

# SOCIALIST REVIEW

NEITHER WASHINGTON NOR MOSCOW, BUT INTERNATIONAL SOCIALISM

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SIXPENCE

**FORTNIGHTLY**  
for the  
**Industrial Militant —**  
for  
**International**  
**Socialism**

## MACMILLAN IN MOSCOW

WITH MACMILLAN tripping off to Moscow we can expect the Gallup Poll once again to tip in favour of his Party. Let us not forget then the reason for the popularity of his visit, ie, the preparation for Summit Talks to solve the German and other matters, and why such a prospect, previously hailed by some Left-Wingers, could possibly ensure for us another five dreary years of Tory rule.

A reasonable question to ask: Suppose, thanks to Macmillan, we have our Summit Talks, or the Premier looks as if he wants them, and the resulting popularity is just enough to get the Government back, will all the socialists who plumped for the talks for so long consider the five years a fair enough price to pay for their precious talks?

### MISTAKES ON THE LEFT

Apart from those hopeless sectarian extremists (like supporters of this journal) who hold that nothing could be worse than having the Tories back with us after the elections to go their happy H-bomb-strewn way, the supporters of Summit Conferences could perhaps justify their past stand from future expectations of the results of the Top People's Conference.

Because it is true that a sizeable portion of the British people have some faith in the outcome of a meeting of the top warmongers, certain Leftists have taken it on themselves to blow hot and cold on the subject. Some suggest that it is necessary to go along with supposed popular feeling, avoid hurting feelings, and say that Summit Talks could very well be a good thing; it would expose the warlike intent of the West; or if the smaller nations were included we could have a more "democratic" Summit.

It is doubtful whether the ruling class of the smaller nations would be any more inclined to look after the interests of the Labour movement in power politics than the larger nations; we can only judge the neutrals on their past activities. Nehru uses troops against strikers on every occasion. Tito supported the UN in Korea and white-washed Hungary on varying occasions. Nasser sent the last Egyptian strike leader to the gallows. It will not be the anti-imperialist revolts (which brought these men to power) which would speak at an international conference,

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but the men themselves and their shifting opportunist policies. Is there any reason to suppose that these men, any more than the Soviet or its leaders, will attempt to speak for German or British labour?

**It is much more honest to take a stand against trust in Summit Talks from the start, and if events prove one to be wrong, then admit it, than to find oneself washed up in a Tory election campaign.**

And how strong is the popular feeling for Summit Talks that we must follow Father Macmillan and the masses to our Bloody Sunday? It is true that a sizeable portion of the bourgeois Press, along with the Stalinists, along with various Left-Centrist leaders, and some honest Radicals and workers feel that a Summit Meeting could do some good to their various and diametrically-opposed interests. But is there really a deep-going bread and butter feeling so strong in the Labour movement that workers would kick us to death or brand us sectarians if we suggested that more good could come from, for instance, an international gathering of workers' representatives, scientific top warmongers, certain Leftists have taken it upon themselves, Labour leaders, etc, than another of the interminable thieves' kitchens of carping and cynical power politicians? After all, there is also a sizeable portion of the population who would be inclined to agree with our estimation of the motives of those set in power above us, and we would be doing our little bit if we propagandized with the aim of encouraging these healthy sentiments of the Labour movement, rather than for "pressure on the world governments."

## CASUAL LABOUR IN BUILDING REGISTRATION A SOLUTION says OMAR

**WHY DO** we need a form of Registration for the General Operative employed within the Building and Civil Engineering Industries?

The answer is a brief and simple one; to end casualization; to provide the operatives with a measure of economic security.

Of all the major industries in society, none other is plagued to the same extent with casual labour.

This need not be. The main problem is to reconcile an irregular demand for houses; schools; hospitals; factories; roads, bridges and other building projects with the available supply of labour.

The volume of building work is not constant; it depends on a number of varying factors.

These are conditioned in the main by external forces and not,

as so often imagined, from the inside.

Government policy has been and still is, responsible for the rise and fall in the number of men employed in the industry. This is frequently conditioned by the general economic state of the nation.

### IN WINTER

Whatever the cause, the operative is the sufferer. In addition, the best laid schemes of men often go adrift through the fickleness of the weather.

Winter, in particular, with its rain, hail, snow and frost inflicts a heavy toll on the personnel of the industry; to an extent, without parallel in any other industry.

All these have an adverse

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## INDUSTRIAL

## TRAMP NAVVY

## SR building repoter says

## SEPARATE AGREEMENTS — A DANGER

**B**UILDING AND CIVIL ENGINEERING may seem very similar to some of you, and so they are, but the crux is that each have separate National Agreements. This can cause, and be engineered to cause, mass confusion in the minds of the workers.

The Shell-Mex (McAlpine) South Bank Site started as a Civil Engineering project. The lads worked under the Civil Engineering Construction Conciliation Board Agreement.

The working conditions under this Board are not so good as the conditions under the National Federation of Building Trades Operatives—no bonus incentive procedure, no regional overtime committees, no travelling time allowances. Otherwise there is not a great deal of difference.

Bro J Armstrong represents the T & GWU on the Civil Engineering Board. The same Bro Armstrong represents the T & GWU on the NFBTO.

Bro J H Mills represents the Amalgamated Society of Woodworkers (Carpenters) on the Civil Engineering Board. The same Bro J H Mills represents the ASW on the NFBTO.

Bro H Weaver represents the AUBTW (Bricklayers and their labourers, when he is not expelling them) on the Civil Engineering Board. The same Bro Weaver represents the AUBTW on the NFBTO.

Mr H E Matthews represents the NUG & MW (Jim Matthews' boys) on the Civil Engineering Board, and the same Mr H Matthews represents the NUG & WU on the Federation.

You will see from this that the same TU leaders sit on both bodies.

Now last December, after a great deal of pressure and activity by branches, the T & GWU decided that they would seek the re-employment of their victimized stewards of the Shell-Mex (McAlpine) Site, South Bank, by presenting their case to the Civil Engineering Conciliation Board. But a big shock was awaiting the T & GWU. When the Trades Unions met to discuss the agenda on the morning of the fatal day and when they came to the item on the agenda dealing with the re-employment of the victimized men, pandemonium broke loose. There were roars of indignation at this affront; at the

very impudence of the T & GWU daring to seek the support of their fellow Unions; there were cries of "Discipline your men"; "Expel these insurgents as we did"; you are making our disciplinarian methods, our statesmanship, look ridiculous. With this support, the T & GWU decided it would be useless to go before the Joint Conciliation Board and they withdrew their case from the agenda.

Now after this example of trades unionism gone berserk, the climate began to change a little. Naughty McAlpine broke his promise to the ASW that he would re-employ all their stewards. The £ s. d. was not coming in. So the ASW called a branch delegate conference and there were cries of "What about our victimized men of the South Bank?" The London Regional Council of the T & GWU insisted on the re-employment of the boys. It was therefore decided that a further attempt be made, and 20th February was to be the big day. Again, there was panic among the leadership until one of them had a brainwave. Solomon in all his wisdom never had a brainwave like it—you will marvel at this piece of duplicity.

The idea was that the Shell-Mex site was changing over from Civil Engineering to Building anyway, and that this would provide a wonderful "get out".

