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TODAY

Socialist Outlook

WEEKLY

No. 81
[Registered at the G.P.O. as a Newspaper]

FRIDAY, MAY 29, 1953

3d.

In Defence
of the
Miners

(See page 3)

WHAT THE FLAG MEANS IN KENYA

THERE are no more loyal subjects of Her Britannic Majesty than the white settlers of Kenya. They are passionately devoted to the Empire and the throne. In return for this unbounded loyalty, they expect the British Government to help them in their supreme task—the exploitation of black labour. With the Tories in power and Oliver Lyttelton as Colonial Secretary, they are indeed well-rewarded.

But the Kenya whites are not satisfied with existing methods of administering the Queen's justice. The due processes of law take far too long; normal methods of punishment are hopelessly inadequate. The "East African Standard" reports Mr. H. S. Potter, Chief Secretary of the Kenya Government as saying:

"... The two basic factors which distinguish the African generally from themselves (the whites), in regard to imprisonment were... that African society had not yet developed the stigma of shame attached to imprisonment and secondly, the low standard of living of many Africans... made it difficult to provide a still lower standard when they were in prison."

He was addressing the Nairobi Branch of the Royal Society of St. George on April 23. At the same gathering Sir Richard Woodley, one of the colony's more prominent settlers, put forward the following solution:

"Three years of slaving from dawn to dusk on a ration sufficient only to keep him alive and working but no more—powers to prison officials in charge to cut rations and inflict corporal punishment of a severe nature for misdemeanour—are more likely to be a deterrent than ten or 20 years of an ordinary sentence."

Meanwhile, the "Security Forces" are not waiting for any "improvements" in the administering of "justice". According to a statement issued by the Kenya African Union, sworn affidavits were pouring into its offices alleging shootings by members of the security forces.

"The conduct of the Home Guards has been far from satisfactory," the statement continues.

"People have been beaten, their property taken away. They have been left with nothing at all to live on..."

The Union is demanding "a commission of experts from England to inquire into the activities of the security forces". With a Tory Government in power, such a commission would most likely be packed with Tory supporters. It would be nothing but a tool in the hands of the officials in Nairobi and would never establish real contact with the African people.

The "Socialist Outlook" has long made clear that it accepts the existing evidence of ill-treatment by the security forces. But if there is any doubt in the Labour Movement let it take the initiative and send its own commission of inquiry to Kenya. Such a commission would enjoy the confidence of the African people and would be able to establish once and for all that the real terrorists in Kenya are the white police reserves and their Home Guard stooges.

CORONATION fever is being methodically spread right across the land. Every town and village is now covered with gaudy decorations, predominantly red, white and blue, supposed to be the visual expression of the people's joy at the crowning of a new monarch.

All the organs of propaganda—press, radio, television, cinema, and pulpit—are pounding away at the same theme... royalty, royalty, royalty. And right in the forefront of this mass flag-wagging is the "Daily Herald". Small wonder that even good Labour supporters feel obliged to stick out their

pathetic little bits of bunting in the back streets. But that is no excuse for the leaders.

Socialists are opposed to all this elaborate and costly buffoonery because its purpose is to instil servility into the people, to teach them their "proper place" in society and to cheer their "betters". It is an orgy of patriotism deliberately being whipped up by Tory scallywags to serve their own evil purposes.

This paper will have no part of it. We consider it our duty—as Keir Hardie considered it his—to stick to our socialist principles and

Editorial

speak out against all this monkey business.

Our readers know that we stand for the immediate liberation of the oppressed peoples of the colonies and we are against all the preparations for war to keep them in subjection. What kind of socialists would we be to endorse this glorification of militarism and empire on June 2?

As socialists, how can we throw our hats in the air for a young woman whose only claim to fame is that she was born into a family possessing a royal title and vast fortunes? We can't, and we don't intend to. The hereditary principle is in opposition to everything that socialism stands for.

Consider also the cost of this hysterical extravaganzas. Official Government spending alone will be more than £2,000,000—and this quite apart from the millions which will be wasted by local authorities on military displays, banquets, bunting and the like.

How readily the Government, and other guardians of public money, disperse money for the Coronation—and how sharply it contrasts with their skintight reluctance to spend a few pounds on easing the burden on old age

pensioners or making life a little more tolerable for the thousands condemned to live in housing conditions which no doubt the Queen wouldn't consider fit for the Royal dogs.

Just off the Royal route there is a postman, his wife and small child who are compelled to share three rooms and a kitchen with eight other people. Ten adults and one child in four rooms! We can personally vouch for this case which is typical of the deplorable housing conditions in "Royal London". How many rooms are there in Buckingham Palace?

Take another authentic case. A young married woman living with her husband and little girl in two top rooms of a seven story building. There is a tap on the landing—but no sink. All waste water must be carried down three flights of stairs. And this woman is suffering from tuberculosis of the knee and also has a "spot on the lung"! The rent for this "dwelling" is 30s. a week.

What has this young woman got to cheer about when all the stupid lords and ladies, the inhabitants of baronial castles and Mayfair boudoirs pass by next Tuesday surrounded by spivs and their spouses amid fluttering flags and prancing horses.

