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Hands Off
the Colonial
peoples!

To Him That Hath... The Rent Bill Analysed

THE general view that the Parliamentary Labour Party have taken in opposing the Tory Housing Repairs and Rents Bill has been correct. The provisions of the Bill make it certain that the landlords, when they think it worth their while, will get an increased rent. Equally certain, the houses in most need of repair will not get repaired in spite of the fact that the tenant will be paying a higher rent.

That this is a correct summing up of the position is confirmed not only by many statements made by Labour M.P.s, but in addition certain Tory members added their testimony to the same effect.

For instance, Mr. Derek Walker-Smith, Tory M.P. for Hereford, said (Col. 1034 Hansard Dec. 1st). "Therefore I feel bound to say that it would be wrong to express the view that it is certain that these proposals will secure widespread repair. On the information that is known to me I could not feel that certainty."

This statement is completely in line with the views expressed by the Labour Opposition and proves conclusively that, whatever else the proposals contained in the Bill may do, they will not lead to the repair of the houses although they will equally certainly lead to increased rents.

The Bill therefore fails so far as its alleged principal object is concerned. I use the word 'alleged' because it must be obvious, the Bill being a Tory one, that the real objective is increased rents.

THOSE WHO PROFIT

An equally candid comment to that of Mr. Walker-Smith's is contained in the "Financial Times" of November 7th, 1953. It says: "For many well-known companies interested in rent restricted property... the proposals should mean an increase in available profits."

These companies have in fact had no difficulty in keeping their properties in a good state of repair, even though they are rent-controlled. A list of 34 of them shows that all except one have maintained or increased their profit yield as between 1951 and 1952.

Again, National Income and Expenditure Tables for the year 1952 shows that £320 million was paid in rent to individuals and companies (excluding rent paid to

local authorities). The Tory Minister of Housing indicated that 4 to 5 million rent-controlled houses could be kept in good condition even though rent-controlled.

If these houses get a rent increase on an average of £14 per annum, these private landlords will get a rent bonus of £70 million per annum which they do not need but which the tenant will be obliged to pay.

TO HIM THAT HATH

This follows out the strange biblical precept "To him that hath shall be given, from him that hath not shall be taken away." How this found its way into the

By
**Tom
Braddock**

Holy Book I do not know. I should think some ancient scribe wrote it in for a joke or as a comment on the habits of landlords of that age. But even this queer precept is not being observed in the Rents Bill.

Certainly the landlord who does not need it is being given more, but the landlord who has not kept his house in repair is also to get increased rent.

SANITARY INSPECTORS

Some play was made by the Tory Government speakers in connection with clause 21, that the tenant can go to the local authority for a "certificate of disrepair". Note that it is the Local Authority from whom he gets the certificate, not the Sanitary Inspector. That means that every Sanitary Inspector's report will be held up for at least a month or even longer, waiting for confirmation or otherwise (often otherwise if it is in a Tory borough) by the full Council meeting.

This means that even if the overworked Sanitary Inspector can get a report prepared, there is no chance of the tenant using it before the rent increase is due for payment.

Moreover, we have had a long experience of this sort of thing. This power of Local Authorities to compel Landlords to carry out repairs has existed since 1920. But the fact remains that the condition of about 7 million of our houses has continued to deteriorate until vast areas of them are in fact two-storey slum dwellings—mile after mile of them in all parts, town and country.

LABOUR MUST FIGHT IT

An examination of the Second Reading Debate shows that the Bill must be resisted by the Parliamentary Labour Party—it cannot be effectively amended. It must also be opposed by the tenant by the direct method of refusal to pay any increase whatever, no matter what the law may say.

In the meantime the signatures of tenants all over the country should and can be collected on a petition calling for the removal of the Tory Government.

This will give tenants the necessary confidence to resist when the time comes. They will know that they do not stand alone, the family next door will have signified an equal determination to resist. The N.E.C. and the Parliamentary Labour Party will know that their efforts have the deliberate and considered backing of the mass of the people.