The site (Shell-Mex) was changed over from the working conditions of the Civil Engineering Conciliation Board to the conditions of the National Federation of the Building Trades, or the NFBTO for short. Then the Civil Engineering Board leaders, Bros Armstrong, Mills, Weaver and Mr Matthews, said to the Executive Council of the NFBTO, Bros Armstrong, Mills, Weaver and Mr Matthews: "What about the case for the re-employment of the victimized stewards?"

Bros Armstrong, Mills, Weaver and Mr Matthews of the NFBTO replied: "Ha! ha! ha! ha! hi! hi! hi! hi! No decision of the Civil Engineering Board is binding on the NFBTO. The matter is up the spout (we mean **ultra vires**) as far as we, Bros Armstrong, Mills, Weaver and Mr Matthews of the NFBTO are concerned, and furthermore we are asking you, Bros Armstrong, Mills, Weaver and Mr Matthews of the Civil Engineering Board not to bother us any more with your nasty problems".

## PAY RATES IN BUILDING

by Jack Weldon

**P**ERSISTENT AGITATION and organised activity on the part of the progressive elements within the ranks of the Building Trade Labourers resulted in a change in the relationship between craftsmen and labourers.

Prior to 1950 the Labourer received a percentage rate of the craft rate and if the standard rate was increased in consequence of a rise in the retail index of prices the Labourer would only receive 80 percent of the increase.

The Building Trades' Group of the T & GWU, conscious of the baneful effects of this method of regulating wages, placed its power and resources at the disposal of its members and progressed the idea of a differential rate.

## Grade A

In 1950 it was able to record the greatest achievement in the history of the Building Labourer, namely, the ending of the percentage system and the introduction of the differential of fivepence halfpenny below the craft rate.

It is doubtful if the value of this change is fully appreciated, but the following example may give the vividness it deserves.

At present in a Grade (A) area the labourer's rate of pay is 4/1½d. per hour (4/2½d. since

February, 1959—Ed.); had the Agreement remained unchanged and the assessment continued to be made on the percentage method, the rate would be 3/6d. per hour; thus lowering his rate by 7½d. a hour.

## Contractors victory

History has shown that progress does not always follow a straight line; more often than not it is undulated; falling below a given norm.

This happened in the case of the Labourers in 1955 when, through the inadequacy of their organization and the absence of the will needed to press for the retention of their newly acquired status; the Contractors were able to score a victory and thereby regain some of the ground lost a few years earlier.

## Strengthen organization

**They were successful in widening the differential but not in removing it.**

**And be it noted; this was achieved at a time of full employment and the peak of industrial prosperity.**

The immediate task confronting the Labourer is the preparation of ways and means that will

See page six

sr is pleased to reprint the following editorial from 'Platform' rank and file busmans' journal

## A YEAR OF MURDER

**F**ULL LTE operating statistics for 1958 are now available. The essential details are printed below. These figures stand as a monument to the systematic and calculated murder of the people's transport services.

And this is only one year's balance sheet of many. Since the LTE took over, 25 per cent of the transport system has disappeared, 25 per cent of operating staff has gone, and 25 per cent of the passengers no longer use the services.

No board of directors anywhere—in any industry—in this country could get away with such a balance sheet as the LTE present for 1958—they would be out on their necks in double quick time. But the LTE are the chosen ones—the darlings of the Tory Government. The systematic destruction of London's Transport services is a calculated political act. It is murder with a purpose—and the purpose is to discredit nationalisation and to provide the Tories with what they believe will be valuable election propaganda.

In this, the LTE are willing stooges. When the bus services were slashed in November last, the fatuous Sir John Elliot

publicly declared:

**"It's a splendid start."**

When, driven to desperation, passengers revolted and refused to leave trains to suit requirements of the LTE, the egregious Mr. Brain Harbour told the Press:

**"Our sole job in life is to serve the public."**

Supporting the LTE's 14th application for fares increases, this same £5,000 a year stooge blandly declares:

**"London Transport expects passenger traffic in 1959 to drop twice as much as in 1958."**

How many more years like 1958 can we endure before London Transport finally collapses? How many more buses are to be sold at knock-out prices? How many more garages are to be turned into museums? How much longer is our industry to be used as a political punch-bag by the Tories?

Once again this journal warns the union — the Labour Movement — and the public — the wheels of London Transport are grinding to a halt. A genuine people's enquiry in which public — staff — and municipal bodies can speak with authority, is an urgent and immediate need.



A REYBURN WRITES ON

**INDUSTRIAL**

**PAY INCREASES—THE EASY WAY**

WHEN workers earning £7, £8, £9 per week want an increase in pay to keep up with rising prices, they have to embark on a long, hard road of bargaining with the bosses, backed up in many cases by strike action, or at the least the threat of it. By the time all possible delaying tactics have been exhausted by the employers' side and a few bob increase has been won, it is about time to start on another battle. And so the weary struggle goes on. If a strike is necessary, it will take months for the workers to recover through their pay increase what they have lost through being away from work.

**Interests guarded**

But under our topsy-turvy capitalist system, this method applies only to the wage-earners and the lower salary brackets. "Top people" (as *The Times* chooses to describe its readers) even if technically employees, do not have to tread this hard road. Professional people — doctors,

dentists, higher civil servants, etc.—have their interests carefully safeguarded for them and they get their salary increases from time to time without having to lift a finger.

**Recommendations**

This was strikingly illustrated recently by the publication of recommendations by the Coleraine Committee on the pay of higher civil servants. The committee was set up by the Government at the suggestion of the Royal Commission on the Civil Service, so as to save these eminent public servants the embarrassment of taking their Ministers to arbitration over pay claims. It's comforting to think that the Government has such a tender regard for people's finer feelings. Instead, the salaries of the higher ranks are reviewed from time to time by this "independent" committee. Trade unionists with experience of "independent" committees know how their "impartiality" invari-

ably works to the advantage of the boss and not the worker.

**The guide**

Not so with the Coleraine Committee. They have recommended no modest little increases of 7/- or 10/- a week. Nothing so insulting. Their "impartiality" has not prevented them from suggesting such whopping increases as £300 a year for assistant secretaries now struggling along on £2,700 a year and at the top end bumping up the Treasury permanent secretaries by the colossal sum of £1,500 a year—from £6,500 to £8,000. The committee seems to have been guided by the Biblical saying: "Unto him that hath shall be given."

**Competition**

Of course, the price of these people's labour is, under capitalism, determined by competition. The civil service has to compete with industry to attract the

brighter products of the universities. Salaries paid to top executives in industry are (with good reason) usually a closely guarded secret. But these proposed increases give some idea of what industry is offering in "straight" salaries, apart, that is, from expense accounts, free cars, payment of children's school fees, etc. These are the gentlemen who are so well qualified to resist to the uttermost any wage increase for their employees.

**Tiny minority**

The high salaries proposed for the top bureaucrats are also due to the scarcity value of highly educated people, under conditions of capitalism. University education (particularly at Oxford and Cambridge from which the majority of senior civil servants are drawn) is still restricted to a tiny minority of young people.