While one worker is inadequately housed, while one old age pensioner hasn't enough money to buy a decent meal, while one colonial worker is sweated by the City of London... we shall keep our hats firmly on our heads when the bands play "God Save the Queen".

★ Star Letter ★ An Idea for June 2nd

Thank God for a Socialist paper that devotes a whole page to exposing the vicious and hollow sham of the coronation;

Your readers are in your debt for the reprinting of Dr. Salter's magnificent testimony; such an article is an inspiring contrast to the old maid-ish air of faint deprecation which has emanated from other so-called Socialist journals on the subject of the Crown, not to speak of the downright adulation of "Labour's Own Daily Paper"—the "Herald", which seems to have turned itself into an additional Court Circular.

When the symbol of privilege and inequality dedicates herself to the service of the Capitalist ethic on June 2, every Socialist worthy of the name might well make an equal resolve to dedicate himself to the greater ethic that men like Hardie, Salter and Marx have embraced in their different ways, before him.

Amidst all the phoney rejoicing we might well determine to bring that day nearer when the common people of this country really will have cause to rejoice, when they recover their birthright of freedom and full social justice that has been filched from them over the centuries by kings and queens and the assorted parasites who cluster round the throne.

Carmarthen. David E. Painting.

"All people that on earth DO WELL
Sing to the Lord with cheerful voice..."



Sir Lincoln Must Be Disowned

NO-ONE will be surprised, but many will be disgusted, that Sir Lincoln Evans has accepted the position of vice-Chairman of the Iron and Steel Board, set up by the Tories to supervise the denationalised steel industry.

Coming on top of his pro-Tory utterances and his acceptance of a knighthood from the Tories, his departure from the relatively low paid offices of the Trade Union Movement for the realms of Big Business at £96 3s. 1d. a week, will evoke little but contempt from the rank and file trade unionist. Tempered, no doubt, with a sigh of relief that he will no longer be around to embarrass our movement.

If it were just the one man, we could perhaps shrug our shoulders and leave it at that. After all, this tactic of the employers is well understood by trade unionists in the shops. Practically every shop steward with any length of service behind him has, at some time or another, been offered a job as charge-hand, foreman or raterfixer. But he has spurned it, recognised it for what it is, and stuck to his

Nationalisation Policy Betrayed

job as Trade Union representative.

Unfortunately however, there seems to be a veritable queue of T.U.C. General Council members, falling over themselves to climb on the Tory Steel Board. It's jobs for the boys with a vengeance.

Besides Evans, there is John Owen, General Secretary of the Blastfurnacemen; and Wilfrid Beard, General Secretary of the Patternmakers.

And when, after a meeting of the Patternmakers Executive Committee, Beard announced his withdrawal from the Board, lo and behold! There was Andrew Naesmith, General Secretary of the Amalgamated Weavers, ready and waiting to step into the breach.

The prompt action of the Patternmakers Executive in forcing Beard to withdraw from the Board after only two days, sets an example for other Unions—and the General Council—to follow.

But as Naesmith is already a part-time Director of the Bank of England it can be assumed that his Union Executive is not so 'awkward' as the Patternmakers. His

appointment raises only an additional but incidental question—did they run out of engineers?

While the Tories would, without doubt, prefer to involve men whose Unions are directly concerned with Iron and Steel, any member of the T.U.C. General Council will serve their purpose. They want to involve Trade Union leaders, the higher the better, and then claim that their denationalisation

By
Fred Emmett

tion plans have been endorsed by the Trade Union movement.

The Tories will use these appointments to drive a wedge between the political and trade union wings of the movement.

The Amalgamated Union of Foundry Workers is directly concerned with the industry. They have reacted quickly. An emergency resolution at its conference on Monday last, declared that any association with the Iron and Steel Board is incompatible with the

policy and aims of the Trade Union movement and the Labour Party.

This stand will be endorsed by the overwhelming majority of rank and file of the movement. It must be the stand of the whole movement—Labour Party as well as the General Council. The rank and file must demand it.

Who authorised the "Herald" to praise Sir Lincoln's action? Does this mean that the T.U.C. will endorse these appointments?

Unless the movement insists on repudiating and condemning these people—and those who support them—we shall have only ourselves to blame if the public no longer take us seriously when we say we are opposed to denationalisation.

Everyone knows that Labour is losing support in the country because we no longer have a clear programme. Following Attlee's endorsement of Churchill on the issue of "peace", we now have the T.U.C. General Council virtually endorsing Churchill on the issue of denationalisation. Who can wonder that we lost Sunderland!

It is time for us, the rank and file, to call the leaders to order—and quickly!

Why Keir Hardie Was Against Coronations

Keir Hardie made this speech on June 17, 1911, on the occasion of the Coronation of King George V. Why are such forthright speeches not made today? Has the Monarchy become less reactionary—or have the leaders of the Party become more respectable?

