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Socialist Outlook

No. 109

WEEKLY

[Registered at the G.P.O. as a Newspaper]

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 18, 1953

3d.

**Hands Off
the Colonial
peoples!**

RAIL STRIKE? THE TORIES ARE WHOLLY RESPONSIBLE

GOOD luck to the railwaymen! By declaring a national strike to commence at midnight on December 20th the National Union of Railwaymen have given the only possible answer to those who expected them to accept without protest the insult of a 4/- a week wage increase.

Railwaymen are state employees — their industry is nationalised. So this is no "ordinary strike"—it is essentially a strike against the Tory Government which is wholly responsible for the present critical situation on the railways.

It is not a strike against nationalisation—but against all those who are doing their dirty best to make nationalisation a failure.

Against the advice of all the experts, and against the expressed

wishes of the men concerned, the Government denationalised the profitable section of transport, road haulage, and thus deliberately deprived the nationalised railways of £7 million a year, the expected road haulage profit for 1953.

£7 millions which should have gone to the Transport Commission for use in improving wages and conditions of all transport workers, including railwaymen, has instead gone to swell the profits of the sharks of private enterprise. That is Toryism, naked and unadorned.

CAN'T AFFORD IT!

And now, having carried out that piece of robbery of the nation's purse, these gentlemen come to £6-a-week railwaymen and say: "We can't afford to give you an increase!" There is only one reply to that piece of impertinence: **The country can't afford the Tory Government!**

Can't afford a wage increase, indeed! Why, not only are the railways deprived of the revenues

from road transport—but they are also expected to shoulder the huge burden of £32 millions every year in compensation payments to the ex-shareholders!

This isn't a payment for any kind of service. It is simply a dead weight on the industry which effectively prevents any improvements in railwaymen's wages and conditions, as well as holding up

Editorial

urgently needed modernisation which could help to reduce fares.

Yes, the Government can afford to raise the present abominably low wages of railway workers. Restore road transport to the nation as part of an integrated road-rail transport system! Cut the compensation to the ex-shareholders!

SELF-CONFESSED ROBBERS

If the Tory Government won't do these things they confess to being completely bankrupt. They confess to being—what indeed they are—a government of rich men existing to make rich men richer. The quicker they are removed and replaced by a Labour Government acting in the interests of the majority, that is the workers, the quicker will the railway crisis be resolved.

But the next Labour Government had better take note of the real cause of all this unrest in industry. Not only must road transport be renationalised—but

public ownership must be extended to all the important industries. Unless that is done, the modernisation of British industry will never be accomplished and the profit-makers will continue to exploit the nationalised mines and railways for their own needs.

But meanwhile, if the Government insists on a showdown, the responsibility for a national rail strike is entirely theirs. The task of the Labour Movement is to ensure victory to the railwaymen.

WHAT WE CAN DO

We can be certain that the Government will have the support of practically all the national press who will, by a barrage of lies, attempt to place on the strikers the blame for any inconveniences that may be suffered by the public.

All the propaganda weapons of the Labour Movement—the Parliamentary Labour Party's use of the House of Commons, the columns of the "Herald," and all

the party's public platforms—must be placed at the service of the railwaymen to combat this poison.

Railwaymen have been patient to the point of exasperation. They have accepted, time after time, miserable "awards" in the hope of more to come in the future. But all the thanks they have got is this latest kick in the teeth... four lousy shillings where at least eighteen were demanded! They have therefore no choice in the matter.

The threatened national strike is the logical outcome of Tory policy towards the nationalised railways.

Those who object to being "inconvenienced" by a railway strike had better make sure they row in with the railwaymen and thus ensure that the Government quickly capitulates! For there certainly won't be any capitulation from men whose basic rate is between six and seven pounds and who must work seven days a week to earn anything like a living wage at all!

In their two years of office, the Government have presided over the deliberate worsening of working class living standards. They have dismantled the Welfare State which Labour built, they have cut the food subsidies and forced up prices, they have raised the rents and reduced old people to penury—and all this time they have "looked after their own". Profits have continued to climb.

Now the workers have decided to fight back—first the engineers, now the railwaymen and, in all probability, the miners will be next. Tory rule is being challenged in industry and the ob-

Some Facts on Compensation

THE TOTAL payments of compensation under the Coal Industry Nationalisation Act, 1946, in each financial year since vesting date (1st January, 1947) are:

Year ended 31st March	£
1947	270,420
1948	159,048
1949	23,704,830
1950	10,700,868
1951	52,197,098
1952	53,467,588
1953	51,241,369
1954 (to 30th November 1953)	11,992,369
Total	£203,733,258

—Parliamentary Secretary, Ministry of Fuel.

* * *

Interest payments to the ex-shareholders of British Railways amounts to an average of £32 millions every year.

vious task of the Labour Party is to extend this challenge on to the political field.

All this wonderful militancy in industry must be given a political direction by the Party. Surely now is the time for the National Council of Labour to launch a massive campaign to force the Government to resign.

Peace and Goodwill to All Workers—Xmas 1953



This happy little girl is the much-loved daughter of a London bus driver. She is obviously looking forward to a merry Xmas—but her father is getting more and more worried. With the cost of living always going up and wages always lagging behind, it's getting to be a real problem to provide those little extras which mean so much to the kiddies.

And then there is the menace of another world war. The little girl's father still feels sick at the thought of all the happy little children who were blasted to death in that so-called "fight for freedom." So, all things considered, he thinks he owes his family two things: a determination to fight for more wages, and an equal determination to join with workers all over the world who are fighting to end this profit-making system which forever breeds war.

NEXT ISSUE

There will be no 'Outlook' Xmas Day. The next issue will appear on **Friday, Jan. 1st.**

In Defence of Railwaymen

BILL is a signalman, a first class signalman who has guided trains in and out of London—some loaded with freight and some with passengers—for the past twenty years. For this work, highly skilled and responsible work, he receives a weekly wage of roughly £7 a week.

The rent of his nice new council house—where he lives with his wife and three lovely children—is 32/6d. a week. Which leaves him with less than £5 10s. 0d. a week on which to feed, clothe and rear a family. And don't forget, he's very fond of his family, likes to take them out and about and give them as many good things as possible. Especially at Xmas does Bill enjoy giving the kiddies a treat. But how can he do all these things on £7 a week? He just can't—at least not without working all the overtime he can get!