**Class and status**

Capitalism insists on the divorce between brain and hand. It educates the majority to do monotonous repetitive work. The few who get higher education are accorded by society an altogether disproportionate status. According to capitalist philosophy and economics they have to be rewarded for the time and money invested in their training. Yet who in their senses could argue that any one of these people, however capable they may be, is worth ten to twenty times as much as a worker? And who could doubt that, if brain power is a qualification for a high salary, there is plenty of ability in the working class which is frustrated and stifled by all kinds of social and educational factors?

**Impartial!**

Above all, why should "administration" be such a highly regarded art? It is not inherently difficult. Lenin quite correctly spoke of the possibility under socialism of any worker taking over in his turn the function of the official. It is only under capitalism that administration becomes complex and difficult. For the State is for ever trying to find a means of getting round the conflicting class interests which tear society apart. Under conditions of parliamentary democracy, it must keep up an appearance of impartiality, and this involves skill of a kind in its higher bureaucracy, just as the elaborate shams of diplomacy call for a delicate touch in negotiations. When the workers take over control of society, administration will take its proper place as a subordinate activity of society as a whole, calling for no higher skill and no higher salary than are appropriate to the mass of the workers. There will be an end of the present gross injustice between the few and the many. peace by mutual terror —

**YOUTH**

**FORGOTTEN WORKERS by**

An APPRENTICE & RON SMITH N.Lewisham Youth Section

IT is perhaps a tradition among employers to pay such low wages to apprentices, but it is one which is robbing many industries of potentially skilled workers. Apprentices are getting a raw deal from employers and little assistance from the trade unions at this moment.

The table below shows the wages of an apprentice:

	s.	d.
1st year	59	0½
2nd year	69	6
3rd year	94	4
4th year	110	6½
5th year	130	7

These figures, compared with a clerk or typist, seem to be very low indeed. However, we appreciate that the employer is giving the apprentice the benefit of becoming experienced and skilled in a trade which can possibly give him the opportunity of obtaining a job with a good wage

later in life, but some employers apparently think that an apprentice is a cheap form of labour. The danger here is that an employer may sack a skilled man to whom he is giving a wage of perhaps £9 and employ an apprentice with a few years' experience at less than half the money. This is reason enough for the trade union leaders to come to an agreement about the wages of apprentices.

**Sufficient?**

It has been said that £3 a week is enough for a lad of seventeen to eighteen. This wage would be grossly unjust to the youth and to his parents, who must find it difficult to keep him on what he contributes to his parents' house-keeping money. The youth of today find it difficult to exist on the low wages of an apprentice and this is probably the reason

for many of them leaving before the completion of their apprenticeship.

**UNDER CAPACITY**

Recently, the Federation of British Industries asked 510 of their member-firms if their present production was full capacity, and 79 per cent replied that it was not.

In the metal-using industries, output is 20% below capacity.

In some sections of the engineering industry it is from 10% to 50% less their capacity.

Steel is turning out only 75% of its potential.

Coal pits are closing and miners being thrown out of work.

The co-author, who for obvious reasons wishes to conceal his name, states that he finds it difficult as he has to pay for all of his tools and feels that it is unfair of his employers not to make an allowance for this fact. He also thinks his union should look into this matter and make some steps towards improving the wages of engineering apprentices.

It would be advisable for trade unions to make the wages of apprentices the subject of an inquiry and attempt to secure an increase in their money. These youths are undoubtedly doing a fine service to industry, but are they to remain the forgotten workers?

**LTE OPERATING STATISTICS**

**STRONG FOR SERVICE**

Staff Employed	1957	1958	Loss
Drivers and Conductors	39,874	36,303	3,571
Inside Staffs	6,478	5,666	809
Vehicles	9,292	8,712	580
Car Miles Run	381,403,000	320,334,000	61,069,000
Passengers	3,152,662,000	2,534,029,000	618,593,000
Revenue	£59,169,000	£48,506,000	£10,633,000

It remains only to add that, as a reward for this year of unexampled success, the salaries of the 5 members of the LTE were increased as follows:

Salary	1957	1958	Increase
Sir John Elliot	£7,000	£7,500	£500
A. H. Grainger	£3,500	£5,500	£2,000
B. H. Harbour	£3,500	£5,000	£1,500
L. C. Hawkins	£3,500	£5,000	£1,500
Anthony Bull	£3,500	£5,000	£1,500

Truly London Transport is "Strong for Service"—but whose service?



## THE MOVEMENT ON THE CENTENARY OF

### GEORGE LANSBURY'S BIRTH

RAY CHALLINOR RECALLS

## A MAN OF PRINCIPLE

GEORGE LANSBURY was a man of principle. Unlike our present Labour leaders—mere Gallup Poll jellyfish, dithering with each tremor of public opinion—Lansbury knew what he thought was right and, come what may, he stuck firmly to his socialist beliefs. Whether in Parliament or prison, he always kept the Red Flag flying.

Such behaviour, positively unheard of among Labour high-ups today, is now regarded by Transport House as dangerous and indecent. Were Lansbury still alive, he would have been expelled from the Labour Party long ago. Yet, paradoxically, because he is dead, he must be showered with praise, he must be looked up to, venerated as one of the pioneers of the Labour Movement.

The centenary of Lansbury's birth—he was born at Lowestoft on February 21st, 1859—is likely to be marked by a deluge of hypocritical praise from the Establishment of the Labour Party. Of course, they don't want people to know Lansbury's real message; they hope to smother that by their paens of false praise.

We can be sure that Hugh Gaitskell, just back from France, where he tried to persuade the neo-fascist De Gaulle to accept American Thor rockets, will not dwell on Lansbury's stand against war and re-armament. He is hardly likely to quote from the *Daily Herald* during Lansbury's editorship, for throughout this period—that of the First World War—the paper took an anti-war position.

#### Against war

In his struggle against war, Lansbury saw the Russian Revolution as the first ray of hope. The Russian people, hungry and tired of the futile slaughter, overthrew the Tsarist regime. The soldiers even voted for "peace and bread" with their feet—by simply disobeying their officers and deserting. Lansbury saw this as a model to be followed elsewhere. Speaking at a giant meeting in the Albert Hall, he drew the following lessons from the Russian Revolution:

**"This triumph has come, friends, because for the first time that I know of in history—at least, in modern history—soldiers, working class soldiers, have refused to fire on workers. (Loud and continued applause.) To me, comrades, this is the greatest lesson of all. On Bloody Sunday they had not learnt this lesson; they have learnt it now, and it is for us to learn — (great applause) — because we can understand that when the working classes of all nations refuse to shoot down the working classes of other countries, governments won't be able to**

**make wars any more." (Tremendous applause.)**

Lansbury's appeal to the troops of both sides—"march out into No Man's Land and refuse to fight any longer"—is not likely to be sympathetically received by Hugh Gaitskell who, when Chancellor of the Exchequer, even cut social services so he could spend more on arms. Yet, Lansbury's policy is based upon the most important socialist principle—that of international working class solidarity—whereas Gaitskell's is based upon a reliance on the Great Deterrent, an idea imported directly from American capitalism.

#### Poplar council

After the First World War the promised land failed to materialize. Instead of "homes fit for heroes", there was unemployment and wage reductions. Faced with this situation, Lansbury did what he could to defend workers' living standards. He was a member of Poplar Borough Council. In those days unemployment benefit was administered on a local, not a national, basis. This meant that in Poplar, the Council was confronted with the alternatives—either to cut the amount of unemployment benefit or to increase the rates in this overwhelmingly working class borough. In either case, it was the poorer section of the community that stood to suffer.

