000, and I am numbered amongst these sufferers.

From 1913 to 1936 I worked at the coal face in South Wales. "Worked" is an euphemism, "slaved" would be more correct.

From 1936 till 1941 (when I was conscripted into the Army) I worked at various manual jobs in London. The rigorous Army training accelerated my trouble and although I had been accepted into the Army as A.I. and believed I rightly belonged in that category, I began to realise that something was seriously wrong with me.

TIE WAGES TO LIVING COSTS!

The Sliding Scale Explained

by NORMAN DINNING (A.E.U.)

TO prevent rising prices undermining wages, all Wage Agreements must contain a clause which provides for an automatic increase in wages corresponding with every increase in living costs.

The advantages of this 'Sliding Scale' have many times been presented in the columns of the *Socialist Outlook*. The idea is now being debated on important Trade Union Committees, and an increasing number of workers are recognising it as the only immediate solution to the wages problem. Demands for its adoption are almost certain to appear on the agendas of the national

conferences of many Trades Unions. It will not be amiss, therefore, if I here deal briefly with some of the principal objections to this demand for a Sliding Scale.

"Tying wages to living costs prevents the workers from improving their living standards".

This objection reveals a misunderstanding of what is meant by a Sliding Scale. It must never be understood as a substitute for claims to increase the basic rates of wages. It is merely a means of protecting existing wage rates against the ravages of rising prices.

Any attempt by Union leaders to trade our right to fight for absolute increases in wages in return for a Sliding Scale must be firmly resisted. That is what is so objectionable about the recent Sliding Scale agreement secured by the Printers' Unions.

They accepted it as a SUBSTITUTE for a real wage increase and actually agreed to a standstill period of five years before making any further wage claim. Since the Sliding Scale protects existing wages but cannot improve them, the leaders of the Print Unions have, in fact, said that no increase in real wages is possible for five years! That is an abdication of their duties as trade unionists.

By all means let the Unions go forward for increases in the basic rates of pay. But if we don't want to see those interests disappear in a few months because of rising prices, it is only sensible to hitch them firmly to a Sliding Scale. Then, with every increase in prices, wages will rise AUTOMATICALLY.

A Sliding Scale agreement does not actually increase real wages (that is, wages in terms of what they can buy)—but it does prevent them being decreased by rising living costs.

"The present Cost-of-Living Index is a swindle and if wages are tied to that they would still lag behind prices".

That is perfectly true—but the answer is not to reject the Sliding Scale but to insist that a new and real Cost-of-Living Index be formulated by the Trade Unions as the basis of the agreement. Meanwhile, however, even the existing Index, inadequate though it is, does provide a certain protection against price increases.

"The Sliding Scale can slide downwards as well as up."

It can. But in the present period of inflation due to re-armament, that possibility is practically excluded. What faces trade unionists is not falling prices—but rapidly rising prices.

If and when the cost-of-living falls and, because of the Sliding Scale, money wages with them, that would still not be a fall in REAL wages based on what wages can buy. Of course, falling prices—under capitalism—is usually accompanied by unemployment and then, inevitably, the employers will stage an attack on basic rates of pay. To resist that and to increase wages absolutely is the task of the Unions and is really quite a separate question from the Sliding Scale.

"The Sliding Scale, when secured, will destroy the militancy of the workers."

This objection, I find, usually comes from workers who fear that the Sliding Scale will prevent the workers understanding that it is re-armament which is the real cause of high prices. They need have no such fears.

In the first place, the demand for such protection of wages by means of agreements giving automatic increases to keep up with the cost-of-living, is a real and serious fight against re-armament.

It means that the workers—quite rightly—refuse to bear the burden of re-armament. For this reason, all the employers and the Tory Government will violently resist the demand. As for militancy—it is going to take all the militancy the Trade Unions can provide to secure this elementary protection of the workers' wages.

In my opinion, the Sliding Scale is long overdue. The longer we hesitate, the more deeply are price increases cutting into our living standards. The immediate wages policy of all Unions must be:

FOR A SLIDING SCALE OF WAGES TIED TO THE COST OF LIVING IN DEFENCE OF EXISTING WAGE RATES.

NO STANDSTILL ON FURTHER CLAIMS TO IMPROVE THE BASIC RATES.

FOR A REAL AND TRUE COST OF LIVING INDEX.



AUSTIN-NUFFIELD MERGE FOR MORE PROFIT

THE amalgamation of the Nuffield and Austin Motor Companies now being carried out follows naturally upon the close link-up made between them in 1948.

In a joint statement, the heads of these two industrial giants have claimed that "the unified control would not only lead to more efficient and economic production but would also further the export drive and be particularly beneficial to manufacturing and assembly abroad. We have formed the opinion therefore that amalgamation would be both in the National Interest and to the advantage of shareholders of both companies."

