WHAT NEXT, LABOUR?

During the past few years the Labour Party has steadily slipped to the right. The gap between the Macmillans and the Gaitskells has narrowed to the size of a pin-head. Re-thinking has given rise to double-talking.

Once the Party stood for the abolition of capitalism; now it stands for the shareholders' bonus. At one time the Party was determined "to secure for the producers by hand and brain the full fruits of their industry" on the "basis of the common ownership of the means of production." Now Industry and Society, the policy statement on nationalization, offers a new road to workers' control of industry. The Government will acquire control over certain unspecified firms by gambling on the Stock Exchange. The capitalist class is to be thrown off their seat of power by a series of transactions in the City.

The policy statement on pensions assumes the existence of capitalism sixty years hence. It's concern over the plight of the pensioners is certainly no match for the Labour MP's zeal over his own wage packet.

Listening to the debates on the Tories' plan for Cyprus it is difficult to believe that Barbara Castle said, at Brighton last year, and with the approval of the platform:

"The Labour Government are not like the Tories, talking of a vague future when they speak of self-determination in Cyprus..." The Labour Government will complete the freedom of Cyprus during their period of office and they do not include partition in their definition of democratic self-determination. We have no intention of keeping Cyprus a divided island—we have had enough of that..."

Finally, the most recent gem from the crown of the Party—the statement on education. Learning to Live teaches us to live with capitalism. It assumes the existence of class society, of the division between "thinkers" and "workers" and then proceeds to outline a policy with which even the most faint-hearted liberal would not disagree.

LEBANON

by Dev Murarka

For the last two months barri- cades have gone up in tiny Lebanon. The opposition parties, united for once, refuse to yield either to force or persuasion till President Chamoun resigns. Ostensibly, the crisis is due to the obscurantism and ambition of this Bourbon of the Middle East. The cause, however, is more subtle, and the making of the present crisis can be traced back to the time of the French occupation.

The prosperity of the Lebanon depends on the oil-rich hinterland of the Middle East. Geographically she is part of the Arab world. Politically, however, she has always been somewhat aloof from the main-stream of Arab politics. This is due to the composition of her population which is almost evenly divided into Muslims and Christians. Political power is in the hands of rich merchants of Beirut who are predominantly Christians. They have tended to be unneccessarily pro-Western.

In the absence of any cohesive political movement or party, the country was, until recently, peaceful by Middle Eastern standards, its politics corrupt and unprincipled, and its government a stooge of Western imperialism. In the rigged elections of 1957 President Chamoun ensured that Parliament was packed by his yesmen. The press was controlled, similarly, the situation in Lebanon comparable to Washington than to the Lebanon.

Opposition to Chamoun really started in the dark days of the Suez crisis. At the height of the crisis, when the progressive forces of nationalism in the Middle East were engaged in a tremendous struggle against the combined strength of the British and French imperialists and expansionist Israel, President Chamoun's government was busy stabbing them in the back.

Immediately the hostilities in Suez were over, President Chamoun rushed to sign the infamous Eisenhower doctrine even before it had been approved by the US Congress and Senate. Since then Chamoun and his henchmen have behaved like all the other spoilt stooges of Washington in Asia. Confident of American support, armed support if required, he let it be known that he will use his yesmen in Parliament to amend the constitution so that he may...
Buses reasserted

Quite rightly, they refused to return until the last few words were examined clearly, unambiguously. Cousins was sent back to Sir John Elliot, head of LTE, to find out. He came back, held up two fingers close together with hardly a chink of light between them and said they would get 8s 6d as near as that.

The men went back. They had won. But there was one small cloud in the sky. What did the Financial Times have to say on the decision to return?

TRU COMMENTS

BUSMEN’S STRUGGLE

A large majority of the garages have now gone on strike, apparently in the belief that the country busmen have been promised some specific increase. The LTE has denied making such a promise... Nevertheless, the ambiguity has served its purpose, and the garages have rescinded their decision to stay out.

The sequel is well-known. The country men were tricked shamefully. They received a 'generous offer' of 5s, which is 60 per cent of the 8s 6d won by the central men (which itself is 81 per cent of their claim). The men's representatives—without Cousins—argued with the LTE. They were shown the door. Cousins who had now come back from Belgium took a handful of permanent officials to plead with the LTE. They were shown the door.