Lansbury, as a councillor, was revolted by both prospects. He said:

**"From the first moment I determined to fight for one policy only, and that was decent treatment of the poor people, and hang the rates! My view of life places money, property, and privilege on a much lower scale than human life."**

Consequently, Poplar Council passed a resolution raising unemployment benefit and refusing to meet statutory commitments. This decision resulted in the whole membership of the council being prosecuted. As a body, the worthy Mayor, Aldermen and councillors, led by the corporation mace bearer, marched in procession to High Court.

In court, Lansbury, stoutly defending Poplar's decision, pointed to the growing unemployment—at that time it numbered about a million—and said he did not see why working class areas, which have the misfortune of having a large number of unemployed, should have to bear the burden of maintaining them while middle-class residential areas, places with far greater wealth, had practically no unemployed to maintain.

Lansbury was asked by a judge, "What if all borough councils did as you've done?" He replied benignly, "Why, we should get the necessary reforms."

While this statement was no doubt true, it did not satisfy the judges. They sent the whole of the council to jail for "contempt of court". They were to remain there indefinitely until they were prepared to carry out the judges' order to pay the £270,000 owed.

As the councillors didn't have the least intention of paying, they prepared themselves for a long sojourn in prison. But they had not counted—neither had the capitalist government—on the electrifying effect their magnificent stand would have on the working class. Millions of people throughout Britain saw that Lansbury and his comrades were fighting for them. Other Labour councils, realising that direct action was the best way of combating the Government, decided to follow Poplar's lead. From the standpoint of Lloyd George's Government, the situation was quickly getting out of hand. With crowds gathering nightly outside Brixton prison to hear Lansbury denounce the Government from his cell-window and the prospect that local government in London might be paralysed by most of its councillors being in jail, Lloyd George realised that his policy was no longer tenable. He caved in, granted the reforms—and Poplar won.

After the ensuing 1922 General Election, Lansbury, with his Poplar success still fresh in the electorate's mind, got returned for Bow with an increased majority. Elsewhere Labour gained more seats than ever before. It was in the position, with Liberal support, to form a minority government. But King George V, a short-tempered, narrow-minded Tory, refused to call upon Labour to do so. This example of the political bias of royalty led Lansbury, in a public speech, to remind the King of how Charles I lost his head through dabbling in politics. When the King finally was compelled to call on Labour to form a government, he insisted that Lansbury should be excluded from the Cabinet. And, of course, MacDonald agreed.

Unlike MacDonald then—and our present Labour leaders now—Lansbury never mixed in exalted, aristocratic circles. In his *Autobiography* Philip Snowden reports MacDonald, immediately after his betrayal of the Labour Government in 1931, as saying, "Yes, tomorrow every duchess in London will be wanting to kiss me." Lansbury never needed to fear the blandishments of noble ladies: they saw him as an enemy, acknowledged him as an enemy. For his part, he saw them as one of the reasons for the corruption of MacDonald and Co.

That is why, after the demoralizing 1931 debacle, he argued for—and the Labour conference

adopted—a resolution pledging the Party to oppose all hereditary rights and privileges.

It was during this period, as leader of the Labour Party, that Lansbury achieved the culminating triumph of his life. Singing the *Red Flag* as he marched his small band of 59 Labour MPs through the division lobbies, he opposed the Tories with a thousand times more gusto and effectiveness than Gaitskell has ever done. The reason? Lansbury made this plain from the start: "The program we fight on shall be a Socialist one, full-blooded and unmistakable."

The greatness of Lansbury stems from the fact that he mirrors the best qualities of the British working class—its sincerity, its interest in progress, its concern about the sufferings of fellow men. But Lansbury also reflected its weaknesses—its lack of theory and tendency to pacifism.

His lack of theory resulted in him often being buffeted by events. For example, instead of openly criticizing the Second Minority Labour Government for coming to power and merely administering capitalism, he took a post in MacDonald's Ministry. He never understood the essential character of reformism.

**The prevalence of pacifism inside the British Labour Movement is caused, paradoxically, by the extremely violent nature of British capitalism. During the period of Empire-building, 1815-1915, Britain was at war 64 out of the 100 years. This is more than any other country in the world. Germany, which comes second, was only at war 28 years. Because it indulged in such blood-lettings abroad, British capitalism could be peaceful at home. Class struggles were rarely fought to the bitter end; rather than resort to physical force, it would rather make a few concessions out of its huge profits from colonial exploitation. The British workers, growing accustomed to a comparatively tranquil existence, began to fondly imagine that crucial social changes could take place quite peacefully. They failed to realise that all government is, in the last analysis, based upon force: the repressive force of capitalism can only be overthrown by the liberating force of socialism. Picket lines, workers' demonstrations and meetings must always be defended, by force if necessary, from fascists, the police and other hooligans. As Lansbury failed to understand the real role of force in society, he never built a revolutionary socialist wing of the Labour Party. Consequently, he was thoroughly defeated at the Labour Party 1935 conference by the reformist right-wing because he never tried to create the only possible alternative to it—a tendency based upon social revolutionary theory and practice.**

But Lansbury, whatever his shortcomings, was one of the few really great men of the Labour Movement. The centenary of his birth needs to be commemorated by some truly fitting memorial—shaking the Establishment to its foundations, Labour councils taking the road to Poplar, and by the Labour Party adopting a "full-blooded and unmistakable" socialist policy. That, if he were still living, is what he would appreciate the most.



Readers will notice that we have dropped the point relating to Ireland from "What we stand for." We have found that Irish socialists themselves are unclear on the issue and feel it would be impudence on our part to determine the right road for them. The discussion now opening in our columns will, we hope, serve to stimulate thought on the road to socialism in that country—Editor.

## NOEL HARRIS OPENS THE DISCUSSION ON A POLICY FOR IRELAND

THE passing of resolutions calling for "the withdrawal of British troops from Ireland," "self-determination for Ireland," or some similar objective has become common practice among British Trade Union and Labour Party Branches and other Socialist organizations and groups.

These resolutions are passed, on the whole, by well-meaning socialists on the sound socialist principle of the right of every nation to freedom from foreign domination and exploitation.

The attention of the comrades or brothers who pass the resolutions is, however, usually drawn to the position of the six north-eastern counties of Ireland by Irish exiles who have been, unfortunately, blinded to fact by virtue of having been engendered with a fierce nationalism which has been deliberately confused with religious bigotry by years of clerical indoctrination.

### Confidence trick

These facts must be faced by all Irishmen, no matter how bitter and hard to digest the pill may be.

There is no denying that the "State" of Northern Ireland was founded in a totally undemocratic manner by means of a Tory confidence trick, after the overwhelming majority of the Irish people had demonstrated

their wish for political independence.

**But there is also no denying that the confidence trick was highly effective and that Northern Ireland was established as "an integral part of the United Kingdom" with the almost complete support of the people living within its boundaries.**

These people still support the continuance of the status of Northern Ireland and it would be comparable with the United States' policy with regard to the People's Republic of China to ignore this established fact.