So Bill, like thousands of other railwaymen, works overtime, nearly every day of the week, Sundays and holidays included. He doesn't like doing it—he hates it. But he has no choice. Unless he is prepared to work all the overtime possible, the standard of life of himself and his family would rapidly slip down below the bread line.

There is no payment for sickness on the railways—like there is in a lot of much less arduous jobs. So, unless Bill is really seriously ill, he must go to work

when really he would be much better off in bed.

But Bill is also a socialist, a member of the Labour Party and, of course, an active trade unionist. He would dearly love to attend a lot more ward meetings because he's got plenty to say about politics—about compensation, for instance—but he just hasn't got the time. He must work instead. It's the same with all those books he would like to sit by the fire and read. No time. Always it is work and sleep, sleep and work.

But now Bill's union, the N.U.R., has put in for an increase—works out to about £1 a week. Naturally, Bill wants that increase. He wants it very bad indeed. For with it he could ease off a bit and spend a bit more time with the family. So Bill is right behind the union in this dispute.

But the Transport Commission rejected the claim, that is, they denied Bill the chance of a better sort of life. It then went to the Staff Tribunal and those gentlemen graciously offered Bill a miserable 4/-. So now Bill is real mad.

The N.U.R. executive then called a strike for December 20th and, as you'd expect, Bill is all for it. He knows better than all the soapy journalists that a strike will mean thin times ahead until the strike is won. But Bill has been kicked around long enough. He's fed up being a "loyal servant" of the railways. He is determined to teach the Tory Government that they must recog-

nise him as a fully grown man, a skilled worker who has a wife and family to support and a burning desire for a bit more leisure in his life.

So Bill is all for the strike—and we are all for Bill, and all his fellow members of the N.U.R.—and we wish them all the very best of luck in the coming struggle.

When I saw Bill yesterday he was white with anger. He had just been shown a copy of a paper called "The Recorder". It's a new addition to the pile of Tory papers which pour out their slanders whenever the workers stand up for their rights. Bill doesn't know who the editor of the "Recorder" is—but he would dearly love to meet him one day! For this is what that worthy gentleman wrote

By
John Lawrence

about Bill and his mates in last Monday's edition.

"The nationalised railways took on men the old railways wouldn't look at. You've seen lounging about the stations. Poor types... throwing luggage and parcels about, or dropping them off the barrows... Thefts of goods and damage in transit... there have been a chain of fantastic mail robberies. And there has been accident after accident, with people killed, in which it has been found that the railwaymen were at fault..."

And so on in the same slander-

ous strain. Of course the "Recorder's" editor knew exactly what was wrong and how to solve the crisis. No doubt he had often pondered the question from the depths of his seat in a first-class carriage! It's very simple, he says, just sack all the poor types! "The chief trouble on the railways," says this idiot editor, "is that too many men are employed."

Of course he didn't bother to give any facts and figures. If he had done, his case would have exploded in his hands. For the total staff employed in 1952 was 6 per cent less than in 1948 and, what is more, this reduced number of workers did 4 per cent more work! And that, of course, is why they want more wages. Of course, there are some people who could well be sacked—but the "Recorder" didn't mention them. But Bill did—and very forcibly. Sack all these so-and-so ex-shareholders, he said!

Then Bill turned to me with a grim sort of smile and said: "Anyway, if the gentlemen of the 'Recorder' thinks we are all a lot of lazy lie-about, spending our time pinching mail bags and arranging train smashes, he won't mind, will he, if we don't turn up for work for a few weeks commencing midnight the 20th December."

Is the "SOCIALIST OUTLOOK" in your Local Library?

If not—ASK FOR IT!

What it Means to be an African Mau Mau is 'Red'?

THE African National Congress is the foremost organisation of the African people, and was founded in 1912 with the object of unifying the African people in the Union to fight for their political and economic rights.

Racial discrimination is practised in all walks of life in S. Africa. Out of a population of 12½ million, only Europeans, who number 2½ million, have the right to vote; the 10 million Non-Europeans do not have that right.

Europeans own more than 86 per cent of the land, and the Non-Europeans, who make up 75 per cent of the population, own only 13 per cent of the land.

The Non-Europeans have no say in the making of the laws of the country and do not participate in the Councils of the State at all levels; Africans are debarred from doing skilled labour, and they are denied the opportunities of trade union organisation. They live in separate areas called "locations" and compounds, which are fenced off and in rural areas are known as Reserves. They have separate schools and separate churches.

Discrimination is practised in places of employment and in the use of public transport. The African cannot move freely from one area to another without producing a document from some authority.

The most notorious and degrading law affecting Africans is the Pass Law, which is designed to control the movement of an African, and shows that he is either employed in a certain area or is looking for employment.

Although this Pass system has been in existence since 1809, introduced by the British authorities, it has been perfected from time to time for the purpose of regulating cheap labour in the interests of European mining and farming industries. Today, every African male over the age of 16 is required to carry this document, which can be demanded by any police officer at any time or place. Failure to produce it is a crime, and more than 100,000 people have been flung into gaol yearly under this law.

The coming into power of Dr. Malan's Nationalist Government in 1948 shocked not only Non-Europeans in the Union, but democratic Europeans as well, because of the notorious Herrenvolk doctrines and the similarity of the ideas of the Nationalist Party to those of the Nazis in Germany. This party during the war had sympathies with Hitler, and acclaimed his victories.

It did not only whip up racial hysteria between Black and White, but preached race hatred amongst the White people themselves: anti-English and anti-Semitic propaganda was intensified. It also propagated division amongst Non-Europeans and formulated plans for splitting the Africans into Tribal groups.

The Nationalists then passed numerous discriminatory laws.

The **Group Areas Act** is designed to ruin the Non-Europeans economically by removing them from the areas in which they now reside or trade, with or without compensation for the fixed properties they own. In some cases it will take away the right of owning fixed property altogether.