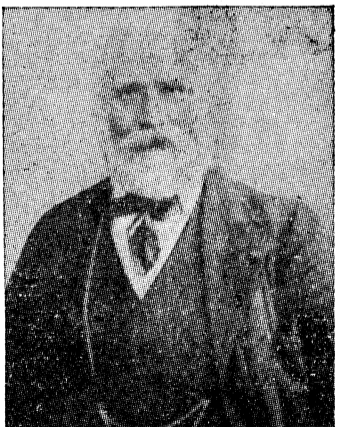
THE most desperate efforts are being made to popularise the coming Coronation. Public authorities have been given power to spend the ratepayers' money illegally on decorations and festivities.

"Loyalty is a form of idolatry as meaningless as is the worship of a wooden image by a South Sea Islander. Let anyone who likes to think himself 'loyal' sit down and try to figure out to himself what he means by it? There is nothing about the present king to inspire 'loyalty'. He is a very ordinary, commonplace person, both in mind and body, with no single attribute of greatness discernible in him.

"Is it the throne that inspires the loyal feelings? The throne is the symbol of oppression. Every throne in Europe is rusted with the blood and tears of the common people. It represents the age of tyranny, when the people had no rights. Loyalty is the most unmeaning of all modern superstitions.

"The Coronation with its pomp and show, its make-believe, its glorification of militarism, and its mockery of the solemnities of religion, is an affront to all that is true and self-respecting in our national life...

"Half a century ago Republicanism was the creed of Radicalism and Nonconformity. But the corrupting influences of wealth and a debased newspaper press



Keir Hardie
Founder of the Labour Party.

have eaten the soul out of the manhood of the nation. But Socialism has come to re-awaken the people to a new life, to sweep away sham and re-establish realities. Kingcraft and Priestcraft are used by the cunning and unscrupulous to veil truth from the eyes of men. But the veil is being rent and the death's-head which it conceals is being disclosed in its rotten hideousness.

"If we cannot set our heel upon the thing, we can at least show our contempt for it and preserve our self-respect by refusing to participate in any of the foolery connected with this Coronation."

Nowhere To Live!

★ The Plight of Evicted and Homeless Families ★

WHAT would you do if you were faced with eviction? In the County of Middlesex alone, about forty-seven families are made homeless every week.

Mr. and Mrs. Jones of Tottenham are one example. They were running a small shop in Tottenham and living above the shop. Now the owner intends to run it himself and live in the house Mr. Jones now occupies. This is a tied house, dependent on employment in the shop. A court eviction order has now expired, and Mr. Jones and his family are waiting to be put on the street.

They have four children, aged ten, eight, five and two. They have nowhere to go when they are evicted. The Middlesex County Council have told them to come back when they are on the street and the Welfare Officer might be able to find a night's lodging for the mother and children.

Unless the Borough Council can re-house the homeless family the Jones's have practically no chance of getting a home. Even furnished rooms are out of the question. Landlords, with one voice, say "No children!"

STATISTICS OF DESPAIR

One thousand and thirteen applications for temporary accom-

modation were considered in the Head Office of the Middlesex County Council Welfare Department in the six months ending August 16, 1952. Six hundred and sixty-eight of these families were told that the County Council could not provide temporary accommodation.

The County Council have 60 families in County Hostels at present, and the target they have set themselves is to be able to accommodate 100 families. This is obviously only nibbling at the problem.

Mr. and Mrs. Jones have a miserable prospect even if the County Council give them temporary accommodation in a

By Audrey Wise

Member Tottenham C.L.P.

County Hostel. There is no guarantee that Mr. Jones will be able to be with his wife and family. Even the children are sometimes separated from their mothers. So short is hostel accommodation that the County Hostels themselves are overcrowded.

In the first ten weeks of this year, 15 families were evicted in Tottenham alone. Other boroughs can probably show similar figures. Wherever you live, every week some family in your town is probably being put on the street. What this means in terms of misery can be imagined.

MORE PUBLICITY WANTED

The whole housing situation is deplorable, and complete homelessness is the deepest misery, specially since it so often leads to the break up of families. It is imperative that the facts are pub-

A Labour Party says . .

"This Tottenham Labour Party now decides to open a campaign to obtain homes for those evicted through no fault of their own, and for separated families.

"It will forcefully demonstrate the plight of these homeless and separated families and campaign for all necessary steps to be taken by Government and Local authorities, for example requisitioning, so that no houses shall remain empty while families are homeless."

licised in strong terms and action taken.

Borough Councils, particularly in London, are in a very difficult position. Shortage of land, apart from other problems, hinders their building programme. The ever-increasing size of London presents complex planning problems. We must press for full use of resources on building, and solutions must be found to the special problems of fully built up areas. But until sufficient new houses are built, it is urgent that full use be made of all existing houses. Mr. Jones and all those like him need homes NOW.

REQUISITIONING THE ANSWER

Houses are allowed to remain empty indefinitely while owners try to sell at inflated prices. There is no attempt to ensure that the best use is made of all available space. But Councils have even been asked by the Tory Government to de-requisition and so make the housing problem worse.