Finally the Tory Government will know that they have a Bill that is never going to be accepted by the people as the Law of the Land.

LABOUR CAN LEAD THE WAGES FIGHT

Support the Workers and Oust the Tories

ELSEWHERE in this issue we have reported and made some comments on the magnificent strike of more than two million engineers organised last week in support of the 15 per cent wage claim. This paper congratulates all who took part in this united demonstration and urges the Labour Movement to stand ready to give its unqualified support to any subsequent militant action which may be decided on by the Confederation of Shipbuilding and Engineering Unions.

Meanwhile, other sections of industrial workers are on the move. Welsh miners have called for an end to the Saturday shift working if the Coal Board continues to refuse the wage claim of the day-wage men; Glasgow

and West of Scotland council of the National Union of Railwaymen has urged the union to reject the miserable 4/- awarded by the Railway Staff National Tribunal; and the Transport and Salaried Staffs Association has declared its "bitter opposition" to this measly 4/-. Most railwaymen have described it as a downright insult.

There can be no doubt that strikes in defence of the diminishing wage packet is the prospect ahead in British industry.

This struggle to keep up with the rising cost of living is essentially directed against the Tory Government which has shown its complete unity with the employers in placing the burden of Britain's economic difficulties on the shoulders of the workers, the old people, the sick and the children. They have embarked on a deliberate policy of forcing up the cost of living by their reckless abolition of most of the food subsidies, by

their gift to the landlords of increased rents, and by reducing the real value of all the social services—health, pensions and education.

It is therefore quite correct for Harold Hutchinson, the "Herald's" star industrial correspondent, to write on December 3rd that the only lasting solution is for a Socialist Government which will bring about "changes

can, and must resist by the only means at present available—by strikes and demonstrations. And there is no doubt at all that such resistance, well-planned and led with determination, can eventually force the employers to disgorge some of their fantastically high profits.

But that, it seems, is exactly what the "Herald" doesn't want—for they present these ultimate socialist solutions as an alternative to strikes for more wages. It is a knavish trick—and it won't work.

The Confederation of Shipbuilding and Engineering Unions, for example, are well aware that the protection of their members' living standards requires a Labour Government which will bring about "changes in the ownership of the means of production."

That's why at the Margate Conference of the Labour Party these unions proposed their 'Plan For Engineering' which involved a substantial extension of nationalisation. The 'Plan' was then ignorantly denounced by Mr. Deakin as "mumbo jumbo"—and there wasn't a word of protest from the "Daily Herald". On the contrary.

It is clear therefore, that the "Herald's" belated conversion to socialism has as its object the damping down of the present struggle for higher wages.

There is absolutely no contradiction between a fight for higher wages and a campaign for a Socialist Government. The one supplements and gives political meaning to the other.

If the "Daily Herald" wants to help the workers in their fight against the employers and yet wants at the same time to strike a blow for socialism, here is what they can do. First, give full support to those unions who are being forced to come out on strike for more wages and second, turn over the columns of the paper to advocating the following things:

(1) That the Labour Party and the T.U.C. should initiate a joint campaign to force the Tories to Resign.

(2) That the leadership of the Party should reconsider its ill-advised rejection of the 'Engineer's Plan' and generally revise its present opposition to further "changes in the ownership of the means of production..."

Wages are politics—and it is up to the leaders of the Labour Party to make that clear to the workers now rightly preparing to do battle with the employers. But no more please, Mr. Hutchinson, of these attempts to present political solutions as an alternative to the industrial fight. Both are connected, and it is the Party's job to connect them consciously in the minds of the workers with the simple slogan... **Get The Tories Out!**

In Solid Ranks They Marched

Some of the two million engineers who struck last Wednesday in support of their wage claim (see story on Page 2).



Handley Page Lock-out

ON the morning of Monday December 7th, the Chief Security Officer of the Handley Page Factory at Cricklewood, London, approached the main gate from inside the factory, and locked it up with chain and padlock.