### Divide and rule

The confidence trick referred to is the old ace of British imperialism: the division of the people into antagonistic camps on the basis of religious differences. India, Palestine and the more recent attempt in Cyprus are examples of this policy. Suspicion and antagonism are engendered by granting small favours and rights to the minority group—in the Irish case, the Protestants—at the expense of the majority, the Roman Catholics.

**In this way, the heroic struggle of the Irish peasants for basic human rights and dignities degenerated into a struggle between the lackeys of British imperialism and the agents of the Irish**

**bourgeoisie and aristocracy, the rival churches.** In this gradual change of direction of the Irish struggle, great socialists like Fintan Lalor and James Connolly were used and cruelly betrayed. The very mention of their names has become almost heresy in the South and the people in the North are almost totally ignorant of them.

Many of the originators of the resolutions, to which I have referred, are sincere socialists who believe that Socialism can never be achieved in a divided country. Their slogan is "Unity before Socialism." This contention is true up to a point, but it is a sheer fallacy, indeed folly, to contend, as they do, that territorial unity must be the first goal of Irish socialists.

Ireland is therefore governed by two basically similar bourgeois classes who are ever jousting for power. The question must therefore be posed as to what good can be obtained by supporting one against the other. This is the only way, in current circumstances, of realising territorial unity. The answer is, of course, that no good, indeed the very opposite, can be obtained from such a policy. By establishing the absolute superiority of one of these rival factions, the only purpose served is to strengthen this faction which is a retrograde step for socialists.

**Since there are two firmly-established governments in Ireland with the support of the majority of their respective citizens, the task of Irish socialists is to achieve unity among the Irish proletariat and peasants. The recent move for the reunification of the Irish Trades Union Congress is a step in the right direction.** But since the division of the Irish people is still prevailing, a catalyst, Socialism, must be applied. It is apparent that the job of establishing Socialism among the Irish people must be tackled within the existing framework. In other words, the old maxim, "divide and conquer," must be turned on the ruling classes after the goal of a United Irish Socialist Party has been achieved, and this only after Socialism has been separately established North and South of the border.

It is important to realise the enormity of this task which confronts Irish socialists and the tremendous odds against which they must work.

In the Republic, the bourgeois government have so firmly entrenched themselves and have so much control over the media of propaganda that they have been able to delude the people into a state of apathy regarding real everyday political and social issues by convincing them that the existence of the "State" of

Northern Ireland is the sole cause of the social injustice, poverty and degradation which is so widespread in their area.

In the North, the Tories have achieved the same end by a reversal of the tactic. They have managed to convince their people that the existence of a slightly higher standard of living in the North is entirely due to the separate status of the six counties. Thus a fear is deeply rooted in the minds of the people of Northern Ireland that any merger with the "Catholic South" will result in the pushing down of their living standards to the low level of the latter area. They are therefore deluded into a policy of guarding the status quo and disregarding, like their Southern compatriots, political and social issues.

Neither of the bourgeois governments are fools, however. Both realize that their main enemy is not one another but Socialism, and both adopt measures designed to prevent its spread in their respective areas.

The Southern government adopts tactics which are not far behind those of Franco's Fascist Spain. The banning of books, magazines, newspapers and other forms of literature and the proscription of political parties and similar organizations, together with a relentless, determined attack from the pulpits and other platforms.

The Northern government use slightly more subtle tactics. They, like their Southern counterparts, have an almost complete monopoly of the propaganda-making machinery, newspapers, radio and television. By widely publicising the aforementioned resolutions, no matter how obscure their origin may be, as implying support from the British Trades Union and Socialist movements for the petty bourgeois terrorist organization, the Irish Republican Army, they plant a fear and suspicion of Socialism in general in the minds of the workers of Northern Ireland.

### A greater service

**A much greater service would be rendered to the Irish people if British socialists were to refrain from passing these useless resolutions and were instead to concentrate on establishing more direct contact between socialists, both North and South of the Irish border, and possibly acting as a kind of mediator between them. Further purpose could be served if the columns of papers like SOCIALIST REVIEW were made available for Irish socialists to attempt to publicise more widely the sorry truth of the gross betrayal of the Irish working class revolutionary movement by the petty bourgeois middle class leadership right through history.**

Only by a policy of separately establishing Socialism, North and South, and exposing both "orange" and "green" Tories will Ireland ever be "A Nation Once Again."

### LIGHT ON A STRIKE

In March, 1957, there took place in the engineering and shipbuilding industries the biggest strike since the 1926 General Strike. The stoppage, which affected over 700,000 men, was short. Last-minute intervention by the Government referred the wage dispute to a Court of Inquiry which substantially accepted the union's claims.

In their pamphlet *Looking at Industrial Relations* (February, 1959) the Engineering and Allied Employers' Federation frankly admit that they were looking not for a settlement but for a fight:

Twice in four years the Federation has been prepared to "fight it out" with the unions. Clearly, the unions' capacity to pay strike benefit was limited. Such a course, involving as it would have done, the virtual closing down of the industry, might have been a worthwhile calculated risk. It was no occasion for the kind of compromise which would inevitably emerge from a Court of Inquiry.

Who encouraged the Engineering Employers in their attempt to force a showdown? Once again the pamphlet is damningly frank:

The Government and the employers' organizations—notably the British Employers' Confederation, in a document "Britain's Industrial Future," published late in 1955—were in complete agreement in 1956 that further pay rises were not in the best interests of workers in a period of rising prices, when bigger pay packets would buy less and further aggravate the inflationary spiral.

When all appeared set for a struggle to which the Federation and the Confederation were irretrievably committed, the Government, shaken by the economic and political repercussions of intervention in Suez, decided that the country was not strong enough to withstand the probable effects of transport, engineering and shipbuilding strikes."

So there we have it! The Government which is supposed to be above the battle had first encouraged the employers to get tough and then faced with the economic consequences of their attack on Suez, decided at the last moment to call it off.

# FORUM



# ECONOMICS

## Recessions and unemployment

By J. CRUTCHLEY

**THE MOST SIGNIFICANT** feature of the recovery in the American economy is that production has increased faster than employment. In January, 4,724,000 workers (6 per cent of the total labour force) were unemployed. At the height of the recession in April, 1958, 5,120,000 (7.5 per cent) workers were unemployed. **Employment between April and January therefore rose 1½ per cent, but in the same period total industrial output increased 13 per cent.**

This comparison is modified by seasonal employment and the influence of non-industrial employment. Despite this, the trend towards "technological unemployment" is causing concern amongst American unions.

The Steelworkers have recently made a survey of employment and production in the American steel industry. They found that 13½ per cent more ingot tons were produced in the third quarter of 1958 compared with the first quarter. This increased output was achieved with 2½ per cent less production and maintenance workers and 1 per cent less salaried employees. (Quoted in *AFL-CIO News*, January 1).

### Evidence

Figures from the car industry are even more impressive. General Motors plan a 25 per cent increase in output in the first quarter of 1959 but only a 5 per cent increase in workers. At the Dodge Main Plant in Detroit in March, 1957, there were 26,600 workers, working two shifts. In December, 1958, there were 7,100 workers on one shift. But production has only dropped from 950 to 550 cars a day. (*Business Week*, December 20, 1958).

About this evidence, *AFL-CIO News* says . . . this "has

Jack Weldon - end

restore the lost penny as a preliminary to further advancement.