The **Suppression of Communism Act** is designed to silence all opposition against the Nationalist

★ By Walter Sisulu ★ Secretary General African National Congress

In printing these extracts from the speech of Walter Sisulu we appeal to all readers to help the "Fund For African Democracy" whose secretary is Solly Sachs, 21 Strutton Ground, London, S.W.1. The meeting at which this speech was made was organised by the above "Fund" under the chairmanship of Sir Leslie Plummer, M.P.

Government of Dr. Malan, as evidenced by the indiscriminate banings of people's leaders, both European and Non-European. This ban applies not only to political leaders but to Trade Unionists as well. Under this law, to advocate equality between white and black, or any socio-political changes, by what the Government may consider illegal methods, is a crime.

The **Mixed Marriages Act** forbids marriage between a Black person and a White person in South Africa, and makes it a criminal offence.

The **Native Labour (Settlement of Disputes) Act** makes it a crime for the African workers to go on strike. Instead, machinery has been created for government-controlled Trade Unions.

This is a brief summary of some of the discriminatory laws of the Nationalists.

The recent law to prevent Indian women from joining their husbands in South Africa, is just another example of the provocative racial measures of the Union Government. It is difficult, therefore, to understand why the British representative at the United Nations continues to support the racist policies of Dr. Malan and his continuous defiance of the United Nations resolutions.

of Seretse Khama which became a matter of concern to the Union Government to such an extent that he was prohibited from entering the Union. May it not be that the British Government acted the way it did in the banishment of Seretse Khama from his homeland because of pressure from the Union Government?

I would like to point out further that the Colonial powers must know that the struggling people in Africa consider their struggles not isolated, but interwoven. What touches Africans in Kenya and Uganda, touches Africans in Rhodesia and South Africa.

We are alarmed and shocked

HOT COCKLES

HOT cockles is an ancient Christmas game. You were blindfolded, then you had to kneel and guess who biffed you. Looks as though that is what the Heads of States were doing last week at Bermuda.

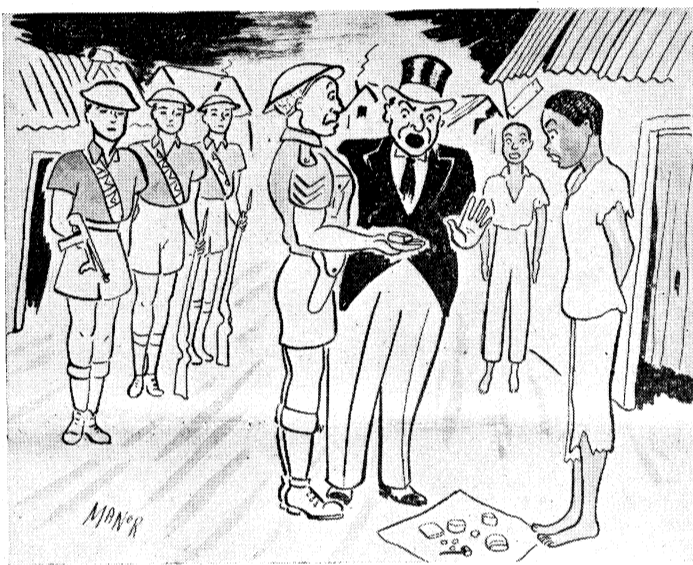
So far as the communique was concerned there was little in it. Do we recognise China's right to come in on the United Nations? Is the war in Indo-China to go on and on? M. Laniel was unable to speak clearly for France, in fact he seems to have been very much in the background.

They said: "We reaffirmed that the European Defence Community is needed to assure the defensive capacity of the Atlantic community of which it will be an integral part within this framework." Thus it seems that the European Defence Community is

by the policy pursued by the British Government in Kenya and now Uganda, and we believe that the only possible way of handling the situation is a peaceful discussion with the recognised leaders of the people, not by intimidation and armed force.

The Government now has decided to move away Africans from the western part of Johannesburg, about 4 miles from its centre, to a spot 12 to 15 miles away from their places of employment. Although Sophiatown is one of the few African townships where an African can buy freehold property, this right of ownership is now being taken away, and the Government has stated definitely that it has no intention of subsidising.

Thousands of Africans are without accommodation, transport facilities are shockingly inadequate, many Africans live below the breadline, and yet the Government is determined to worsen a situation which is already so bad. People are now being obliged to



'A FULL box of matches! You WERE going to burn Georgetown!'

The Week at Westminster

by Harold Davies, M.P.



top level lads playing "Hot Cockles" at Bermuda? Who was blindfolded and who biffed them!

RURAL WALES

Last Tuesday the voice of Wales dominated the Chamber and Tudor Watkins in an able speech opened the challenge to the Home Secretary who speaks for the Tories on Wales and its affairs. I still have pleasant memories of going around the farms near a Cardiganshire village to collect brand new pennies on New Year's Day. That was the custom when I was a child.

Apparently, according to Tudor,

—What Rubbish!

WHAT is Mau Mau? What started Mau Mau? What is the real cause of the trouble in Kenya?

As part of an attempt to provide myself with at least a basic understanding of these questions I recently read a book called "Mau Mau" by a certain C. T. Stoneham.

Can you guess what was one of the first things I learned from this remarkable book. That our old friends the Communists are responsible for the organisation of Mau Mau! I have often wondered what sort of chaps these Communists are—these extremely able

By
Price Jones

people who can cause trouble where previously none existed. Any amongst the dockers, engineers or miners is immediately said to have been fomented by this Moscow-directed minority—and now Mau Mau! Let's see what Brother Stoneham has to say on this point.

"The organisation has been framed in exact imitation of Communist methods. Cells are formed under a leader. Each member is encouraged to break away to form other cells under his own leadership... By this means growth is stimulated and the rapid spread of the movement assured. It was along these lines that Communism penetrated into the smaller European States, with what success the fates of Estonia, Poland, and Czechoslovakia bear witness. Communism is still busy with this infiltration and there are many who believe that Mau Mau is merely an off-shoot of its worldwide campaign, adapted to the approval of a backward, superstitious people."

Throughout the book is this repeated assertion that Mau Mau, in its present form, has been formed by a few unscrupulous Kremlin-inspired people seeking power and fortune.