The can was now firmly in the hands of the negotiating committee. But what a difference in atmosphere. There were no rank-and-file strikers outside their door to encourage them, they did not have report back immediately to their mark men waiting impatiently for the next step forward. Their general secretary was away, with sprained back. Negotiate became their slogan. As always happens when the mark-and-file are remote from the scene, the representatives' blood ran thinner and they concluded that the word is mightier than the fist.

Busmen tricked

The result? When one member proposed that the issue be put, once again, to the men, there was no seconder amongst the twelve-man negotiating committee. As strangely enough, the capitalist press had predicted the same occurrence. They voted in the afternoon to ask Sir Wilfrid Neden to intervene and... give a hand to slippery Sir Wilfrid.

What an outcome. The LTE has been faithfully playing the Government's game. The busmen knew from the very beginning that they were fighting against both. They had beaten both, and yet, at the last moment, the negotiating committee appeals to that Government to arbitrate once again. Couldn't they see that the umpire—as always—was wearing knuckledusters?

This is not the end. The men will once more go down to the garages. A delegate conference might have taken place by the time these lines are read. But it would need a stupendous act of heroism to renew the strike, to make the few weeks' work after seven weeks off seem like an intermission, when the vast majority of strikers will get sweet blow-out out of it, and what's taken would have to be unofficial. Finally, who tricked the men back to work? To the men it appeared that a definite promise for 'at least 8s 6d' was given. It is true the LTE was careful to issue a denial only after the garages had voted to return, but was Cousins so raw as to be really bluffed by Sir John Elliot?

Again, every trade-union congress is faced with deciding whether to recommend a resumption of the strike, but the starting committee thinking of when they asked the Government to adjudicate between their interests and the LTE's and the busmen's. Does the Government still look like an objective umpire, even after the last four strikes?

It is not only the busmen that will want to know. There are one-quarter million members of the Transport and General Workers Union who are interested, and beyond them, nine million organized workers.

ENGINEERS & RAILMEN

SHIPYARD WORKERS have put in for a 12 per cent increase. As T. E. Allen, General Secretary of the Boilermakers' Society said, when presenting the claim: 'Do you know why a man has to earn 12 per cent? Because if dividends can rise by 12 per cent, as they did in the first five months of this year, so should wages.'

This is an encouraging sign from the top of the trade-union heap. Especially considering as the shipyard workers' claim follows on the submission of one of the most miserable 7½ per cent by Carron, for the three million engineering workers.

What is the leadership of the AEU and the other unions in the Confederation about? Since May, last year, when a pay rise was won through a solid national strike, and then half-lost by a leadership that called it off too soon and accepted 'strings and conditions', including a wage standstill for twelve months, the AEU has been give up by six per cent. By the time the present claim is conceded—even if it is conceded in full, which is most unlikely—these workers will find themselves trailing even further behind prices.

Workers' share

But that is not the major criticism of the 6 per cent. The principle is just keeping up with the cost-of-living is wrong, hopelessly wrong. Engineering wages have gone up as much as the cost of living since before the war. Living standards have gone up even more—and working wifes and overtime-seeking husbands can explain the reason easily. But productivity has left both miles behind. Workers are producing three or four times as much per hour as they did in 1938.

Are we then to accept the principle that we must keep abreast of prices only? Or are we to demand a greater and greater part of what we produce? The think the answers should be 'yes' and 'no' in that order. Rank-and-filers know better.

Redundancy threat

There is another principle that the Tory Government is trying to ram down our throats—again. One which the leaders of the railway unions accepted to their advantage. The wages department has been plunged for the 3 per cent increase. This is that 'any increase definitely be a share of the "economies" within the industry giving this increase.' In other words, the wage bill must remain the same before they will be forced to give a rise to some workers, others are going to be sacked in order to pay for it.