To accomplish this, a keener interest must be taken in the affairs which concern him; problems of bread and butter; both inside the Trade Union Branch and the place of employment.

It must be forcefully driven home that only through the medium of the Trade Union Branch can the appropriate Constitutional Amendments be progressed.

Ideas are barren, unless they can be given practical existence, and to speak of improvements without doing something to bring them about is mere wishful thinking.

**Therefore, an immediate task is the strengthening of the Trade Union Organization, in particular, the Building Trades' Group of the T & GWU and the setting up of a single organizational unit for all those operatives classified as non-craftsmen under the leadership of the T & GWU.**

**A lesson that all must learn is: Organization must be faced with a more powerful Organization.**

already happened in textiles, electrical equipment, coal mining and many other industries" and "from these figures one conclusion is inescapable, namely that stable production will result in declining employment levels. Slowly rising production can be, and has been, accomplished with little or no rise in employment."

**This pattern has been duplicated in the British Car Industry where output is now above the 1955 peak, while the number of workers employed is less.** This trend is also apparent in other industries but, as throughout 1958 they were working below capacity, it is difficult to estimate to what extent. The only survey in Britain was made by the National Institute of Economic and Social Research in July, 1958. This information is contained in their first *Economic Review*—January, 1959.

### Initial stages

They found that there was an excess capacity of about 20 per cent in the metal-using and rubber industries and 10 to 15 per cent in the chemicals, paper and steel industries, and "in the latter group capacity is still growing fast". The bosses in the metal-using industries said "on average, they could produce 10 per cent more by working 3 per cent longer hours and employing 3 per cent more labour" and at full capacity they could "produce 20 per cent more with 7 per cent more labour". (See also Andrew Shonfield, *Observer*, August 17, 1958, and Douglas Hague, *Westminster Bank Review*, November, 1958.)

During the initial stages of a recession firms are usually unwilling to reduce workers. There are two reasons for this:

Firstly, if they expect a quick return to boom conditions they will maintain their labour force through a small slump so they will have enough labour to reach near capacity production when the boom comes. This presupposes the labour shortage that has existed in Britain since the war and that the capitalists are confident about the future.

### Another reason

Secondly, as industrial production becomes more capitalized and the division of labour is extended, the flexibility that characterized the older industrial units disappears. Increasingly, a small reduction in output does not mean a proportional reduction in labour. The logical outcome of this process, which is being approached in the steel, chemicals and car industries is that the labour force cannot be reduced without cutting output to zero. Output can be reduced, but this means that the labour cost per unit of output is increased. To counteract this, American firms have been working two shifts which can be cut to one during a slump.

Despite this inflexibility, a recession does give firms a chance to reduce workers by "rationaliz-

ing" employment and utilizing excess capacity, created by new investment. Thus, when the boom comes, output increases much more rapidly than employment.

The present recession is the first one since the war to be widespread in the manufacturing industries. Therefore this is their first chance to organize their factories and gain the increase in productivity that the investment in industry since 1954 has created. One result of this excess capacity is that they are planning an increase in man hours worked but not men employed. This means the bosses will want overtime to increase. Workers in these industries can learn an important lesson from these facts. Overtime should not be worked while their mates are still in the dole queue.

**It is impossible to estimate the extent to which these factors are operating in British industry, but I do not think unemployment will fall to the 1 per cent level (230,000) we used to have. In January it was 2.8 per cent (620,000). This will be reduced by the seasonal spring upturn in building and other trades but it is doubtful if it will fall below 2 per cent (460,000) before the summer.**

Reviewing this situation, the *Economist* (February 14) says, "These are the main reasons why optimism about a continued, though probably still mild, improvement in output over the next few months carries no corollary assumptions that employment need rise or unemployment fall correspondingly. Workers have been considerably underemployed in many British factories for many months past, if not quite as much as machines have. It might be politically embarrassing if British industry manages to achieve a significant increase in its output before it needs take on many men. But it will be economically scandalous if it cannot."

For economically read profitably and you have the reason why this change should be resisted.

## S R BOOK SERVICE

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## WHAT WE STAND FOR

The **SOCIALIST REVIEW** stands for international Socialist democracy. Only the mass mobilisation of the working class in the industrial and political arena can lead to the overthrow of capitalism and the establishment of Socialism.

The **SOCIALIST REVIEW** believes that a really consistent Labour Government must be brought to power on the basis of the following programme:

- The complete nationalisation of heavy industry, the banks, insurance and the land with compensation payments based on a means test. Renationalisation of all denationalised industries without compensation. — The nationalised industries to form an integral part of an overall economic plan and not to be used in the interests of private profit.

- Workers' control in all nationalised industries ie, a majority of workers' representatives on all national and area boards, subject to frequent election, immediate recall and receiving the average skilled wage ruling in the industry.

- The establishment of workers' committees to control all private enterprises within the framework of a planned economy. In all instances representatives must be subject to frequent election, immediate recall, and receive the average skilled wage in the industry.

- The establishment of workers' committees in all concerns to control hiring, firing and working conditions.

- The establishment of the principle of work or full maintenance.

- The extension of the social services by the payment of adequate pensions, the abolition of all payments for the National Health Service and the development of an industrial health service.

- The expansion of the housing programme by granting interest free loans to local authorities and the right to requisition privately held land.

- Free State education up to 18. Abolition of fee paying schools. For comprehensive schools and adequate maintenance grants — without a means test—for all university students.

- Opposition to all forms of racial discrimination. Equal rights and trade union protection to all workers whatever their country of origin. Freedom of migration for all workers to and from Britain.

- Freedom from political and economic oppression to all colonies. The offer of technical and economic assistance to the people of the underdeveloped countries.

- The abolition of conscription and the withdrawal of all British troops from overseas.

- The abolition of the H-bomb and all weapons of mass destruction. Britain to pave the way with unilateral renunciation of the H-bomb.

- A Socialist foreign policy subservient to neither Washington or Moscow.



# SUMMIT DIPLOMACY NO WAY TO PEACE

writes BOB HOWARTH

**A**PART from the immediate election gain that Macmillan can expect from his championing of the Summit Conference, what could such a conference achieve, in terms of itself: a lasting solution of divided Germany and a disarmed Europe? The Left-Wing Summiteers have a lot at stake here. They may have to prove that the results of a conference, or even Macmillan's visit to Moscow, are worth a renewed period of Tory rule.

For Germany, the issue is clear, one can have either a solution taking the interests of the German people as paramount, or a solution which, at best, will be a suitable compromise of the interests of the Great Powers, or, to put it another way, a reshuffling of their forces with the still unreformed aim of build-up to world war simply adapted to a different program. It is also suggested that perhaps one of the Powers has interests that coincide with those of the German people, or both, by conference, can achieve a state of sweet reasonableness that may nearly coincide.

Others, on a more realistic level, will point out that the West has been continually hedging and rejecting any form of compromise, whereas the Soviet has put forward a series of changing demands which indicate, taken at face value, a sincere desire for settlement. Both sides have not hesitated, of course, to claim to be working in the interests of the German people.

## Western proposals

There is, however, nothing which impels us to be so naïve as to take any of the proposals of either side at face value, without relating them to the real condition of Germany, the position of the Powers involved and their past record in these matters, which is the only way of establishing the value of the Summit Conference panacea.