So much for the leaders, what about the ordinary member of

this organisation. Again let our book guide us. We are told that: "The typical Mau Mau member grows a beard and moustache and cultivates a fierce demeanour. He is a killer, and is proud of it. He has been reared on a diet of Hollywood violence and garbled accounts of underground warfare in Europe and the East. He sees himself a hero—with a wild-beast philosophy of profit and enjoyment for the strong. Unfortunately, he has the encouragement of softness and sympathy for his kind expressed in the 'highbrow' journals of Britain and America, and since he has received a tolerable education from his 'oppressors', he is able to read and digest these learned periodicals."

So America in the shape of Hollywood and 'highbrow' journals is co-operating with Russia in organising and creating Mau Mau (what will McCarthy say!). When our author says 'a tolerable education' it makes one wonder to whom it is tolerable when one reads elsewhere that last year £59 per head was spent on European children's education as compared to 30/- per head on African children.

I would like to quote once again from this remarkable book. "The Kenya native pays no income tax, and though from the growing of sisal and maize he may, and often does, earn thousands of pounds yearly, the sum of seventeen shillings remains his entire direct contribution to the Colony's revenue."

Well, well, it seems that I, along with many many thousands of fellow Socialists, have misplaced my sympathies. It appears that we should have changed our colours from white to black. But it does make one wonder just a little why the poor down-trodden white settlers don't make one last desperate effort to get away from their wicked black oppressors.

Although I have only mentioned a few of the many ridiculous statements in this book, it will be obvious that I have not improved my understanding by the reading of it. But although it may have had a negative effect on me I contend that books like these can do and do have considerable effect in misleading and distorting the opinions of many people who are not as interested in the subject as myself.

We have a terrific job on our hands to counteract the flood of literature pouring out on this and other questions.

He uttered: "I dare not fight; but I will wink and hold out my iron." Now that the floodlight has been turned on the Kenya killings, how could we, the Labour Party, let the Government go into Recess without a censure of its methods of Colonial administration in Africa. Maurice Edelman demanded last week, that Lyttelton's "shoot to kill" instructions be modified in view of the ruthlessness with which it was still being interpreted. He said: "Never before in the whole history of warfare has the number of killed been twice the number of wounded."

The National Press appears to think that for some obscure reason the Opposition should now cease to oppose. This censure vote deals with the handling of affairs in Africa but we cannot forget either the mishandling of Colonial Affairs in other parts of the Commonwealth. We were told by the Colonial Secretary the other day that we had to keep up the colour bar in Bermuda. Race discrimination is not worth the dollars that it may earn.

We cannot afford to wink and hold out our iron. Labour must go on fighting to let the world know that our Colonial Policy is based on the great traditions of the Socialist Movement. Remember Britain was once considered the "Mother of the Free." Perhaps you too once sang about it. Let Labour prove it in Colonial Africa.

What the Ranks say on GUIANA

THE Executive Committee of the Leicester Labour Party carried a motion "that the statement issued by the N.E.C. on British Guiana be accepted." They turned down a ward resolution which rejected the circular and called on the N.E.C. and the Parliamentary Labour Party to advance a policy which "will convince colonial peoples everywhere that the Labour Party really stands for economic and political freedom, and for the abolition of exploitation."

However, before the full debate meeting of the Leicester Labour Party—which comprises four constituencies and affiliated organisations—some comrades in the League

of Youth organised a meeting with a speaker from Guiana. Other comrades sold many dozens of the "Outlook" pamphlet on Guiana. Another produced and distributed a two page bulletin "Facts on British Guiana."

The resolution which had been rejected by the E.C. was then moved at the full delegate meeting on December 10th by an organiser of the Distributive Workers Union, seconded by a local councillor, a member of the A.E.U. The meeting by 80 votes to 25 refused to accept the N.E.C. circular.

The resolution calling for a socialist policy toward Guiana was carried overwhelmingly.
Leicester Socialist

unalterable. This comes out just at the time when we are accepting the Russian offer of talks.

There is nothing here about the reunification of Germany on the basis of free elections. Bermuda, with a reluctant France in the shadows, is telling the world that we are pushing ahead with German rearmament and be damned to the consequences. On such a basis the Russian talks would be bound to fail.

Read the communique through again and again on Indo-China. What do you find? Nothing that yields one glimmer of light on the real policy to be followed. Must this "other Korea" be kept going? Ho Chi-Minh is prepared to talk. Are the French just to go on wasting their blood and treasure. American Aid is no substitute for the real peace that the ordinary Frenchman needs.

While all this was going on, Eisenhower addressed the General Assembly on his plan for a stock-pool of fissionable material for peaceful uses. This is a progression on the old Baruch Plan and one that they will investigate. Some papers described the plan in hyperbolic phrases. Nevertheless, does it really do anything to prevent the Atom Race? The one sure thing is that the speech overshadowed the Bermuda Conference for news value.

We shall discuss that and the Bermuda Conference in our Foreign Affairs Debate this week. Any old way, there were three

Socialist Outlook

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Editor: John Lawrence

We cannot be Nym's in this fight.

A Rank and File Railwayman Tells You . . . WHY RAILWAYMEN WILL STRIKE

THE railwaymen's strike decision is a challenge to Toryism and the whole Tory set up for British Transport. Such a strike will be a terrific set back for the Tory plans to depress the workers' wages in order to maintain high profits and dividends. This is a blow with the Workers' fist. It is worth 50 votes of censure in Parliament or 100 petitions against Churchill.

But now Railwaymen are determined men and if no settlement is reached by midnight on Sunday, December 20th they will be the 'desperadoes' of industry, in the eyes of the same capitalist press that praised them before.

Everyone knows, of course, that for the press lords it is a question

By
Bob Shaw (N.U.R.)

of profits and shareholders first. Their change of front will surprise nobody.

But some may wonder why decent, good family men must stop work and produce chaos during Xmas week? To understand this you must know what has happened to railwaymen's wages since the war. Since 1947 a Goods Porter's wage has risen from 92/6 to 117/6, an increase of 27 per cent. A Motor Driver has gone up 23 per cent and an Engine Driver has gone up 23 per cent.

But the price index has increased during that same period by 41 per cent so that the Porter can now buy 14 per cent less and the Motor Driver and Engine Driver 18 per cent less than six years ago.

In fact, if a railwayman on bottom money were to spend only that amount on food allowed by the official index, his family would eat no fresh fruit, no sweets, no tinned meat, few eggs and cakes, and only the cheapest cuts of meat.