What a lucky co-incidence! How comforting to know that one's patriotic duties are best performed by . . . drawing bigger dividends! For that is what the merger means—bigger profits and bigger dividends.

BIG CAPITAL—BIG PROFITS

The resources of these two firms are enormous. The balance sheet value of Nuffield's Morris Motors is more than £10 million, and of Austin's almost £8 million—a joint nominal value of more than £18 millions, and with a market value of more than £60 million.

Austin's sold their latest issue of 5/- shares to shareholders at 25/- each—and they could at once make a 30% profit by selling them on the Exchange at 32/6.

Together these two firms make almost half of the cars produced in Britain, and more than a quarter of the commercial and public vehicles. They will play a very big part in the re-armament programme. Just listen to

the Chairman of Austin's speaking at the annual meeting:—

"Profits were high last year . . . tooling up for the defence programme has been completed in the same lines and production has begun . . . the company were hoping that its immense programme for re-armament would be in addition to the normal output."

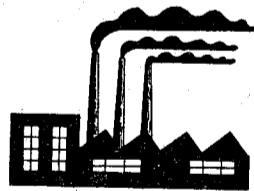
And the profits, also, of course, would be "in addition" to the normal record-breaking figures!

THE PRESS APPROVES

The joint declaration of Austin-Nuffield, and the favourable comment upon it by the capitalist press, are in strange contrast to their propaganda barrage against the centralisation, through nationalisation, of coal, transport, and other basic industries, especially steel.

Gone is the argument that centralisation "lowers production and increases prices." (Incidentally, following on the merger the prices of the cars of both firms were promptly raised).

Gone, too, is the contention that centralisation "destroys the healthy competitive spirit and creates bureaucracy." If there are any shareholders in the combine who mourn the boasted "democracy of industry", they will no doubt soon be consoled by the prospect of higher dividends. In any case, the decisions of the millionaires—quite bureaucratically taken—will be respected.



TENDENCY IN INDUSTRY

The whole tendency of modern production is towards closer economic centralisation. When this is carried through in a bureaucratic manner by great capitalist enterprises, it is said to be for reasons of "efficiency" and completely in the "National Interest".

But when a Labour Government undertakes to centralise industry by means of nationalisation, no matter how half-heartedly the Government does the job, and no matter how well it compensates the former shareholders nor how many former directors get jobs on the nationalised boards, there is a chorus of protests from all sections of the capitalist class.

Why? Because capitalist amalgamation and centralisation protects the ownership and the profits of the millionaires, and strengthens them in the fight against the trades unions.

But centralisation carried through by the nationalisation programme of a Labour Government supported by a mass Labour Movement carries with it a threat to the whole principle of private ownership of industry.

IF PART, WHY NOT ALL?

The centralisation of one industry, or part of an industry, is claimed by the big employers to lessen waste and give greater production. It is clear therefore, that centralisation through the nationalisation and planning of ALL important industries will completely eliminate waste and give even greater production.

Readers Forum

Britain—49th State ?

The Press, the Parsons and M.P.s of various political parties have, for a long time now, warned us of the grave danger of Communist domination unless we continue to squander over £800,000,000 per annum on armaments, and take orders from Wall Street.

Yet how many Russian troops are to be found in this country? How many Russian films are showing in our cinemas?

On the other hand, if you look around this country you will find many thousands of American troops, aircraft, and other war material. And the British screen is dominated by Hollywood films propagating the superiority of the American 'Way of Life'. As Churchill stated recently, no less than thirteen American air bases in this country place us "in the front line" in the event of any future conflict with the Soviet Union.

We are, in fact, America's 'unsinkable aircraft-carrier' and will be one of the major targets in the event of World War III.

I would not like to see this country transformed into a totalitarian police state, but I do realise that Britain with one foot in the Yankee pawnshop and the other tied down by the Atlantic (suicide) Pact is rapidly becoming the 49th State of America. Let us therefore declare our Independence by telling the Americans politely to remove themselves from our island. Let us proclaim our neutrality in the event of World War III, giving a moral lead to the world by pursuing a true Socialist foreign policy. Let us disarm unilaterally and devote the vast sums now being spent on armaments to the reconstruction of our country and the relief of Asia's semi-starved millions.

Liverpool. J. Granville Marsh.

* * *

Aid to Spanish Youth

Through the pressure of world public opinion, the Franco Government has been forced to release seven of the 34 Barcelona strikers arrested in July, 1951. Twenty-seven of these working-class leaders, however, remain in prison and in grave danger of their lives.

Every effort must be made by the British Labour Movement to effect the release of these men and women in face of their perilous situation.