Tories say that family life is sacred, but this is sheer hypocrisy. Private property is the god they

COMPENSATION

A Reminder on the Facts

ELSEWHERE in this issue the facts concerning the Nationalised Coal Industry are brought to light from the point of view of a working miner. Here are some additional facts about the other nationalised industries which do not get enough publicity.

TRANSPORT

The following stocks were issued to cover the cost of compensating the shareholders:

£1,053,819,065	British Transport 3% Guaranteed Stock	1978-88.
124,119,575	" " " " "	1968-73.
12,905,641	" " " " "	1967-72.

The interest burden on these stocks is £35,728,328 8s. 7d., so that before the railways could earn a penny to pay for the running expenses, wages, maintenance, etc., or repair the neglect of a decade, they were in the red to the tune of £36 millions.

In 1951, the Transport industry showed a profit of £3 millions over and above, but this was only possible by rejecting the legitimate claims of the railway workers.

GAS

With gas the story is much the same except that the total is smaller, much of the industry being already publicly owned by the municipalities. The Gas stocks were:

£229,075,804	British Gas 3% Guaranteed Stock	1990-95.
75,000,000	" " " " "	1969-71.

The increase in the interest rate from 3 to 3½ per cent. was due to the capitulation of the Labour Government to the Tory demands for the ending of the cheap money policy.

ELECTRICITY

Similar to Gas. A considerable section owned by municipalities. In this case one stock was issued to cover the compensation of the private companies.

£344,013,161	British Electricity 3% Guaranteed Stock	1968-73.
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Although there have been subsequent issues, they have been to finance expansion not for compensation.

COAL

Here the method was different. There were numerous small companies scattered everywhere, making it impossible to agree on a figure for each one separately. A global figure of £164,660,000 was fixed. The different companies are still haggling over their respective shares.

TOTAL

For the sections of the Transport industry taken over, therefore, £1,190,844,281 was paid out; for part of Fuel, £772,748,965. Nearly £2,000,000,000 in compensation for partially nationalising two industries.

worship. Husbands can be separated from wives and parents from children—but never the owner from his property!

Tottenham Labour Party has started to move in the right direction (see panel on this page). We

urge all other Labour Parties to campaign on this question. When the people know the facts they will rally to support any action—however drastic—taken by Labour Councils to get homes for the homeless.

Labour's History

The Great Dock Strike—1889

IN the 19th century dockers lived under the most shocking poverty, filth and exploitation. These conditions were common to the whole of the working class in England.

In the first half of the 19th century the Trade Unions began to take shape, but the members of the these first unions were drawn from the skilled workers. The so-called unskilled workers, like the dockers, did not receive the benefits of industrial organisation. The most oppressed and

By Harry Constable

One of the seven Dockers tried at the Old Bailey for "conspiring to organise a strike" in 1889. They were found not guilty.



Pioneers of Labour
Among whom are the leaders of the Dock Strike J. Jones, H. Champion, Tom Mann, Keir Hardie and Ben Tillett.

underpaid sections of the British working class were not organised until events of far reaching importance took place in 1889.

In the summer of that year the match girls went on strike in London. You can read the story in last week's "Outlook". The conditions of work against which they struck were so obnoxious that the employers had to back down in the face of an aroused public opinion. In the midst of this industrial unrest, Will Thorne formed the Gas-Workers and General Labourers Union on the simple basis of a demand of an eight-hour day. That union gave only one benefit; strike pay.

In July 1889, Thorne made an application for a shorter day to the four London gas companies, and within a fortnight the London gas workers won a reduction of their working day from 12 to eight hours. This caused a sensation at the time and amazed the official leaders of the working class movement.

Two years before, Ben Tillett had founded the small Tea Porters and General Labourers Union in the East End of London and did

all he could to get the dock-workers to join. With his friends, John Burns, Tom Mann, and H. H. Champion, meetings were held at the dock gates where the doctrines of Socialism were preached to the dockers.

At that time the standard wage was 4d. an hour, and the casual labour for shipping companies was hired by contractors. Dockers could be hired for periods of less than four hours. Many times, after waiting for days to get work, a docker would be engaged for two or three hours, and sometimes for no more than an hour.

On a blazing hot August 12, 1889, 2,500 port-workers, inspired by the victory of the gasworkers, stopped labouring in the East India and West India Docks. They demanded an increase in the rate from 4d. to 6d. an hour, special payment for overtime, the abolition of sub-contracting and peace-work, and engagements of not less than four hours at a time.

Two committees were formed, the one from the dockers consisting of about six elected representatives, including Tom Mann, and John Burns, the others composed

of representatives of East End trades connected with the river-side industries. After satisfying themselves that both meant business, these two committees came together and amalgamated. Eleanor Marx, the daughter of Karl Marx, acted as secretary.

Needless to say, both the contractors and the dock companies refused these demands. Tillett, Mann, and Burns worked hard to arouse support for the dockers and the strike spread from London Bridge to Tilbury with a picket line system stretching along 20 miles of dockland.

One interesting aspect of this strike was the rôle played by the Stevedores and the sailors who were already organised. Their previous training in trade union activities made them extremely useful in picketing the dock gates. They gave large sums of money and in some cases even borrowed money on their credit to subsidise the strikers.