Life is grim for railwaymen and the nagging fear of poverty and debt has been brought back by Tory budgets and the steady rise in prices.

The 4/- award came as a shock to railwaymen, many of whom had hoped that the Transport Commission would do the "fair thing." The immediate reaction was that it was a "b . . . insult." "If we stand for this we will stand for anything," was the general comment.

Perhaps a mistake was made and the Tribunal meant to give more? No! Further negotiations proved useless and only brought out a smart attempt from Sir Brian Robertson, the new Chief of Staff, to split off the higher grades.

If only, moaned the "Sunday Observer", the Tribunal had offered even 6/-, then all would have been well. Railwaymen would have grumbled but they would have accepted it.

The Tories and Transport Commission understand the position much better than the "Observer." For them it is a question of the workers' or the shareholders. Either workers' families must go without and scrimp and scrape to live, or the ex-shareholders must lose their guaranteed 3 per cent. Parliament has said in legal terms that the shareholders must be paid £32 million per year, enough for £1 per week increase for every railwayman and some to spare. For Churchill and his gang there is no question of choice. They will still pay out to their pals, even if railwaymen starve, and despite the clicking of tongues from the liberal press.

That is why the railwaymen are on strike against Toryism. They

are hitting out at the compensation payments in the fight for 15 per cent. Their stand is also a fight against the Tory plans to split up British Transport and against the loss of millions of revenue due to the selling of Road Transport.

The Tory Government, on the other hand, will resist. The interests of its class are at stake. It must be forced to retreat.

For success the railwaymen must unite and stand firm. All out united and no division in the ranks. The demand for the full 15 per cent must go along with the

demand that the compensation payments be suspended and that railwaymen's wages be guaranteed in future against further increases in living costs.

The leaders of the Labour Party who supported the Tory Minister when he called out the troops in the petrol strike, must take a stand and demand justice for railwaymen in their fight for a better wage. We do not want advice, but support. We want to see in Parliament a fight against the payment to shareholders. In that fight the Labour leaders are assured of our solid support.

'E' DAY FOR ENGINEERS

By HARRY FINCH

DECEMBER 23rd is E day for the engineers. On this day the executives of the Confederation of Engineering and Shipbuilding Unions will decide on what form of action the engineers of Britain will take to enforce their 15 per cent claim. They will make this decision against the background of growing militancy among other workers.

It can be safely reported that the A.E.U. National Committee decision for a ban on piecework and overtime has met with a critical reception from thousands of workers, especially inside the A.E.U. itself. Many resolutions have been sent to the Executive Council of the A.E.U. asking it to recall the National Committee in order to rescind its decision for a ban and instead to propose a ballot for a National Strike of all engineers in the New Year.

There is no need to repeat the reasons why a ban on

piecework is not the best method but one point stands out—with the operation of such a ban every worker is on his "Jack Jones." He must face the inevitable attempts to speed him up on his job. The inevitable sackings and victimisation and lock-outs will throw the unions on to the defensive instead of, as on December 2nd—the offensive.

The National Strike is the only means of keeping the unity and presenting a solid front to the employers. The ballot should be—"Are you for strike action—Yes or No." The attempt to drag in an alternative of arbitration should be rejected. If the strike ballot is lost then the leaders can talk of other forms of action. Arbitration, which is INACTION from our side, never has, and never will get the workers anything.

Councillor H. Finch

GOOD GIRLS!

AMONGST the engineering workers marching through the Willesden area on the day of the engineers' national token strike was a group of young girls carrying slogans such as "Don't Scab" and "Out today—15 per cent tomorrow."

They were from one of the shops of a factory in north Acton, and there is a short but interesting history behind these girls. Until last May there was no organisation in their shop. The girl who played a leading part in getting the organisation going, now the shop steward, put it to the girls that the only way that they could improve their working conditions was through the Union. A 44-hour week and two weeks holiday with pay were not given out of kindness on the part of the boss, but were got because there are strong Unions in the country.

Today out of the 125 girls working in the shop, 40 are in the A.E.U., and the number will be increasing in the near future.

They are facing the usual difficulties of organising. The administrative staff do their best to stop the girls joining the Union. Some of the girls are scared of joining, thinking they may lose their jobs,

and others think they will be joining some sort of communist organisation.

But more and more of the girls are seeing that what their steward said about "only improving conditions through the Union" is quite correct. In the short time that the shop has been organised they have got the management to improve the ventilation by putting in two fans, got more coat racks (they only had about fifty hooks for the whole shop), and have got a new toilet room.

The girls are pieceworkers doing skilled jobs and most of them

By Johnny Wise
(A.E.U. Shop Steward)

have been with the company from three to eight years. The wages they get are slightly above the average paid to girls in the industry, but like other workers they are feeling the effects of the rising cost of living.

They came out on the token strike, solidly behind the wage claim, and brought some of the 'nons' with them. Their shop steward says firmly that the non-unionists will be only too pleased to take the extra pay we are striving for, so they should not object to swelling the union rank and file in the fight to maintain a decent standard of living out of profits.

They were on the picket line at 7.30 in the morning (and all turned up on time), before going on the march.

These girls are to be congratulated on the splendid job they are doing. They are in fact writing another page in the proud history of the Labour movement, and with girls like these there is nothing the movement can't achieve.

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The Tories Love Slums!

★ 'Operation Rescue' Analysed ★

THE Housing Repairs and Rents Bill lays down a new policy for the benefit of the slum landlord. This should be opposed as well as the unjustified increases in rents which it allows.

The precise number of slum dwellings is not known. The Government White Paper—"Houses—the Next Step"—admits that the number runs into several hundred thousands. In fact, the vast bulk of houses over 100 years old (two and a quarter million) and a large part of property over 65 years old (approximately one in three of the existing stock of houses fall into this category) would be unfit for human habitation if a proper standard was defined.

'FOR TIME BEING'

Local Authorities are to submit proposals within a year of the Act to deal with slum property unless the Minister thinks the proportion in a district is high, then the period may be extended. The Councils may purchase the slum houses, instead of demolishing them "if it appears to them the house is, or can be rendered capable of providing accommodation of a standard which is adequate for the time being." What is "for the time being"? Apparently fifteen years or more. The financial provisions to the local authorities for repairs run for fifteen years. "Operation Rescue" the propaganda blurb, explaining the Government's plans states:

"Some authorities will be able to pull down and replace all their slum houses within that time (five years). Others may need 10 years, some 15, and some even longer." (my emphasis).