Delegates to the NUR annual conference have already shown that there is no case for this; for the unions to agree to it. The most一律出席 is to see more growth as the economy regains its strength. Even the leadership of the NUR is beginning to fear the results of their too-easy acquiescence. This is that their organ, the Railway Review, wrote editorially at the end of last month:

It is becoming clear that the mass-economy measures now being swiftly taken by the British Transport Commission were planned long before the pay settlement was a device used to cut down wages. The dominating thought was the right psychological moment, and that the greatest pressures for railways improvement on the British public are to save the money of the railways and preserve the nationalised transport for the future.

One of the main economies planned is the speedy replacement of steam locomotives by diesel. Railwaysmen have already had occasion to fight for conditions on the new diesel, on the issue of whether they would be singular or double-manned. A complicated compromise agreement was reached eventually (see Sid Bellwell's "Rail Unions Retreat" in SR, Mid-January, 1949). But that agreement could not be there for the workers. Now we can expect the BTC to hammer even more heavily.

This is a subject which involves not only footplatemen who have to suffer the strain which single-manning involves, but everyone who ever travels by train. The Economist, the big business organ which has attacked the sitting on British railways diesels even since the subject has come up as an issue, tells us:

Describing the German railway system, they write:

It is for the sake of safety, not of labour relations, that two men now man an electric or diesel locomotive hauling a passenger train (June 25).

DAVID BREEN
BACK TO THE 30's?
by E N Wiggins

READERS over thirty will remember without much difficulty the great "twenties". They will recall (as we were yesterday) various trappings of capitalism in distress—queues outside Labour exchanges (and pawn shops); boarded-up shops in even the most prosperous streets; miners' choirs singing from town to town.

One of the things that expressed most vividly the spirit of the times was the experience of youngsters leaving school and being unable to find work—for in some cases five years and more (Gwyn Thomas refers to this terrible statistic in the "dark age" of affairs novels). One of my best friends failed to find employment for nine months out of ten, and that in one of the most prosperous parts of the country.

Happy days?

Well, happy days are here again, as they say. At its last meeting the Committee of the Midland Federation of Trades Councils considered a motion that the Trades Council which viewed with alarm the addition to the labour market of several thousand more school leavers this autumn than last. It further asked the Federation to investigate the prospects of employment, and the possibility of unemployment.

When the Federation met "... the Secretary made a statement concerning the information he had collected from Trades Councils and suggested he should prepare a fuller report later when all Trades Councils had replied, and we had the full effect of the school leavers at the end of the summer term. It was agreed to accept the report " (I quote from the minutes).

Further disquiet was expressed in the debate on another motion later the same day. Coventry Trades Council asked the Federation to agree: "That in view of the great increase in school leavers that is taking and will take place, and the difficulties and problems involved for Trade Unions, we and young people we call upon all affiliated Councils to consider the implications of this report to the TUC representatives are signatories. Further we request the Midlands Federation of Trades Councils to consider the possibility of calling a conference on this question."

Again I quote from the minutes: "Higgs in moving this resolution, gave the position in Coventry and a few details from the Cerr Report. He also pointed out the position of apprentices and women. The position was much more difficult than four years ago. The resolution was formally seconded and carried without discussion."

Determined action

The Midlands are generally looked on as being the thriving industrial part of this country, and while it is true that the position in Birmingham is still reasonably healthy, nevertheless it is also true that in many parts of the region, there is considerable disquiet over the prospects of a return to the bad old days of the 1930's. Only determined action could prevent our sons and grandsons being turned into the dead-end kids of the 1960's.

"A GIANT'S STRENGTH" by JFC

The recent pamphlet issued by the Inns of Court Tory Society, A Tory's View of the Future, is only the latest in a right-wing barrage against the Labour movement. The pamphlet is devoted to the right of union to strike and prohibits entirely unofficial strikes. These proposals are more savage than the 1927 Trade Disputes Act, and are reminiscent of the Combination Acts.

Only unions registered with the Registrar of Friendly Societies could call a strike. But they would not be able to register until they incorporated into their constitution a certain set of rules which would be prescribed by the bosses. If unregistered unions called a strike they would be acting illegally and they would lose their funds in a court case. Remember Taff Vale?

Even if the unions were registered, their strike would be difficult. All strikes would be illegal until an "independent tribunal" had decided. A dispute. Independent courts of enquirers and independent television authorities would have to say whether the independent tribunal would be.