It is important to note that at that time the majority of the dockers did not belong to any trade union. The leaders were

not powerful, well paid officials, managing a rich union with a vast membership. They were penniless river-side agitators without resources but with unbreakable courage, with confidence in the rightness of their cause and the fighting capacities of the men they were organising.

Mass meetings of thousands of dockers were held on Tower Hill. Dockers marched through the streets carrying collecting boxes which were always returned filled up. The port-workers of that day flocked to hear the speeches of their leaders at meetings outside the dock gates.

Money for aid and relief poured in from all over the world. Nearly £30,000 were sent by telegraph. £3,000 came from Australia, while French and German workers expressed their solidarity by substantial contributions.

It must be said that the aid from the British unions arrived somewhat late. "I do not question the sincerity of their wish to help the strikers, but they were undoubtedly very slow in doing it," wrote that brilliant organiser Champion. They have plenty of experience to teach them that in such cases he gives twice who gives quickly. Yet a fortnight and in some cases a month elapsed, before their handsome contributions reached us."

The old Cardinal Manning and Sidney Buxton acted as go-between for the men and the companies, and by the middle of September, after first accepting the not less than four hours at a time rule, the companies finally agreed to give the dockers sixpence an hour.

After that successful action, the Tea Coopers and General Labourers Union was converted into the Dock, Wharf, River-side and General Workers Union, with Tillett as General Secretary. James Sexton created the National Union of Dock Labourers at Liverpool which soon spread into Scotland and Ireland.

The great docks strike of 1889 is regarded by all authorities as an historical victory for the British working class which gave a tremendous impetus to the whole trade union movement.

from the ranks

East Salford Has a Peace Plan

THE following resolution has been adopted by the General Management Committee of the East Salford Constituency Labour Party at its meeting on May 21.

"This meeting of the East Salford Labour Party, noting the recent developments in the international situation, including the statements of Soviet leaders, the Chinese initiative in reopening truce talks in Korea and Churchill's recent speech, and being aware of the fear of war of the working people of East Salford and throughout the country and of the present feelings of frustration and apparent apathy (Sunderland) due to the lack of a clear alterna-

THIS COLUMN IS YOURS

Any reports of general interest from your Labour Party, Trades Council or Trade Union Branch will be printed here if you send them in. Especially official resolutions.

tive leadership and policy by the Labour Party, urge the National Labour Party to now seize the initiative and transform the situation by boldly implementing the policy already laid down by last year's National Labour Party Conference by:—

1. "Proposing that unless the American negotiators in Korea cease their obstruction and accept fair and reasonable proposals on the P.O.W. question as a first step towards a just settlement then British Troops should be withdrawn.
2. "Declaring publicly that the Labour Party will oppose by all means in its power the intervention of British troops in Indo-China.
3. "That in accordance with the 1952 Conference decisions it will oppose any attempt by the Tory Government to suppress the just struggle of the colonial peoples for freedom.
4. Demanding that the British Government inform the U.S. that they intend to trade with all countries notwithstanding American objections even if this means the end of dollar aid.

"Confidently believing that public declarations along these lines in Parliament supported by a campaign throughout the country will rally enthusiastic support and end the apathy of Labour supporters, the East Salford Labour Party pledges its full support to any steps the N.E.C. take in such a campaign."

Bebington & Germany

The following resolution has been passed unanimously.

"THIS Bebington Constituency Labour Party having fresh in mind the horrors of two World Wars and recognising the dangerous trend of present events regarding the proposed incorporation into a European Army of German Divisions commanded by former Nazi Generals, declares that under no circumstances can military commands of German forces by ex-members of Hitler's Command be justified. It believes that any force officered by these men who are responsible for the deaths of millions of innocent people will be a most serious menace to the peace of Europe and the World."

"This Bebington Constituency Labour Party therefore calls upon the Government to take the initiative in the United Nations or direct with other occupying powers, for the withdrawal of all occupying forces and for the setting up of a united, free and democratic Germany which can become a bulwark of real peace in Europe."

THE Grimsby and District Trades Council decided at its last meeting to organise its own investigation into the town's fishing industry. In the opinion of the Council, many of the men now out of work as a result of the trawler owners' decision to lay up part of the fleet would be unable to find alternative employment.

More Letters . .

Beware This Trick

Most serious thinking Labour Party members and Trade Union rank and file will agree with Brother Dinning when he asserts ("Socialist Outlook" May 1) that the Margate T.U.C. and Morecambe Party Conference decisions on public ownership should now be carried out with no backsliding on nationalisation. He expresses fears that the N.E.C. will not implement the declared will of the party and the T.U.C.

May I suggest that there is one possibility whereby the N.E.C. can avoid giving an account of their stewardship for the past year at the 1953 National Party conference. It is this.

In 1951, the N.E.C. scrubbed off the agenda some 400 or so resolutions and amendments, and substituted for the conference a three-day election rally. We are also aware of statements from some party leaders of the possibility of a General Election next autumn. If we assume that a General Election does take place at that time, then the way is clear for the Party National leadership to make a repeat performance of 1951.