That is, so long as the property can be prevented from collapsing, the workers living in slum conditions are expected to stay there.

WHAT IS 'UNFIT'?

The government has defined the standards of fitness for human habitation so that they are clouded in obscurity. Property, which by the 1936 Housing Act would have been condemned, will now be given another lease of life. When standards are reduced, the difficulties are increased for the tenant and local authority to compel the landlord to bring the property up to good repair.

The bill states a house is deemed to be unfit "only if it is so far defective . . . that it is not reasonably suitable for occupation . . ." But the following powers of local authorities disappear by the repeal of a section of the 1936 Act—registration and inspection of such houses; enforcing drainage and cleanliness, closet accommodation, adequate lighting of any common staircase, the cleansing and redecoration of the premises at stated times and the paving of the courts and court-

yards; the provision of handrails where necessary for all staircases of such houses.

In the 1936 Act property could be condemned "by reason of disrepair and sanitary defects." This is to be deleted as is the whole paragraph defining sanitary defects.

The Tories built the slums, now it seems, they are so proud of them that are going to propagate them for eternity if possible.

The Government is to make grants to local authorities for this "slum clearance" scheme. They

By
Cllr. D. Finch

are to pay 50 per cent of the loan charges, and to make an annual payment of £2 5s. 0d. for each dwelling, payable for fifteen years.

In Lambeth, a fairly typical London borough, an estimate has shown more than two thousand dwellings are classified as slums. It is probable that the exact figure will be nearer four thousand. The average cost of acquisition for each dwelling will be about £150. (This corresponds to the average sum paid by the Birmingham City Council when it purchased a large area of slum property).

BURDEN OF LOANS

The loan charges to the local authority on 2,000 dwellings at this cost of acquisition will be nearly £13,000 annually for fifteen years. Repairs and maintenance after the exchequer contribution of £2 5s. 0d. per dwelling is deducted will cost the council £65,000 each year, even if no more is spent on slum property than on requisitioned property.

In other words, even taking the lowest estimate of its slum property, a typical metropolitan borough would be confronted with additional loan charges and repair and maintenance costs of nearly £80,000 each year (a rate in Lambeth of approximately 9d.). Other borough councils, especially in the towns, will have similar financial responsibilities. The White Paper expects tenants in slum property taken over to pay more. Even if the local authority had the decency to extract more from workers living in patched up slums, the deficit falling on the rates would still be enormous. The White Paper admits that "Local authorities will be put to extra expense."

CONCLUSIONS FOR LABOUR

A number of conclusions must be drawn from Part I of the Bill. The Tories intend to relieve slumlandlords of property which has passed for itself several times over but is not profitable now. They are to be paid for, this junk, either at site value, or more, by the rate payers. The Tories also intend to leave the vast majority of slums and dilapidated property standing. They are "solving" the housing problem in their own way.

The answer to the housing problem is not the Tory way—it requires a Labour Government and a Socialist answer.

There are "7½ million houses rented from private landlords, large and small". Local authorities should be compelled to take over all these properties by means of interest free loans. There should be no compensation paid to slum landlords. Where companies owning property are affected, only those shareholders who can show need should be compensated. The majority of companies owning rent-restricted property have done quite well—they want to do a little better, of course. For example the Investor's Chronicle of November 7th, 1953 states: "The progressive records maintained by some of the larger concerns, such as City and West End Properties despite the difficulties which they have had to face, encourages the view that the easing of the repair and maintenance burden might well be used to the shareholder's advantage." (my emphasis).

A Labour Government should have no qualms in dealing firmly with such companies.

★ Star Letter ★ Adopt this Plan

The engineering employers state that extra profits have been ploughed back into the industry so that output can be improved. Where else is the money to come from for modernising plant, they ask.

They are ignoring the fact that even if part of their profits are ploughed back the employers still enjoy them. The enjoyment is merely postponed.

By ploughing back profits capital is increased so as to secure a still larger profit later.

That is why the engineering unions' plan for nationalising important sections of their industry is vital. When the people own an industry and the surplus is set aside to extend production it is the people and not the shareholders who benefit.

In case we forget, the State steel industry made a net surplus of £74,000,000 last year.
Manchester Frank Allau

Musical Scabs in Exeter

IN March, when Panto season ended, the Manager of The Theatre Royal, Exeter, sacked four out of the nine Musicians' Union members who comprised the regular orchestra.

The M.U. official approached the management and was informed that this was for two weeks only. They would probably be re-engaged at the end of March. This statement, however, was untrue. Events proved that this Management had already decided to sack the men permanently. In April, an electric organ was installed; it was then obvious that this decision to instal the organ was taken BEFORE the musicians were sacked.

The other five members of the orchestra were ordered to strike,

and the manager announced that they were dismissed. The union had been tricked. A meeting was arranged between the Union, the Theatre Management and the Ministry of Labour. Such was the Management, that no satisfactory result was secured.

The Manager carried on with the organ and a few musical scabs. But obviously the public are being fleeced. They pay the same price for this mixture of canned and blackleg music, as for the full orchestra.

Now, however, the National Executive of the M.U. are giving active and positive support, and on Monday last, the 7th December, the local Branch fully supported by the EXETER TRADES COUNCIL established a picket line. This of course, is a sensation for this politically backward Cathedral City.

As is often the case, the Tories are our allies (unwittingly). They are making the workers of Exeter more Trade Union conscious. This demonstration closely following the engineering strike of Dec. 2nd will compel many to shake off stupid apathy, and become active in the movement.

If the public, as a result of this picketing, and the explanatory leaflets now being distributed, give support by BOYCOTTING the Theatre until the Management become reasonable, then we shall win. And win we must because this is a threat and a challenge to the Trade Union Movement in the South-west.

If only Equity would support us, our strike, minute as it may seem to this exalted body, would be the making of the Union movement throughout this area.

Exeter Reader

'My Ward Supports it..'