After the tribunal's report had been published, the Trade Unions would have to elapse until a legal strike could begin. The waiting period is to allow public opinion to be heard! If they mean the opinions of the public as heard in the Daily Sketch, Express and Mirror, we understand they want enough time for their insidious and libellous propaganda to do its dirty work.

The tragedy is that these reactionary proposals will probably be declared by the right-wing bureaucratic trade union leaders. The idea of outlawing unofficial strikes which threaten their prestige and chance of a knighthood is right up their cul-de-sac. However the rank and file will see through these vicious measures.

Despite the fact that the Inns of Court Tory group boast three Labour Party members as subscribers, the ordinary working men and women don't think these measures will see the statute book. The British worker will never surrender one of his fundamental rights. The right to organize in his trade.

WAY FORWARD
by James D Young

What is the Labour bureaucracy and the highly-paid officials of the trade unions, the Labour Party and the Co-operative movement?

The peculiar thing about these people is that though of working class origin, they are in their way of life middle class people, and some the pride of British capitalism (the late J H Thomas for example). So, while they are paid to look after working class interests, their own real interests are often tied up with the capitalist system.

Their main functions therefore are to protect the workers from becoming a really independent force in politics, and (b) to prevent the workers from discovering their class strength. Conversely, the main function of Socialists is to see to it that "at long last the working class shall enter upon the scene of history, no longer as a servile following, but as an independent force."

That is why a Socialist Party has to avoid becoming "an appendage of the official bourgeois democracy" and work for the establishment of an independent organization of the workers and make every municipality a factory and a federation of workers' societies in which the position and interests of the workers can be discussed in complete independence of bourgeois influence.

Marxist way

The capitalists instinctively fear the growth of a really independent workers' movement; for they always know what is dangerous to capitalist political power. They do not mind a Labour Government very much; they can always keep it on a short leash. But they do mind a mass working class movement, especially when such a movement rises above sectional interests and questions the capitalist system. They want to use the teeth of our militant (and even potentially militant) trade unions and so render them "safe". At least a section of the capitalist class is thoroughly fed up with "industrial peace" and "class collaboration." This is, of course, the inevitable response of capitalism whenever the workers take action on a class scale. Capitalism in its heyday could buy off the workers' movement by reforms; in its death agony it often prefers to use the bludgeon. Unless in our educational work we face up to the analysis of the Marxist way.

Accept challenge

What of the lesson it teaches? In our educational work we cannot neglect that either. The answer is that for each new stage of the workers' struggle we need to put up the challenge which the capitalists have thrown down to us by extending the class struggle and by extending the struggle beyond the traditional constitutional boundaries. This must be done in two stages: firstly from the rank and file; and thereby show the Labour "leaders" that they must either take up the bosses' challenge, or make way for better men. There must be no question of "striking a bargain" with the boss class; many of them at the top who disapprove of general strikes and workers' struggles just as much as Macmillan and the boys who preach "industrial peace," are anxious to do, and to which some Tories are still willing to agree.

But it is not enough to make speeches in and out of Parliament, and then wait for the general election in 1960. It must be a question of answering capitalism's challenge by organizing working class action on a scale that we have not witnessed for years, of which the British ruling class has shown itself so much afraid (e.g. by reviving the Trade Councils and transforming them into an active organ of working class struggle). To do any less in the present critical political situation would be to abandon the struggle for the defence of our class, and still more to abandon the struggle for the abolition of the wage and profit system.
IT'S OUR AFFAIR TOO!

The PRESS has carried brief statements about the NEC's actions against John Lawrence, the former leader of the Labour Group on the St. Pancras Borough Council and certain members of the North and South St Pancras Constituency parties. What was it all about and what are the issues at stake?

First, Lawrence was suspended without explanation. What any charges were brought against him and before he was given any chance to defend himself. If Lawrence was suspended, he was constitutionally debarred from holding any public office, representing the Labour Party.