At the recent Conference called by the Aid to Spanish Youth Committee, it was enthusiastically agreed to send a deputation to the United Nations Assembly in Paris. The aim of this deputation, which will leave in the near future, is to gain the personal intervention on behalf of the arrested Spanish workers, of the Acting President of the Assembly, the leader of the Mexican delegation.

May we appeal to your readers through your columns for donations to the special fund which is now being set up in order to

DENATIONALISED —by the back door

By ALD. F. BROWN, (N.U.R.)

On the First of January, 1952 representatives of the Unions covering the Stratford Printing Works—the largest printing works owned by the Railway Executive—attended a meeting at the direction of the Management and were informed that the Executive had decided to close the works down.

General Sir N. Watson, on behalf of the Railway Executive, explained that this step was necessary owing to the high cost of modernising the works which was already, he estimated, losing £40,000 a year.

To give the staff the opportunity to "re-adjust" themselves however, the closure would not take place until after the end of June next.

After the workers' representatives had expressed surprise and some resentment at the decision having been taken without any consultation, it was eventually agreed that a further consideration of the matter should take place at another meeting in a month's time.

Make no mistake about it—this is de-nationalisation, even if it is being carried through by a back-door method.

The political significance will not be lost on the Labour Movement. Private enterprise will, if this decision is enforced, be handed the printing for the Railway Executive which was formerly done by its own nationalised concern.

The Unions involved, through the Printing Trades Federation, will have to examine the position carefully and take action, but the whole Labour Movement must resist with the utmost vigour the attempt to hand back to private enterprise undertakings which could, and should, be operated successfully by the people, for the people.

★ Correspondence should be as brief as possible and addressed to The Editor, 177, Bermondsey St., London, S.E.1

pay the expenses of the deputation? All contributions should be made payable to The Treasurer, Aid to Spanish Youth Committee, 13 Cavendish Avenue, London, N.W.8.

Michael Segal (for the Committee).

* * *

Aid to Greek Prisoners

May we appeal to your readers to help us to send desperately-needed food, clothes and blankets to the 20,000 men, women and children detained in prisons and on islands of exile in Greece.

The International Red Cross has paid special attention to the plight of the women prisoners and exiles and their children detained often with them, and urgently appeals for more food and clothes. Many of the prisoners suffer from tuberculosis and other sicknesses and gifts of food and warm clothes may mean the difference between life and death. Their families are mostly poverty-stricken and quite unable to assist them.

In a letter of November 20th, 1951, the International Red Cross has asked the Relief Committee of the League for Democracy in Greece to thank those who have helped in the past and expresses the hope that "they will be able to continue the supply, as the needs of the political exiles and detainees in Greece are as great as ever."

May we therefore urge that gifts in kind (tinned food, clothes, etc.) be sent—for distribution by the International Red Cross—as well as financial donations to help towards the purchase of blankets and the payment of transport costs. Send to: Relief Committee, L.D.G., 19 Beak Street, London, W.1. (Tel. GRO 8279).

Yours faithfully,

Mary Trevelyan,
Sybil Thorndike,
Compton Mackenzie,
John Mavrogordato.

YOUTH CONFERENCE

WHEN? AND WHERE?

JUST before the New Year it was announced quite casually in the *Daily Herald* and *Advance* that, in view of the local elections taking place in the Spring, it had been decided to cancel the League Conference originally arranged to take place at Easter in London, and instead to hold it sometime during the seven-day Labour Party Rally at Filey, June 14th to 21st.

A conference held under such circumstances would be quite unrepresentative, since many people have to take their holidays at a certain time of the year, and cannot get time off to go to Yorkshire for a week.

The cost to Leagues or Constituency Parties would necessarily be high, and it is quite possible that a number would not consider it practicable.

This unfair decision was evidently taken without any consultation with the League of Youth, and can only lead to a heightening of the frustration which has existed since 1948 due to the high-handed methods of Transport House.

London and Middlesex L.O.Y. Federations have already opposed these arrangements quite firmly with unanimous votes at their delegate meetings. It is to be hoped that other branches, Federations and Youth Advisory Committees will do likewise, and also send resolutions of protest through local parties to the N.E.C.

REPRESENTATION

It would be far better for the Conference to be held during a public holiday week-end, such as Whitsun, and in a more central place.

Regarding the basis of representation at this year's Conference, we must demand that the decision of the League and the N.C.C. for "one League—one delegate", carried unanimously last year, is adhered to, and that this time there shall be no veto of delegates or resolutions by adult parties.