I would like to let you know how welcome and timely was the lead by the "S. O." in calling for a petition to get the Tories out. All the members of the Labour Party with whom I have discussed the matter have been enthusiastic and when the matter was raised at my last ward meeting, it was unanimously agreed to send a resolution of support to the G.M.C.

David Goldhill Ward 7, Holborn and St. Pancras South Labour Party

Our Readers Write . . .

The Opposition is Negative

I cannot understand the negative attitude of some of your contributors to this excellent, constructive suggestion to galvanise the Labour Movement into new life and "make the dry bones live again."

Frank Allaun is unquestionably right. A petition such as you suggest with the backing of the National Council of Labour, and they ought to welcome such powerful, constitutional support of Labour Party policy, would have even greater success than the recent food subsidies petition, and I know for a fact that this petition made many Tory M.P.'s spend sleepless nights.

In addition to breaking the puny morale of the Tories, the Petition would give new courage to the militant workers in the Labour Party, Trade Unions, and Co-operative Movement. The Engineers, Railway Workers, Building Workers, Women fighting for Equal Pay, the Homeless, and all those whose cause you so ably champion in your Editorials, articles, and correspondence columns every week, would be given new courage and new talking points in their mass canvas which would precipitate the fall of this Government which has lowered the prestige of the British People in the eyes of all right thinking and humane people.

Wimbledon Percy Allott

Churchill Won't be Impressed

I am sorry to see the "Socialist Outlook" editorial putting forward the idea of a petition to bring the Tories out. In my opinion, this is the same kind of approach as that adopted by the C.P. on the question of peace. Instead of rallying the worker militants and Labour voters around a real struggle to bring the Tories down, the proposal for a petition can only disarm our movement by fostering the idea that the Tories can be defeated without a fight. Neither Socialism nor peace can be won by the signing of petitions—millions of signatures will not impress Mr. Churchill and his ilk.

"Socialist Outlook" should lead the way by giving political direction to the present industrial demonstrations of the workers against the attempts of Toryism to depress living standards.

The "Outlook" should campaign for pressure to be brought to bear on the Labour leaders to raise their voices in Parliament in protest against Tory attacks on the workers and mobilise the T.U.—and L.P. members for an all out struggle for higher wages and better living conditions.

Nottingham M. Shaw

'I Hope You'll Fight for it'

The opposition to the Mass Petition suggested by the "Socialist Outlook" amazes me. I have just been reading a pamphlet by G. Healy called "Plain Speaking on War and Peace" in which I find the following: "Before England enters any new war the matter should be submitted to a referendum vote by the whole nation."

I agree entirely with this idea —although it is clear that such a referendum could be signed by all sorts of people from Churchill down—then how much more necessary is the petition you advocate which is simply for or

against the Tories remaining in power.

Only those who are definitely in favour of a real struggle against the Tories would sign such a petition and I therefore hope you will continue your fight for it.

St. Pancras (London) Hilda Lane

A Passive Course

This idea seems contrary to the previous editorials which dealt with the means necessary to remove the Tories.

In 1952 I seconded the following resolution on behalf of Small Heath Divisional Labour Party at the Annual Labour Party Conference.

"This Conference believes

A Mass Petition To Get The Tories Out! For or Against

Our readers continue the discussion . . .

This Woman Will Sign!

By AUDREY WISE

MRS. Raymond of 30 Arundel Gardens, North Kensington, is living in suspense. She has been threatened by the Tory Council with eviction from her requisitioned flat.

Mrs Raymond has four children, aged 14, 13, 11 and 8. At the back of her flat is a communal garden, run by a committee over whom the tenants have no control. The committee was apparently set up by the landlords.

The excuse for threatening to evict this family is an allegation that the children have brought friends to play in the garden. This is against the "rules." These "rules" seem to be designed to make tenants' lives a misery. Children are constantly being accused of causing "damage".

Mrs. Raymond says that this word "damage" is the only word known to this committee, though it is difficult to see how anyone can damage this dreary expanse. There is no space provided where children can play, and no seats where the women can sit and knit.

This family has lived in the flat for three years. Now their whole security is threatened on this flimsy excuse.

It is, of course, Tory policy to hand requisitioned property back to the owners, many of whom are anxious to sell with vacant possession. A woman has visited this house with the idea of buying.

However, Mrs. Raymond (who is the sole support of her children) is a woman of initiative. She has collected, so far, 119 signatures from her neighbours, against her eviction. This petition seems to have made the Council pause.

Mrs. Raymond has certainly no love for the Tories. She knows they don't like requisitioned property, and she was very disturbed about the cost of living. Since a petition had been her spontaneous means of self-defence, I was interested to know her attitude to a monster petition to get the Tories out.

She is enthusiastic about the idea and thinks the Labour Party would have no difficulty in getting signatures. She herself would welcome a chance to take part.

the continuance in office of the Tory Government daily increases the burden imposed on the working people. The rising cost of living, the wreckage of the textile industry, the drive towards war, the smashing of the Health Service can only be remedied by the return of a new Labour Government pledged to act in a socialist manner.

Conference proposes, through the National Council of Labour, that mass meetings and demonstrations be held throughout the country and if this does not succeed in its objective, to discuss what other measures shall be taken by the Labour Movement to rid itself of a mortal enemy, and resolves to support the Trade Union Movement where it is forced into industrial action to defend the living standards of its members."

The 'Socialist Outlook' had previously published the original resolution from my Division which was stronger than the above because it said that the industrial action of unions shall be supported "with the object of rallying the entire working class for the early return of Labour to Power." Your headlines then were:—"SMALL HEATH GIVES THE LEAD." Surely, with the gigantic strike movement of the engineers commencing, to be followed by other unions, the time is fast approaching for the Small Heath resolution to take on living form. Labour has its greatest opportunity to strike down the Tory Govt. if it allies itself fully with the wage battles before our eyes. Yet, Mr. Editor, it is at this crucial time that you propose a new course—a passive course—that of a petition!

Birmingham Cllr. H. Finch

Unite the Working Class

In last week's "Outlook," I see that Councillor Dipple of Tottenham wrote with gusto against the idea of the N.E.C. organising a Petition for the resignation of the Tory Government.