The majority of the Labour Group decided that they must abide by the constitution and appoint another, temporary leader until he was restored to full membership. A minority—some 15 councillors—took the view that Lawrence should continue as leader in spite of the NEC's suspension and formed an independent 'Socialist Labour Group.' Whether the majority or the minority's decision was right, the serious issues remain: who must rest on the NEC?—was the splitting of the movement locally, which in 1990 included the great mass of people, the Tory minority on the council. The members of the Socialist Labour Group were subsequently expelled from the party for refusing to accept the official Labour whip on the council.

Lawrence's suspension was soon followed by his expulsion. Whatever the grounds put forward by the NEC for his expulsion, it is pretty obvious that the real reason was that he was identified as leader with left-wing policies on the council, such as opposition to civil defence, keeping the rest of council flats as low as possible and celebrating May Day by flying red flag and giving a holiday to the council employees.

His Record

Because of this record he had won a considerable reputation among the rank and file of the party and no doubt the NEC decided that the time had come to get rid of him. Left-wingers become intolerable when they come to be widely known. If the NEC wanted to be consistent, they should have gone after all the Members of the Labour Group who supported the policies with which Lawrence had become associated. But it is always safer to divide and conquer.

One of the charges against Lawrence was of organizing a faction inside his constituency—Labour Party—South St Pancras—which in some unspecified way forced through decisions against the wishes of the majority of members. This has been made the pretext for a "re-organization" of the party by the NEC.

Excluded

The party was put in a state of suspension and all former members were required to re-apply for membership. Some, not all, were required not only to undertake to abide by the rules and constitution of the party but to state that they agreed with the re-organization. Those who refused to approve the NEC's actions were excluded from membership. The weakening of the local party in a marginal constituency obviously matters less to the NEC than topping off the left wing. Incidentally, since Labour has been subject to actions detrimental to the interests of the party, it is worth recording that in the next elections earlier this year, Labour won three seats from the Tories in South St Pancras, a large section of the electorate had felt pretty satisfied with Labour's record in the borough.

Lawrence and the other expelled and excluded members of the St Pancras party will be appealing to Annual Conference for reinstatement and the final decision on their case will be made then.

The Facts

It is therefore important that the facts in the case should be as widely known as possible in labour parties and affiliated organizations so that delegates to conference can be mandated to vote for their readmission to the party.

They Suffer

As everyone knows, this is not an isolated case. There are far too many examples of hand-acted action by the NEC against the democratic rights of party members. In very few cases is any disciplinary action taken against members who hold extreme right-wing views. It is the left-wing of the party that suffers. It is time to put a stop to the rot. If the NEC were forced to reverse their decision on this occasion, they would not be quite so ready to move against the Left in future.

P MANSSELL

Of Bombs and Bevan

By Ron Lewis

The latest plan for Cyprus seems to have embarrassed the Party leadership. For after the very emphatic resolution on the topic at Brighton it is very hard for the Party to accept the present plan, which is designed more to keep NATO together, than to enable Cyprists to consummate their national desires.

Close the Base

Not, mind you, that I have any sympathy for the Litry Left's devotion to the cause of Eonis. If I were a Cyriot, the last old gang of cut throats, I would want to have been consulted with would be the Greek Church and State. However, our job may be expected from him. Remember the wage freeze, continuity of foreign policy, the crash rearmament programme, all decisions taken when he was in the cabinet; indeed his speech on rearmament a few months before he resigned on the same issue was hailed as a masterpiece and was published by Transport House as a pamphlet on how to win adherents for the Party.

Bevan was typical of a good many people, some of them well-meaning. He was unable to escape from socialism, great dramatic gestures that will accomplish in a short space of years. There is, however, only one sure way. That is via the education, organization and leadership of the masses. All these manoeuvres, and intrigues within the Party hierarchy, meetings at the Summit, and every other facet of the permanent of the impact they make upon the people.

We need to develop, in the Party, a strategy for wining power for the workers over everything. Such a strategy should be known to every member, who should regard himself as a class leader and fight for the cause during business and leisure to win adherents for the cause.