Outside were the Divisional Organiser of the Association of Shipbuilding and Engineering Draughtsmen, Mr. W. A. Court, the Chairman of the Handley Page Design Department Strike Committee, and 170 draughtsmen and technicians. These workers, who came out on strike on the 9th of November, were now locked out—literally.

As reported in last week's "Socialist Outlook", they struck work to further their demand that trainee draughtsmen should not be used as cheap labour. On Tuesday December 1st, there was a mutual agreement between representatives of the employers Federation and Union leaders that the men should return to work on December 7th. Negotiations on their dispute were to follow. The strikers, on the recommendation of their union, agreed to this course the following Friday.

Then, in the afternoon at 4.30

came a statement from the Handley Page management. They declared that the workers could not be taken back without forty eight hours notice.

Meeting over the week-end, the E.C. of the Union expressed its opinion that, as the return to work had been mutually agreed for the following Monday, their members should present themselves for work and the responsibility was on the employers to honour the agreement.

On Monday, after a short meeting, the men lined up outside the gate in an orderly fashion. The Union Divisional Organiser and Mr. W. A. Court asked the gate-man to inform the management that they were ready. No answer was forthcoming for a few minutes. Then it came—padlock and chain.

WORKERS ANGRY

The action of the management has resulted in anger not only among the draughtsmen locked out, but also among trade unionists inside the factory. The shop-stewards committee, representing 2,500 workers in the Cricklewood factory, the committee representing 900 workers in the Radlett factory of Handley Page, and the strike committee, have issued a

joint statement. They bring the facts to public attention and roundly condemn the management. They declare its action is irresponsible in the extreme and flouts the recommendation of the employers organisation of which the Handley Page is a member.

Trade unionists throughout the country will view this as a provocative lock-out and support the draughtsmen in their fight against the arbitrary action of their employers.

Second Class Citizens

You will probably be interested to know that the following resolution was carried by an overwhelming majority by the Croydon Labour Party at a recent meeting.

That this Croydon Labour Party deplores the action of the National Executive Committee in rejecting the previously endorsed candidature of John Lawrence, believing that such acts are detrimental to the traditional freedom of choice accorded to the Constituencies."

The case for the resolution was presented by a comrade who had

also been a delegate to the Party Conference and the discussion revealed that, in our opinion, the case of John Lawrence was a clear case of political victimisation. It is made even worse by the fact that Lawrence is permitted to represent the Labour Party as a Councillor on the St. Pancras Borough Council but is not allowed to represent the Party in Parliament. This definitely smacks of the creation of "second class citizens" within the Labour Party, a thing which no socialist can possibly tolerate.

Thornton Heath (Surrey)
Eve Brown

Too Many Coppers!

There is a large national surplus of pennies. It is so large, in fact, that it is an embarrassment to the banks, which are having to store large quantities in their vaults.

This half-humorous situation of bank vaults overflowing with pennies is an apt comment on the ever-rising prices, which are rendering these humble coins superfluous.

How many things can you buy for a penny? Very few. Even bus fares are rising way above the penny level, and children would certainly be scornful (and rightly) of the one-time penny pocket money. So these forsaken, unwanted pennies are cramming the banks. Perhaps they'll soon be given away free!

Tottenham J. Wise

Ndegwa is dead, shot down . . .

Letter to ex-Corporal Kamau, late of H.M. East African Rifles

★ From his friend ex S/Sgt. C. G. Siddle ★

Jambo, Kamau,

What is your news? Good, I hope! I hear that you are bewildered, unhappy, and perhaps bitter. Don't be like that. Let me try and help you—explain things to you. For just at the moment I am so proud to be white.

Ndegwa is dead, shot down just like one of our late enemies, and the Officer (and Gentleman) who did it has been upheld as having honourably done his duty to the Great White Queen.