The basis of Western proposals are those set forward in the Eden Plan of 1955; before anything, free all-German elections (no recognition of the East German régime at any cost), followed by a staged withdrawal to form a neutral belt on the eastern border of the new united Germany to a similar depth on the Stalinist side. Further, that it will be up to the new German Government, after it has drawn up a new constitution, to decide whether it will join any of the aggressive alliances.

The sincerity of the West in championing the principles of self-determination and democratic suffrage at a Summit Conference, however, are open to examination by the results of previous big power conferences. It can be claimed, justly, that to rake up the mess of Yalta, Potsdam, etc (all of them "Summits") is digging up ancient history,

but we can come much closer with the 1955 Geneva Conference, the often forgotten first Summit Meeting of the post-Stalin peaceful coexistence drive. **The Vietnamese people are still awaiting the free national elections promised by the US and Britain for mid-1956, where it is as obvious that the Communist Viet Minh would sweep the polls as it is that the anti-Soviet (and probably Right-Wing) forces would win in Germany.** The Western Plan would unfold itself with the inclusion of united Germany, into the NATO alliance, the carving up of the East German economy, and distribution to the monopolists—Krupp, and so on—staffing official positions with "minor" Nazis, revanche chanting for West Poland, etc—would the Western imperialists be satisfied with less?

Whatever social analysis is accepted as to the nature of the Soviet bloc, with its expanding, planned economy, the Soviet rulers are less inclined to seek war as a way out than the Western rulers. But what is the position on the ground where the two super-States meet?

The Ulbricht régime, already shaken by popular uprising, gives a full-time demonstration of an industrial working class with a full-time choice for or against Stalinism. Even granting that the German Democratic Republic has special features as a régime with bayonet foundations, it has its centrally-planned, statified economy fairly typical of all the Soviet bloc, conditions made livable by liberal Soviet consumer goods injections (since 1953) and also the biggest refugee flight in history, of industrial workers, youth, worker technicians. The West Berlin proletariat with the choice only  $\frac{1}{2}$  a Deutschmark tube-ride away, a choice between the "Socialist" State and the monopolist Germany of Adenauer and Krupp, voted 98.1 percent (in what no one has denied was a free election) against Stalinism.

**This itself is disturbing to Khrushchev because it underlines the point that there are two types of industrial worker who register by ballot their support of Stalinism. The one, in Russia, for instance, has no choice, the other, as in Italy, chooses Stalinism for what it claims to be. But there is the third type in Berlin and East Germany, voting with their feet, who can undermine by example the international equilibrium of the Stalinist movement. The Soviet leaders can be prepared to risk a great deal to close the gap which threatens not only their territory, but the ideological and spiritual strength of their world organization. And facing them the Western imperialists are on their firmest ground; Western working**

classes divided by chauvinist hate, and the NATO alliance spearheaded to Berlin with the reactionary Bonn-Paris axis.

What can the alternative Warsaw Rapacki plan offer as a third course to avoid what appears to be the dead weight in the Balance of Terror? The Poles are in a bad position to make a popular appeal to the German masses, the expulsion of the German minorities, while they are also now ancient history, was a typical example of the line of policy that has trapped the German workers in the policies of their capitalist class, falling in with the popular anti-German feeling in Britain today, the continuation of Ilya Ehrenburg's war-time cry of "for these crimes the whole German nation must pay."

The resurgence of the Krupp Empire can be laid down not to the intrinsic militarism, etc, of the German workers but firmly with Ernie Bevin and the Attlee Labour Government, who took the decision **not** to nationalise the Krupp works (all in the British Zone) in 1946, when democratic referenda in Essen and North-West Westphalen voted for nationalisation.

Rapacki disengagement would be fine, but with the long history of sellouts for the German workers, often inspired from outside, it is now a little late to continue dictating terms as to what a hypothetical united German Government should do, however distasteful the policy of such a Government may be. The Germans are as entitled as anyone to self-determination. Our job is to oppose our own Government and ruling class, the displacement of which would be one of the biggest aids to German labour. It is true that German Stalinism is bankrupt, German social democracy has almost completely sold out, and German big business has half its jackbooted heel already as well-entrenched in German soil as ever in their own impotence in advocating trust in this century. But for socialists to expend a big power deal for Germany's future, or by further alienating the German people by implicit chauvinist demands, is to follow the same easy, disastrous course of laying aside socialist principles in favour of a social chauvinism which is the main reason for the sorry present state of Germany and West European labour.

Already the top-level talks illusion has sent Macmillan on the road to Moscow and given his party a chance, which they seemed to be losing, of returning along the road to power. **The British Left can best help the German Labour Movement by attempting to achieve what lies in its power, which is also a policy on which all the Left minorities in the Labour Movement can agree, whether they are supporters of Summit Conferences or not. Put out the Tories, and push the British Labour Government to get out of NATO and so disrupt the Western Alliance. Only when such a significant change in the balance of power takes place can there be any hope that the realpolitik of the Great Powers will force them to accede to a settlement in favour of the German people.**

## Casual Labour - end

would make the industry more attractive and thereby induce many, who are at present reluctant, either to remain in the industry or to enter it for the first time.

There are many aspects that will need urgent and active attention on the part of those called upon to provide and set up the machinery for regulating the relations between the employers and the employees but they can go ahead with confidence because all the essential factors are in their favour.

**There must not be any deviation from the belief that "Registration" and the guaranteed week can become an accomplished fact.**

**It depends on YOU the General Operative.**

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## LETTERS

A reply to Geoff West's comments (SR, December 1, 1958) on Labour Party Youth Sections by Ron Smith, of the North Lewisham Labour Party Youth Section

Many of Geoff West's comments on Youth Sections in his article "Labour Party For Socialists" in December's edition of the **Socialist Review** are true in some respects, but I feel that some of his statements need enlarging and, perhaps, some explaining.

It is incorrect to say that only the Labour Party lacks appeal to youth. I would go even further and say that no party has an appeal to youth. What, then, is the reason for the astronomic number of members the Young Tories have compared with the Youth Sections? The reason is that the Young Tories are politically inert, but socially extremely active as opposed to Youth Sections, which are politically active. Apart from the isolated over-social Youth Sections,

our social events are limited owing mainly to the lack of money. Some Youth Sections over-indulge in the social activities in order to attract members, but these members are quickly introduced to politics and the majority of them enjoy the political discussion.

There is an abundance of potential revolutionaries in Youth Sections, but with the increase in world tension it will be necessary to revise the methods in which the Labour Party intends to create complete Socialism in Britain.

Our need is for new enthusiastic members and we would welcome any assistance from readers who can encourage any young people they know to join their local Youth Sections.



## CASUAL LABOUR — contd

effect on the wages earned and the level of productivity.

In combination, these factors tend to reduce economic security to a minimum and the operative is faced with a precarious existence.

**The view is held by many trade unionists that any solution to the problem of casual labour must be related to some form of "Registration" and a guaranteed weekly payment.**

It must be recognized that any scheme providing greater security will be accompanied by restrictions on the liberty of the individual, for they both go hand in hand with each other.

The loss of freedom of movement from one job to another at will and the hiring and firing methods of the contractors would be well compensated for by a general improvement in the working conditions and the provision of economic security.