The Tottenham Labour Party, at an aggregate meeting carried a resolution calling for such a Petition. There was only one dissident — and that was Councillor Dipple.

It was a meeting on Housing. Discussion ranged over Increased Rents, Houses in disrepair, Evictions, Separated Families, Overcrowding and all the abuses of Landlordism. Then remedies—

Restoration of the original Rents Act and Requisitioning. More Half-way Houses, Take-over of property by Local Authorities, Slum clearance, a National Building Corporation and Cheap-Interest Loans. The essential prerequisite for these measures, said the resolution, is a Labour Government.

An amendment was moved for the Nationalisation of Building and all that goes with it, and deleting the call for an organised petition. The mover advocated Rent strikes, support for Wage Demands and a real Socialist Programme, all of which the Tottenham Party already supports. Indeed the Party has made real Socialist contributions by resolutions to Annual Conference in recent years and will do so again. Yet no one seconded this amendment.

Tottenham recognises the necessity to fight for a Socialist policy but also the necessity to unite the Labour Party through the N.E.C. with the wage demands of the Engineers, Railwaymen, Miners and all sections of the Workers. If there was a General Election tomorrow it would be fought on the Margate programme on which the N.E.C. was mandated. Does this mean that "pure" Socialists would not rally the workers in such an election to get rid of the Tories? Not for Tottenham anyway, so we put the N.E.C. mandate in the resolution for a Petition.

This is not a contradiction. On the contrary, the discussion showed the consistently serious approach of the Tottenham Party which is deeply rooted in the working class. It is not prepared to wait till 1956 for Churchill's General Election, so it asks the N.E.C. to activate all local Parties around a Petition, just as it would for an Election.

In an Election we go to the people. It is the time the Party really works with a class purpose. Members who don't attend Ward meetings, come out with us on the canvas, rallying the working class on their own doorsteps. If this is right for an Election, it is right for a Petition. It's not just getting a signature to separate "Peace" from Socialism, but getting the signature of the Engineer, Railwayman, Miner, or any worker and his wife who come to the doorstep, to get rid of the Tories while we express the Labour Parties' solidarity with their wage demands and encourage their Rent-Strike. Isn't that uniting the Working Class in action. It starts with a Petition but Class unity leads to Class Power.

Perhaps the confusion of those who oppose this is best expressed in the statement of the mover of the Tottenham Amendment who said: "A petition against the Rent Increases, Yes! but to get rid of the Tories, No!"

Isn't the Bill to increase Controlled Rents a Tory Bill?

Tottenham N. Dinning

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'That we Your Petitioners . . .'

★ By Reg Groves ★ The well-known Labour Historian

THAT we, your petitioners, dwell in a land whose merchants are noted for enterprise, whose manufacturers are very skilful, and whose workmen are proverbial for their industry.

"The land itself is goodly, the soil rich, and the temperature wholesome; it is abundantly furnished with the materials of commerce and trade; it has numerous and convenient harbours; in facility of internal communication it exceeds all others.

"For three and twenty years we have enjoyed a profound peace.

"Yet, with all these elements of national prosperity, and with every disposition and capacity to take advantage of them, we find ourselves overwhelmed with public and private suffering.

"We are bowed down under a load of taxes; which, notwithstanding, fall greatly short of the wants of our rulers; our traders are trembling on the verge of bankruptcy; our workmen are starving; capital brings no profit; the home of the artificer is desolate, and the warehouse of the pawnbroker is full; the workhouse is crowded, and the manufactory is deserted."

So run opening paragraphs of the 1839 Chartist Petition, which surveys the causes of suffering and discontent and does on to demand five of the six points of the famous People's Charter, around which the workers were organising.

The Petition demanded: Universal Suffrage; the Ballot; Annual Parliaments; Payment of Members; and No Property Qualifications for M.P.'s. The sixth point, Equal Electoral Districts, was omitted.

Petition to Parliament was the only constitutional way by which the people could influence their legislators. In a population of twenty-five million, only eight hundred thousand property owners had the vote. One adult male in seven had the vote.

There were three Chartist Petitions—in 1839, 1842, and 1848. Each Petition marked the opening of serious conflict between rulers and ruled. Behind the demand for the vote was gathered all the discontents of the time. Implicit in the demand for political democracy was the determination of the people to use the vote to right their wrongs.

The popular campaign for demands set out in the 'People's Charter' and in the Petition, opened with the great Glasgow meeting of May 28th, 1838. The platform united for the first time radical leaders of working men in Birmingham, London and Scotland, and the crowd, cheered by forty bands and over two hundred flags and banners, numbered 200,000.

At Newcastle, on the Town

Moor, 80,000 workers paraded in support of the 'six points.' In August, the people of the Midlands assembled in a great Birmingham demonstration numbering 200,000. On September 25th, workshops and factories for miles around were closed as 300,000 working men and women of Lancashire gathered at Kersal Moor, near Manchester. Yorkshire followed with a meeting at Peep Green where 200,000 gave enthusiastic support to the Chartist cause.

All through the Spring and Summer of 1838, large meetings were being held in all main towns.

The comfortable classes became alarmed at the fierce mood of the crowds, and alarm grew when, in October, day meetings—attended which cost the workers a day's pay—were abandoned in favour of night meetings. These gatherings, lit by the flare of thousands of torches, attended by vast numbers of weavers and factory hands, applauding "physical force" sentiments with passionate cheering, a waving of home-made pikes and occasionally the discharge of muskets, frightened the property owners and their Government.

Torchlight processions and meetings were banned. Local authorities were urged to form militias, composed of propertied men. Troops, hitherto billeted in the

people's homes, were moved into newly built barracks for fear they should sympathise with Chartist views. In an attempt to intimidate Chartist leaders everywhere, the Government arrested the Rev. Joseph Rayner Stephens, inciter of insurrection against the New Poor Law, whose fervent denunciations of the new industrial system found ready response from the people. Only the release of Stephens on bail stayed serious riots in Ashton, Stephens' own town.

Excitement grew in the industrial districts. The attention of the people was now concentrated upon the General Convention of the Industrial Classes, the body designated by the Chartists to conduct the battle for the People's Charter.

In our next issue (Jan. 1st) Reg Groves will explain to readers how the fight for the Petition led to the Chartist Insurrection of 1839.

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