We active members of the Labour movement could demand an assurance from our leaders that the Party Conference this year be in every respect a normal one. Discussion of the party's work over the past year etc. and NO election rally. Whether the N.E.C. would give such an assurance remains a doubtful point.

J. Davis.
Edgbaston, Birmingham.

Punishment

This is a story that caused guffaws of laughter and unprintable comment among my compatriots. Here it is, straight out of the "Daily Mirror".

"Two young R.A.F. men should be kept off Coronation duties as a punishment (my emphasis) the chairman of a magistrates' court suggested yesterday." They "were fined £1 each at Uxbridge for taking away a motor-cycle . . ."

I strongly advise Uxbridge readers to keep a close watch over their motor-cycles until after the Coronation!!

R.A.F. (Germany). Conscript.

DANGER!

THE FIGHTING FUND total to date is only £37 12s. 6d. only one week to go—and still £32 7s. 6d. needed to hit our Monthly Target of £70. Please rush in to us everything you can spare during the next few days, comrades.

The Fight In Market Hall Ward

★ Fire Brigade's Magnificent Example to ALL Unions ★

IT may seem strange that when the recent Municipal Elections resulted in over 550 gains for the Labour Party, the story of a struggle which ended in defeat is still of paramount importance to the whole movement.

The Market Hall ward in Birmingham comprises an area stretching from the centre of the city, with its big stores, offices, civic buildings etc., to a Tory residential area near the University. Within it however, and behind the imposing façade, are some of the worst slums, and decaying and neglected working class areas in Birmingham.

It has an electorate of 16,800, over half of which is working class, but its affairs have been decided for many years by the 1,000 business votes of non-residential property owners in the centre of the City. For these absentee voters decisively sway every election result, and successive Tory Councillors were able to ignore the conditions of the working class, since they felt no responsibility to account for their actions to the electorate.

In 1952 however, they suffered a surprising defeat. Tory voters were demoralised and the workers came out in strength to exact revenge for Tory attacks, and Labour's defeat in the General Election.

The margin of 321 majority by the Labour party was very slender

and the local Labour Party anticipated that an increased Tory poll would require a record Labour poll if the seat was to be gained again, an unlikely occurrence in view of the large number of electors who had left the area because of demolition and rehousing, as well as the recession in the general swing towards Labour throughout the country.

The Market Hall Labour Party, although militant, was small, had

had in general been sympathetic to the demands of the firemen.

This small union, which had almost been crippled when the Tory Government and Maxwell-Fyfe intervened in their legitimate trades-union demonstration for better conditions and more pay, hurled itself into action on behalf of Labour candidates, printed three-quarters of a million leaflets—"Vote Labour say Britain's firemen"—at a cost of approxi-

they were held back by the "tied house" conditions; how Maxwell-Fyfe was now proposing to amend the law to remove their privileged free dental and health service—and the Labour Party workers swore to do what they could to help the firemen in their struggles.

On the eve of polling day, cars previously utilised in loudspeaker work on 15 of Birmingham's main factories, toured the ward, headed by one car whose loudspeaker was connected to a gramophone playing rousing music and "hit" tunes. Nothing like it has ever been seen in the ward, and the streets were full of workers listening to the statements from firemen and Labour speakers.

We lost by 752 votes but if organisation and hard work alone can win elections this would have been won. If heroism and physical effort is decisive, Labour should have captured Market Hall. That it did not is a condemnation of the weak and vacillating national leadership with its uninspired policy and conciliatory gestures to the Tories, rather than any reflection upon the magnificent struggle in Market Hall.

The Firemen and their struggle were more successful in Liverpool, Manchester and other areas, and their intervention in areas which did not earlier reflect the swing was decisive.

If this small union could throw the whole of its resources in defence of its members behind the Labour Party, just imagine what the larger unions could achieve.

The mobilisation of their wealth and their membership, their apparatus and their paid officials in concentrated struggles in critical areas, coupled with a fighting socialist leadership, could hurl the Tories from office tomorrow, and place Socialism, not as a programme for the future but an immediate practicable possibility, before a Labour Government elected with an overwhelming majority.

That is the lesson of Market Hall.

An Appreciation
By Sam Goldberg
Labour Candidate
Market Hall Ward
Birmingham



few active workers, and less money to wage a struggle capable of winning the seat, until into the struggle stepped the Fire Brigades Union.

The Tory candidate, and representative of the ward for three years was Mr. T. John, a member of the Fire Brigades Committee. This man had spoken and voted in favour of the vicious fines imposed on the firemen of Birmingham who took part in the "Spit and Polish" Demonstrations in November, 1951. He also sought to move an amendment in the City Council to cut the Fire Brigade Expenditure, which would have meant not only less fire cover, but also would have eliminated Birmingham firemen's hope of obtaining their demand for a 60-hour week.

While Birmingham's Firemen had therefore every reason to remove this gentleman from office, their intervention in the election was part of a gigantic effort on the part of the F.B.U. nationally to change the composition of the local councils, their employers, in favour of the Labour Party, who

mately £2,500, and mobilised almost its entire effective membership in a disciplined, organised and concentrated battle in wards, boroughs, and cities up and down the country.