In practice it would mean that the casual nature of the industry would be at an end.

**To operate the scheme a National Registration Board could be set up for the regulating of the supply of man-power for the industry.**

It would be incumbent on the Board to ascertain the number of men needed to efficiently run the industry at given times. This could be obtained from the statistics relating to past and present requirements. To select the grades and skills of men. Classify them and keep the records.

A record of the men employed; leaving the industry, voluntarily or otherwise would have to be kept; also, the number of permanent or temporary entrants.

Records of the contractors who are members of the scheme would also have to be kept; including particulars of the areas in which they carry out their contracts.

Regional and Local Committees would be set up under the supervision of the National Board to carry out the duties assigned to them.

Among their many duties, they would see that every operative is issued with a registration card bearing a serial number, National Insurance number and any other relevant particulars.

They would be called upon to provide an up to date progress chart of all the jobs coming within their jurisdiction and be in a position to arrange for the transfer of men from site to site as and when the need arises, so as to maintain a continuity of employment.

It is clear that the scheme will involve some measure of restraint and it is not hard to visualise the non-federated employer as an obstacle to its ordered working, but the combined pressure from the Trade Unions and the Federated Employers would eventually overcome the obstacle.

The difficulty in finding employment in bad and wet seasons has yet to be faced.

In this connexion investigation is still needed and representatives of other industries and Government and Local Authorities should be approached with a view to regulating and dovetailing contracts.

There is a large volume of national and private work which could be undertaken when the industry could not normally employ all its available labour.

When these and other avenues of providing full and steady employment have been exhausted, the industry would be faced with the problem of its responsibility to its employees during periods of under employment.

The Damocles sword of unemployment hangs ominously over the heads of Building Operatives and this fear must be removed before the operative can be expected to give of his best to the

*see page seven*

## PARLIAMENT

by Michael Millet

**I**T is said that the Irish are more Catholic than the Pope, but there has been a recent proof that their MPs are more Conservative than the Government. This was a Private Member's Bill of Mr Goodhart (Beckenham) and the subject was night work by bakeries. It was an amendment to a Bill of 1954 which came into force a year ago, which limited the amount of night work in bakeries. Mr Goodhart's Bill gives the Minister of Labour power to waive the provisions of the 1954 Act on the application of an employer.

Mr Brown was indignant for the Labour Party—

"There was not a single piece of industrial legislation for the protection of the health, safety, and working conditions of workers that could not have been overturned on the same grounds as have been put forward on behalf of the Bill. The Opposition were not arguing about night work as such, but about continuous night work. There was no evidence that negotiations had been tried and failed because of the obstinacy of the union. There was every evidence to show the union had offered them and the employers had refused them."

Even Mr Ward, the Parliamentary Secretary for the Ministry of Labour, said for the Government that the Bill, as it stood, was unsatisfactory. It did not provide for . . . Any consultations with the trade union. If the Bill was amended to allow for trade union consultation (which, it is presumed, the Minister can override), the Government hoped it would be given a second reading. A Labour amendment was rejected by 125 votes to 114. Not perhaps a very impressive Labour turnout against a piece of minor, but fundamental, anti-trade union legislation.

## ABOUT CONTROL

Mr Strauss (Vauxhall, Lab) asked the Paymaster-General what share of the profits that Messrs Colville might make as a result of the Treasury loan of £50m for the building of

nation and the industry.

**Considerations of humanity and efficiency demand that provision must be made by the industry to maintain the operative and his family during periods of unemployment through factors beyond his control.**

**In the case of unavoidable unemployment the maintenance of the unemployed shall be undertaken by the industry through the employment committee and that the necessary revenue shall be raised by charging a fixed percentage levy on the wage bills submitted weekly by the Contractors to the Local Committees. Experience has shown that a relatively small additional charge on the present outlay would be**

ample.

The benefits to be derived from the introduction of "Registration" would be an inducement to the non-federated contractors and the non-unionist to join their appropriate organisations.

An additional advantage would be the removal of the fear of unemployment or under-employment as experienced under the present method of conducting industry. Inefficiency, in all its aspects would be reduced to its irreducible minimum.

The introduction of a guaranteed weekly income would ensure a real and satisfactory standard of comfort.

The improvements outlined

the semi-continuous strip mill at Ravenscraig would accrue to the Treasury under the arrangements he had made with them.

**Mr Maudling** (Barnet, C.)—The loan agreed to be made by the Government to Messrs Colville Ltd is a fixed-interest loan, participating neither in profits nor in losses.

**Mr Strauss**—Out of £80m capital of Colvilles, £66m will belong to the State and £14m to private individuals, but the profits and capital appreciation will go to the private shareholders. Can he justify that, and will he engage Mr Hurry to see whether this indefensible situation has public support?  
**Mr Maudling**—The Government do not believe that they should participate in the equity of the steel industry.

### fortunate position

**D**ID you ever hear the like of it? For every pound that the fortunate owners of Colvilles have put into their business they have the use of £4.14.3 at a low rate of interest, probably 3½ or 4 percent.

Now, according to the theories of the capitalists, they have the right to manage their businesses, to hire and fire workpeople because they provided the original capital that enabled the factories, etc., to be built. But in this case they have only provided 17½ percent of the capital. Therefore, they should have only 17½ percent of the control. We would suggest the canteen and the motor transport pool, both of which ought to offer sufficient scope for capitalist managerial talent.

As it is, they are in a fortunate position well described by an eighteenth century pamphleteer:

"They are paid on both hands . . . which (to make use of a homely comparison) is to have a good dinner every day and be paid for eating it. Here's luck, my lads! Never was there so fortunate a business."

## GERM WARFARE

**S**OMEBODY said yesterday

that "They invent a new sort of influenza for every year." This column, still tottery in the lintels from this year's variety, was greatly interested in questions asked by that valiant if pacific MP—Mr Emrys Hughes. He asked the purpose of Microbiological and Chemical Defence (ie Germ Warfare) Experimental Station on Salisbury Plain.

**Mr Aubrey Jones** (Minister of Supply)—It would not be in the public interest to give the figures asked for. . . . The researches are mainly directed towards assessing the threat and providing defences against it. The threats include the botulinus toxin referred to in recent newspaper statements. This substance has been well known for many years and the threat posed is grossly exaggerated . . . it is possible that other bacteria or viruses spell a greater danger.

### GRANTS NATIONAL ASSISTANCE

The number of weekly National Assistance grants on 16th December, 1958, was 1,649,900.

Written answers Col. 136, "Hansard," 9/2/59

**Mr Hughes**—Has the Minister's attention been directed to the speech last week by Sir Robert Watson-Watt in Montreal in which he said that this establishment has invented a substance, one pound of which could wipe out the whole world? Does the Minister not expect a little public interest in this, and can he tell us more?

**Mr Jones**—It is not a new development. It is an old one.

Obviously we've had it. Observe the ominous phrases—"Not in the public interest to reveal" . . . "Essentially directed towards providing defences." These are the usual euphemisms which in this case may be taken as meaning that the Government is hell-bent on schemes for Germ Warfare.

And no MP can do anything about it, for, like so much else of real public importance, it would "not be in the public interest" for it to be discussed publicly!