With his magnetic personality, Bevan would have been very successful in providing some of the inspiration in that kind of strategy building. And had he helped to build a politically conscious, well trained core of activists within the Party, then at the end of his days he may well have looked back upon a life purposefully spent. As it is, he has bequeathed everything the suburban Left thought he stood for, by playing ducks and drakes with the bomb issue.
Notebook

ABOUT 500 of us turned up at the Sports Day at the end of last month; no doubt the NEC Youth Sub-Committee will profit by comparing this figure with the 5,000 who stood in the rain in Trafalgar Square after the march in London the year before. Before the speeches were not much worse, the weather was reasonably fine. We heard that they were quite pleased, though rumours are going about that there is a solid body of dissatisfaction that the NEC Youth Sub-Committee has not been arranging enough expulsions of Youth Section activists. So much better to think for the rousing slogan: Defend Alan Williams from the NEC!

IT IS GOOD to report an important development from London. On July 6 a group of young workers, students and others (?) formed a committee to co-ordinate anti-Ambt activity by London youth. What is particularly encouraging is the presence of trade-unionists, Labour Party Section members and technical school students. In the technical schools there is a big potential to be developed, but it will mean a lot of hard work; at the London School of Printing, for example, a debate on the H-Bomb only drew 18 students—that the majority declared for unilateral nuclear disarmament is no great cause for satisfaction for those of us who are trying to build a vigorous socialist youth movement. We have to work at it.

IN AN EARLIER Notebook we reported that NASLO had elected a strong left-wing executive at their Conferences in April, and that the discussion-camp ‘Beyond the Welfare State...’ was the first sign of this new life in the organization. Besides taking up the loose ends for the camp (the full program will be going out in the next few days), the NASLO executive elected a well known militant as London Organizer, set up committees to look into the problems of technical schools and colleges, and prepare a policy on student grants, and passed important resolutions calling for the expulsion of Mollet from the Socialist International, and protested at the treatment of John Lawrence.

Bob Flagg

SEX, SYNCPATION & SINATRA

by M Maddison (Stoke Newington YS)

IF SEX, SYNCPATION and Sinatra are the Holy Trinity of working class culture— as John Crutchley suggested in a recent article (July 1)—then I’m going to quit politics and (in the words of Candide) ‘go and work in the garden’... Not only do I refuse to accept the sanctity of the trinity; I challenge its significance as the kingpin of working class or any other culture.

Culture is not as limited as this. It includes such things as the nature of work and the feelings of people towards it; it includes language and the way that language is used; it also includes the attitude towards authority and trivial though this may seem, the way people hold a knife and fork, or even whether they use a knife and fork. By narrowing the limits of culture down to these three aspects, Comrade Crutchley is in danger of devaluing the value of his thesis.

I would go even a step further and question the entire concept of a specifically working class culture. The working class—as a group whose destinies are linked intimately with those of the capitalist power elite—can have no distinct culture of its own. It is forced to accept, by and large, the mores of the dominant social class. Although the working class is part of a mass society with a mass culture, it is nevertheless, constantly hammering at the edges of the dominant elite. And in the process it is modifying and remoulding the values that it receives. The working class boy, for example, didn’t invent the Teddy-boy drain-pipe trousers and drape jacket, nor does he create modern jazz. But he will take a fashion or a form of expression and remould it to suit the needs of his own social group.

It is a startling exaggeration to say that ‘love and marriage go together like a horse and cart’ (continued next page)
IT IS DIFFICULT to evaluate the Labour Party policy document on education, LEARNING TO LIVE, without deciding what one would expect a Socialist document on education to propose.

"Equality of opportunity," certainly. This means that we must be sure that the starting points for all children are equal. The accompanying article by C. Dallas sharply underlines the fact that this is not so under capitalism and that working class children suffer disadvantages from the word go.

EDUCATION
LEARNING TO LIVE?

by E G Bridie

Education today clearly serves the needs of capitalist society, and, starting from the spoiled beginnings, aggravates inequalities in order to give each class what it requires in adult life for the rulers a wide knowledge gained in a manner which encourages individual initiative in continuing the class traditions of Britain and her Empire; for the middle class sufficient knowledge gained largely through spooffeeding and cramming to undertake fairly complex but mostly predetermined tasks, and a feeling that these are superior to manual jobs: for the working class sufficient knowledge on the 3 R's to enable school leavers to undertake the tasks required in industry, knowledge gained in a manner which encourages submission to authority all along the line. Clearly, then, till society changes and becomes classless, "equality of opportunity" will be impossible of achievement.