Into the ward poured a fleet of cars, loudspeakers, and helpers. Their national officer Mark Bass, national executive committee members from Yarmouth, Stoke and Walthamstow, as well as the entire Birmingham district committee came into the fight.

The ward party carried out the largest and most intensive canvass in its history, and its pre-election Sunday morning canvasses took on the character of military manoeuvres.

The writing up of pollcards was done in record time, squads of firemen sitting up, did two-thirds of them overnight.

It was an election which will always be remembered in the Labour Party.

After the work was done for the day, the firemen told the workers of their problems; how they still did not have the 60-hour week in spite of improved rosters; how

The Week at Westminster

By Harold Davies M.P.

COBBLING WITH THE HEALTH SERVICE

WE are told that "A hale cobbler is better than a sick king". Macleod, the Tory Health Minister, though neither a hale cobbler nor a sick king, is just cobbling around with the Health Service.

Whilst Nye Bevan stuck constructively and consistently to the point of the Debate, the Minister of Health, after putting on an act of apparent boredom, followed his Central Office brief as though he were speaking to a branch of the Housewives' League. He ignores the Central Advisory Council and sets up the Guillebaud Committee.

Is this Committee dominated with the idea of cuts at all costs? What was it to recommend? We are still not sure about all this despite the Minister's reply.

Dr. Santo Jeger exposed the basis of the Tory attack and, as he said in this paper last week, "the Tories have lost no opportunity of kicking and crippling the Health Services". Dr. Jeger added "There are some general practitioners who through ignorance or malevolence still do not like the Health Service."

Mr. Will Griffiths told the House how he had picked up the "Daily Express" and read the headline "Guillebaud seeks cuts". Ten days later a letter from Mr. Guillebaud appeared in the "Express" denying that he had used the word "cut". But, as Bevan said, it is strange that a repudiation was not published for ten days.

MERRIE ENGLAND!

IF you had slipped into the House during the Finance Bill you would have thought that we were the village committee making arrangements for the Coronation Pageant. Beer, Football and Boxing were top level items of appeal for tax remissions. Any moment I expected to see in Mr. Speaker's Chair, Two Ton Tony Galento, the beer-barrel boxer, shouting "Time Gentlemen, Please!"

It was all just shadow boxing and Jimmy Glanville rocked the House when he demanded any-



thing from 15 to 20 free pints per man on Coronation Day. He wanted the brewers brought to heel and this was one of his joyous ways of doing it and, incidentally, leaving them less spare cash to hand over to Tory funds.

NO BEER NOR SKITTLES

ELAINE Burton in an Adjournment Debate took up the fight again on behalf of the Old Age Pensioners. She told the House of the plight of these old people. Many go hungry because they cannot afford proper food but there is to be no inquiry into their sad plight. The Coronation offers them little beer and less skittles.

Elaine believed that the retail index of prices painted an over optimistic picture of their plight. "Any person who does shopping knows that the pound in her purse does not go so far today as last June."

She quoted letters from Old Age Pensioners from various parts of Britain. Here is one from London: "In the winter I cannot light the fire before 3 p.m., then damp it down with tea leaves and potato peelings. To bed at 8 p.m. by candle-light."

In the House of Lords this week Lord Beveridge said: "There are today at least twice as many people—nearly two million—in receipt of national assistance subject to a means test as there were three or four years ago". You cannot feed the hungry with algebraic symbols and indices of the Cost of Living.

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In Defence of British Miners

By Price Jones
Lancashire
Colliery Worker

IN a recent article I pointed out to "Outlook" readers that the Tory Press were once again belabouring the idea that it was inevitable that the "inefficient" N.C.B. should again make a loss on its years workings.

Now the N.C.B. has published its Annual Report which shows that it had a deficiency in 1952 of £8,200,000. Who or what has caused that?

The Editor of the "Times" (14/5/53) goes to great lengths to prove that it was the fault of the "idle miners". He says, "This year's set-back is due directly to an increase in absenteeism, which was 11.81 per cent. in the first four months last year and has been 13.07 per cent. so far this year. This can be traced to a decision made at the end of last year that the bonus of an extra shift's earnings paid to miners who work five shifts a week should also be paid to miners who work less than five shifts a week, but can produce a doctors certificate to justify their absence. This concession has been grossly abused."

EVIDENCE MISSING

I defy the "Times" Editor to bring facts and figures that will prove that the percentage of absenteeism in the mining industry is higher, year by year, than in any other heavy industry. The only difference is that the miner's absenteeism is continually spotlighted in the Press, whereas the absenteeism in other industries is not. As a result, a large number of people have had, perhaps unconsciously, created for them the illusion of miners being a bone-idle lot.

Next, the assertion that miners receive a bonus of a shift's pay if they work five shifts. It is true that we get paid what we call "six for five", but I have always con-

tended that the sixth shift is not a bonus. Let me try to illustrate what I mean.