Ndegwa, your brother, is dead. His spirit wanders through the forest, his wife and children weep and will not be comforted. Ndegwa is dead, and his death has been marked up on the scoreboard of the 6th Battalion, The King's African Rifles, the Regiment of which we were so proud in the white man's war to establish everybody's right to live, and to live decently. Did I say EVERYBODY? Well, we believed that, didn't we, you and I, when we were comrades in arms? I'm so proud to be white, to belong to the race which keeps its promises. I'm so proud of the white man's sporting instinct, which has made him so superior to the black, and which comes out even in the killing of his former comrades.

Ndegwa is dead. He died because an officer (and a Gentleman) BELIEVED him to belong to Mau-Mau. Now, in England, you have to be very sure that a man is guilty before you may even hint that he is, much less punish him for it. Why is it different for a black man? I don't know, Kamau. The testimony of the Askari and the Serjenti-maja was discarded, the testimony of the Bwana Officer was accepted. Why? Again I don't know. But it is a fact, isn't it, that an Askari is black, and a serjenti-maja is not an officer (and therefore no gentleman). I merely give that as a fact, and draw no inference from it.

In England, you may be told by the Bwana Doctor that an old man will die tomorrow, in great pain, but if you help him to start the great safari today, you will be convicted of murder. Many men have been so convicted. But in Africa a Bwana Officer can shoot a man in the back (justifiably because he is running away), leave him for half an hour, and then, instead of getting a

doctor, shoot him through the head to 'put him out of his misery'. The man is not running away—he can't, with a few Bren-gun bullets in his back—but it isn't murder. Why? I'm sorry, Kamau, I still don't know. I could hazard a guess my friend, but I'm not allowed to do that. I can only recapitulate facts.

Can you believe, I wonder, that you still have friends who sympathise with your bewilderment? Can you understand that we have what is called a 'Tory' Government in England, which rather ties our hands at the moment? The paramount chief of the Tory Tribe is Bwana Churchill—yes, you've heard of him! He is strong for the rights of man. He said so, time and time again, when you were helping us to fight the Italians, in Abyssinia, and the Japanese in Burma. We believed, if you remember, that we were fighting the Italians, and the Germans, and the Japanese, because they would not recognise those rights. Of course, the great white chief may only have been thinking of the rights of WHITE men—who knows? Certainly he did not think it necessary to apply the phrase to the 'British Commonwealth of Nations'—no, please do not laugh, old friend. It is a sonorous and fine-sounding phrase, even if it does mean nothing much.

But you have friends in England—a big, powerful tribe called the 'Socialists' who only need waking up. No, don't be bitter, I know we are all white men, but there are distinctions. Let me explain. A Tory says "Ah! There are terrorists in East Africa, are there? Send out some troops, and get rid of them. Shoot the lot." The Tories know how to handle terrorists—they've been handling them for years in Malaya.

A Socialist says "Ah! There are terrorists in East Africa, are there? Send somebody out there to find out why, AND GET RID OF THE CAUSE." You see the difference, I hope.

Let us ask ourselves what your friends over here can do. I refer, of course, to the people who think that EVERY human being has certain fundamental rights, and more particularly to that smaller sub-section who also believe that you Africans are human.

Well, these people have their councils, rather like your village councils. They are called Ward

Parties and Divisional Parties, and City Parties. They could say that they are 'Gravely Disturbed' (that means a lot, in English) at what is happening in your country. They could demand that their 'Bwana Mzee' who is called an M.P., makes a big 'shauri' about it in the great house, and keeps on making a 'shauri', refusing to be put off with honeyed words or forked tongues, until something is done. If all the Bwanas of all the Divisions made a-shauri at the same time, what a big shauri that would be. It would echo round the world.

They could demand that the Government stops killing their former loyal Askari, or at the very least that they entrust the job to soldiers who do it because it is their duty, and not because they love killing black men to indulge their little, private race hatreds. They could demand that anyone who makes a competition out of it should himself be shot, be he Sergeant or General. They could write to their papers, clamouring for them to condemn these people, and to keep on condemning them until they are removed, or better still, the Tory Government falls. You see, this Government still has over two years to run, which means that many more of your comrades will be shot 'on suspicion' before we can do anything about it.