Having made these general remarks, let us look at the document on the plane to which it confines itself, that of reforms.

It starts with the welcome proposal to reduce the size of classes. At present 32 percent of primary and 62 percent of secondary school children are in classes over the statutory minimum (40 and 30 respectively), and suffer great educational harm. To achieve a reduction to the declared aim of 30 per class in primary and secondary schools, the document proposes to overcome the shortage of teachers, which is the main bottleneck, by providing more places in training colleges and also inducing as many suitable candidates outside schools as possible to take up teaching. It also insists to get rid of slim schools and all-age schools, cater better for handicapped children, and proposes to keep children at school till the end of the school year in which they turn 15 (not the end of the term as now), thus giving a full four years to all children, with the aim of increasing it to 5 later.

Immediate programme

Guarantees needed

These intentions are admirable and deserve commendation. I would have felt happier, however, if there had been some sure guarantees in the document of their being achieved. The note of doubt is induced by experience of the non-implementation of many of the most important features of the 1944 Education Act, of which the present proposals are largely a reiteration despite the six years of Labour Government since that date.

It thus seems justifiable to ask for guarantees that the present reforms will be carried out. For instance, to overcome the teacher-supply bottleneck, the document suggests many inducements to attract teachers, except the one sure guarantee of success—pay them more. The National Union of Teachers is certainly not exorbitant in its demand for a scale in the remuneration of £600 to £1200. Without offering this the Government will not get its teachers, and reduction of classes and other improvements will be postponed again, as it has been in the past.

This question ties up intimately with the question of what share of the national cake is to be devoted to education. At present it is a totally inadequate 3 percent (compare this with 5 percent for "defence"). The document reiterates what its precursor, Challenge to Britain, said:

"We must see that the money is found, even if this means going without other things." Bravely spoken! But it does not follow up with a suggestion to increase the percentage. And unless Labour really does do so, practically all the promised reform will fall by the wayside. It is up to us to push hard in this direction and extract unequivocal figures from the planners.

No streaming

In its organizational proposals, the document very properly places emphasis on the need for comprehensive schools as opposed to the present tripartite system, and the consequent dropping of the conspicuous i-plus examination. In January, 1958, there were only 49 comprehensive schools in the country. 21 of these in London. Wherever there are comprehensive schools, there is generally nothing but praise for them by all sections of the community that have dealings with them, and this despite the quite widespread sabotage in the part of grammar schools which were planned to be incorporated in the comprehensive system but were allowed to continue.

However, comprehensive education means more than just large schools. Comprehensive schools must give comprehensive education, which means that all pupils are given the same intellectual opportunities as at present shall present part in the school, and that all children shall be expected to reach a specified level tested by a public examination.

Reforms only

The worst feature of the document is its proposal to do nothing at all about the private and "public" schools that number 4 or so percent of children who later fill a vastly greater proportion of top jobs. So long as Labour is in power the rich may go on heapsathering their riches and prestige to their children and denying this to the rest of the population. This is a disgraceful submission to the STATUS QUO and must be fought tooth and nail.

In higher education the document proposes little change, beyond improving grants somewhat, expanding the teaching force and the crying needs of industry today, and rationalizing some anomalies such as conditions of entry to universities. There seems little hope of any change in the class structure of the universities, particularly Oxford and Cambridge.

To sum up, the document proposes some reforms which, if carried out, will bolster the present capitalist system and with difficulty help Britain keep its place in the technological race of the capitalist countries. Even then, the vague phraseology of the document is not enough to hold the applicant in ensuring the implementation of the proposals. The whole capitalist structure, however, is to be kept intact, with public schools and privileged universities, even though this is so obviously an impediment to getting the best results from the reforms. This must be condemned outright.

YOUNG SOCIALIST (cont)

riage: the equation pregnancy and marriage is equally inaccu-
rate. I don’t know where Crutchley got his information about the "pattern of working class court-
ship," but he is to be congratulated on establishing himself as the proles’ Kinsey.