J. S.

FIGHTING FUND

We gratefully acknowledge the following donations received:—

	£	s.	d.
A. Woolf	...	2	6
Mrs. Morris	...	2	9
J. S. Grose	...	15	6
D. Finch	...	5	0
F. Walker	...	2	0
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Wandsworth L.L.O.Y.	...	10	0
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J. Thomas	...	1	9
H. E. Castens	...	10	0
Deptford Socialist	...	1	0
D. Friend	...	5	0
A. Kirkby	...	5	0
Total	£6	10	9

THE FORTNIGHTLY 'OUTLOOK' STARTS ON MAY DAY

THIS great step forward is a real victory for the Left Wing of the Labour Party and the Trade Unions. Thanks to the untiring efforts of our old supporters, and a growing army of new ones, our paper advances at a time when many old-established journals are being forced to close down.

There is no secret about the success of *Socialist Outlook*. Month after month since 1948, we have carried on a fight against Toryism and War and against all those who lend assistance to these twin evils. Since the Korean war we have done everything possible to win support for the heroic anti-imperialist struggle of the Korean people—and this has won for us some enemies. Transport House, for example, has requested certain Labour Parties to boycott our sales.

Others who have mastered the art of presenting "left" speeches to Left audiences—and vice versa—have declared our policy uncouth and "too red". They don't consider that telling the truth and fighting for socialist principles is "smart politics".

But the *Socialist Outlook* will achieve even greater successes—because we have placed our confidence in the working class who have never let us down, and because we are on the winning side in the great liberating struggle now unfolding throughout the old colonial empires, and very soon, right here in Britain.

There are still big fights ahead to keep the *Outlook* as a fortnightly and develop it into a Weekly. It will require considerable efforts from all our supporters. This is what we need:—

£500 additional share capital for the Labour Publishing Society.

1,000 Yearly Subscriptions.

£40 a month for the Fighting Fund.

More worker-correspondents in Local Labour Parties, Trade Unions, and Factories.

Sales agents in all the important centres.

Socialist Outlook Readers' Groups are a great help in achieving these aims and, since the beginning of the year, there has been a splendid response to these groups in many areas.

If you want to start a Readers' Group in your district, get in touch with us at once. We will help you to get a meeting of readers together and, if you need it, we'll send a member of the Editorial Board to assist in the initial work. Don't worry about the distance, We'll go anywhere—provided you fix up the arrangements in good time.

Let us hear from you without delay. Send us your donations and subscriptions quickly. Give the Fortnightly *Socialist Outlook* a REAL SOCIALIST SEND-OFF. And, once again, many thanks to all those comrades who have stood by the paper over these last three difficult years.

EDITORIAL BOARD.

Discussion Article

The Cause of High Rents

By E. EUSTACE (Twickenham L.P.)

THE increased interest rates introduced by the Churchill Government threaten Council house tenants—many of whom are already paying excessive rents—with still higher rent payments.

Tenants' Leagues and Labour Parties all over the country are preparing to meet this challenge but, unfortunately, a discordant note is creeping into the chorus of opposition. Some Parties are trying to solve the problem of increased housing costs by advocating 'differential rents' which is the name given to a system of fixing rent according to the tenants' income.

Richmond and Barnes Labour Party, for example, in an otherwise excellent policy statement, suggest that housing subsidies should no longer be applied to all Council dwellings—but to tenants according to their individual needs. They propose that rents should be fixed at one-fifth of the tenant's normal income, but with allowances for children at school or college. But they seem quite unaware that the application of such a policy to be effective would require... a Means Test. That is the first objection to this system, and there are many others.

WHO IS SUBSIDISED?

The support for differential rents is based on the fallacy—ardently propagated by the Tory Party—that Council Estates are today infested with wealthy tenants debauching themselves on the savings they make on rents which are subsidised by long-suffering ratepayers.

It is true that most Council tenants earn better wages than before the war—but the vast majority are still drawn from the workers of low incomes. And this despite the fact that a considerable number of poorly-paid workers are nowadays compelled to refuse Council houses because the rents are quite beyond them.

An examination of the facts will prove that what the ratepayer is compelled to subsidise is not so much the rent of Council houses—but the exorbitant interest paid to the financiers and land-owners.

Now take this problem of interest charges. The recent rise from 3% to 3½% means that, for every £1,000 borrowed, local authorities will have to pay £2,527 instead of the already high £2,168. For a local authority like the London County Council which deals in millions of pounds this constitutes an enormous burden.

The Labour M.P. for Nottingham South estimates that the increase in interest rates will mean a 3/6d. rent increase. While Mr. Sparks, Labour M.P. for Acton, thinks it will mean a 4/7d. increase in the rent of a £2,000 house.

It is clear that Labour's fight must be against the Tory Government and its friends the City financiers who will reap a rich harvest from these increased interest charges. A policy of "differential rents" involving as it does the hated Means Test, would not only be contrary to Labour's traditions—it would also undermine our unity in the fight against the Tories.

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