Let's say that before the five-day week scheme came into operation, a miner received £6 for 6 days work, i.e., £1 per day. Then when the five-day week came into being the miner still received £6, but he only worked five days. Financially, if he only worked five days he was no better off. I maintain that to receive a bonus one must be better off financially.

BONUS: THE FACTS

Now to his other point that miners now receive the "bonus" if they work less than five days. Before this new concession if a miner stayed off work one day he lost his "bonus" shift, in effect he lost two days pay (I understand that the mining industry was the only industry where this applied).

The new concession makes it possible for a miner who can prove by a doctor's note that he was ill, can have a day or so off work and receive a proportionate part of his "bonus", not as asserted by the "Times" Editor, the whole of his bonus. It works out that if a person stays off one day and brings in a doctor's note he will receive four-fifths of his "bonus".

I certainly admit that some miners have taken advantage of this new concession, but to say that this is directly responsible for the loss of £8,200,000 is grossly unfair and unjustified and will be strongly resented by the overwhelming majority of mineworkers who work just as often as they possibly can. The ever-soaring cost-of-living makes it imperative that the day-wage worker at least should work regular and even look for more overtime if he is to retain anything like a decent standard of living.

The "Times" Editor quotes the Report that miners' average earnings per shift rose by 12 per cent. in 1952. (I don't know how they



Coal Cutter at Work

arrive at that figure.) He then goes on to say, "There was no increase in efficiency to justify it". This is a dangerous thought and one that trade unionists must be aware of.

Apart from anything else I regard this idea as a definite condemnation of the miner's integrity. What the Editor really means by "Increase in efficiency" is that the miners must work harder to justify a rise, this in turn infers that miners are now not doing their best. This again is a statement that all mineworkers will resent very strongly.

THE REAL TROUBLE

Whilst the "Times" is scandalously accusing colliery-workers of letting the industry down, both by absenteeism and not pulling their weight, they very conveniently forgot to tell their readers that the loss of £8,200,000 was

incurred only after paying out once again £14,500,000 to the coal-owners as their annual rake-off in interest.

One doesn't have to be really educated to see that, if this annual interest was stopped, the N.C.B. would have made a profit this year of £6,300,000 and the same thing would have applied to the earlier years when the coal industry is supposed to have made a loss.

MORE COAL

The "Times" Editor is obliged to mention the fact that these lazy miners produced 1,600,000 more tons last year than the previous year. But tempers his generosity by saying that the increase "was small in comparison to the increase in miners".

It is obvious that he, like a great number of other people, falls into the trap when talking about the coal industry of trying to compare it with other industries. This

is fatal when trying to understand mining.

An increase of recruits in mining doesn't have to mean a corresponding increase in output. The recruits have got to be trained first and this training is only to give them an idea of the "atmosphere" of pit work. It does not fit them to go on production, i.e., coal-filling, straight away.

In any case, even if it did it would not mean any increase in the amount of coal filled unless there happens to be vacancies on the existing coalfaces.

In any other industry the application of new labour power to new machines and material means new or increased production. In mining, coalfaces are not brought into being as easily as new machinery is bought. It takes quite a while for new faces to be developed. And the "Times" itself informs us that capital expenditure last year was only two-thirds the amount thought desirable in the Plan for Coal!!

MEN OR MACHINES

Talking about new machinery leads me to another point, not mentioned in the "Times" Editorial, but one on which I feel very strongly and I think it may serve as a point for discussion.

The idea of the N.C.B., apparently, is that modern machine methods of mining will improve coal output and is "the thing". I don't want to be thought a left-over from the Luddite era, but I am sure that under present conditions modernisation in all cases does not result in increased production. In some cases it could mean the reverse.

In new, or comparatively new mines, modern machinery is definitely desirable, but we have in this country many pits that are a great number of years old. Conditions in these mines, bad roof, etc., do not lend themselves to the idea of modern machinery. It's

like putting a new patch on an old pair of trousers—the pair of trousers will soon be ruined.

I have one pit definitely in mind where, since the introduction of modern methods, coal output has dropped considerably and costs have soared. In places like this I contend that coal should be got by hand and loaded on to conveyor belts. One great advantage of this method is that there would be far less dirt in the coal filled out (coal cutters cannot distinguish between coal and dirt, men can) and naturally bad conditions would not be aggravated by mechanical coal cutting.

MINERS WILL FIGHT

The "Times" Editorial ends with this last attack! "That all is not well with the coal industry none will deny. The industry needs an undisturbed period for working out its policies. But the period must be reasonably short, for the coal industry has been nationalised for over six years and none of the great hopes which it was said to hold out for the nation as a whole has so far been fulfilled. Unless there is early progress changes will have to be made".

I certainly agree that all is not well. Nothing is perfect, but I maintain that the nationalised coal industry has saved this country from economic chaos which is what would have occurred if "private enterprise" had been allowed to ruin the industry any longer.

Changes will certainly have to be made but not in the way that the "Times" have in mind. The Tory mentality envisages the industry being de-nationalised or de-centralised, coupling all the advantages to them of "private enterprise" with the sure thing of owners' compensation paid out since nationalisation.

I can assure people with this mentality that this position will not be achieved without struggle from the miners.