As a whole, Comrade Crutchley’s very interesting contribution seconded by the hybrid of personal experience—confined to cinemas, dances and Sinatra long-playing records—and text-
book indiscretion: like the prober-
bial curate’s egg it is good in par-
ris. However, sociology isn’t just a survey of jazz, or erotic idylls of tennis clubs: it has wider horizons than these. Compared with the studies in political eco-

y, sociology lags far behind. The time has come for the lab-
cour movement to understand itself and the world in which it lives; it can’t go on whistling in the dark for ever. Sociological analyses can help, but they must be accurate.

Nevertheless, an honest and genuine attempt has been made by Comrade Crutchley to deal with a sadly-neglected subject; such attempts are to be welcomed.
The differences found between children at the age of five tend to widen throughout their school career for two reasons: (1) The disadvantages suffered by the working class child as compared with the middle-class child by the rate at which he is able to learn academic skills, and (2) the bias of schools towards pushing forward the "bright" children, i.e., those who learn easily, largely for the reasons mentioned; at the expense of those who have found it more difficult. This is brought about largely by the, "junior leaving" examination (the 11-plus), to which most junior schools gear their whole curriculum. (They do this because the prestige of any junior school is generally measured by its success in getting children selected for grammar schools and for the public schools which grant a few free places to children who do particularly well). The organization of the school for this purpose is generally done through "streaming" the children into A, B, C, etc., streams which diverge from the class with the result that the longer a child is in a backward stream, the more difficult it is for him to catch up to a higher one.

11 Plus

The 11-plus examination itself, supposedly a pure test of ability to profit by different types of education (academic, technical or secondary modern where the emphasis is on manual and craft work) is far from being "above class" in any respect, or even that for it to be so. The test has had to be constructed, validated and standardized in the light of the approximate grading of performance, which, as we have seen, is so largely conditioned by the child's environment and also the middle-class background and academic bias of the teacher himself. The test therefore tends to measure the skills readily acquired by middle class children in the academic field to the exclusion of any of the average working class child may have acquired.

The working class child is therefore discriminated against in education right from the start. This unhappy picture has been well borne out in the-class structure of grammar schools. Jean Plouin's excellent survey of schooling in South West Hertfordshire and Midisluhe, shows that in 1982, 51 percent of candidates from middle-class homes were awarded grammar school places in South West Hertfordshire, as against only 27 percent of lower-middle-class candidates and 15 percent of working-class candidates. In Middlesbrough the percentage of candidates international socialism

Inequality

No wonder that at the University level children of semi-skilled and unskilled manual workers are almost entirely absent and that upper-middle-class children hold a near monopoly of attendance there. A report "Applications for Admission to Universities" by R. K. Karabalin, 1955-56 with addresses in England, 74 percent came from the upper and middle-class children of semi-skilled manual workers, 34 percent of the semi-skilled manual workers, 34 percent of skilled manual workers. The picture at Oxford and Cambridge is even more shocking. Only 9 percent of entrants to Cambridge came from manual workers, more than 50 percent from the upper and middle classes. Oxford. These figures, incidentally, are similar to those prevailing at the secondary modern schools.

It is thus clear that there is not equal educational opportunity in the state schools for children in Britain. The only way the inequality can be eliminated is by the state school system, which is the root cause and which only the state school system can go to school. The struggle for educational equality is the struggle for Socialism.
Parliament

by Michael Millett

quietly, as if they were ashamed of their defeat, the Tories have made a major part of the Rent Act. Mr. Brooke, the Minister of Housing and Local Government, needed and maintained the essence of which is that a tenant can only be evicted if the landlord could show that the tenant had refused a new agreement "which he could reasonably have been expected to accept.

This raises questions that will have to be settled by the courts. For example, how much must a renter refuse before the "offer" is unreasonable?

Will the courts interpret this as meaning that they can, in effect, arbitrate on rents? There is, presumably, nothing to stop a judge saying that this is unacceptable. This incense of (say) twenty-five percent is unreasonable but if the landlord were to offer a new tenancy agreement in which the net increase was ten percent I would think differently of it.

In fact, there is now a great confusion about the Rent Act (s) and your correspondent, who is about to collect the last installment of his house, is as much understanding of it as Mr. Khristofev has of Workers' Compensation. It is the last hazard any more legal guesses.

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