Well, Kamau, what are the lessons you can learn from Ndegwa's death. You can learn to regard

everything the white man does as being right, and for your own good. Never let him have a suspicion that you have an idea of any sort in your head. You can learn to regard your pass for what it is, a mere scrap of paper. You can learn that to run is an act of aggression. Never run, or even walk. Rather crawl, or grovel. Set the Bwana's foot on your head. If he kicks it, never mind, it is for your own good. Don't complain if he shoots you in the back, and leaves you lying in agony for half an hour. Be grateful when he is humane enough to put you out of your misery with his revolver, just as he would a dog, or, dare we say it, a horse? If a white man beats one of you to death, don't, I beg of you, be bitter if the white man's court decides that he didn't kill your friend, but only caused him 'grievous bodily harm'. Don't be bitter, because bitterness will get you nowhere. Just put it down to 'White Man's Magic'.

And White Man's Magic is wonderful, it really is! That is why I am so proud to be white.

Kwaheri, Kamau
Bwana Kiko.

P.S. Labour will wake up, one day. I'm sure it will. Till then you'll just have to grin and bear it, if you are not killed first. And in the meantime, we, in England, must be content that our honour rests in the capable hands of such men as Captain Griffiths.



The Kabaka

A Motion of Censure Needed

BUGANDA is the latest colonial trouble spot for the Tory Government. It is the largest province in the British Protectorate of Uganda, one of the richest British possessions in East Africa.

British Imperialism has governed Uganda through a system of Indirect Rule, by utilising native rulers and chiefs as its instrument. By this means, says George Padmore in his book "Africa: Britain's Third Empire," "a handful of Europeans are able to govern this vast territory through a network of African functionaries. Instead of issuing orders directly to the peasants of Buganda, the Governor acts through the Kabaka, who is advised by a senior white official known as the Resident."

The native chiefs are responsible for collecting the taxes from the peasants. The average annual income of a Buganda peasant is £4, out of which he pays 43/- in direct tax, including land rent to the chiefs. Padmore, writing in 1948, gave the earnings of skilled factory workers as from 75/- to 98/- per month, for sixty nine hours work a week. Miners earned princely sums of from 13/- to 70/- a month.

LAW AND ORDER

The British Protectorate Government has always been ready with military support to restore "law and order" when the African population has protested or revolted.

This has already happened twice in the last ten years—in 1945 and 1949. In 1945 there was a strike of workers in Kampala, the capital of Buganda. It developed into a popular demonstration against the Native Administration. The people demanded freedom of speech, assembly and the press. They were brutally suppressed. Many Africans, including the Prime Minister, were arrested. Some were banished without trial to other parts of Uganda. Others were exiled to the Seychelles—the British "Siberia"—in the Indian Ocean.

In 1949 the people demonstrated outside the palace of the Kabaka. They demanded the right to elect their own chiefs. Among their economic demands they asked for facilities to gin their own cotton and that the control of the sale and export of native products be abolished.

The Kabaka refused to accede

to the demonstration and a widespread strike followed. The Governor declared Buganda province a disturbed area. The Bataka Movement—or Council of Elders—which had sympathised with the demands, was proscribed. So also was the African Farmer's Union. Powers were given to special government officials and chiefs to disperse assemblies of five or more people and to use force, including fire-arms.

The leader of the Bataka—James Kabazzi—was sentenced to a fine of 20,000 shillings or 14 years imprisonment. Seven others

By
Bill Hunter

charged with rebellion were sentenced from 10 years imprisonment to 16 years hard labour.

Now popular discontent is such that even the system of Indirect Rule is breaking down.

The Kabaka, formerly a loyal instrument of British rule, stated he would publicly oppose the Government's refusal to set a time limit for Commonwealth status for Buganda. He refused to nominate members for the new Legislative Council for Uganda to be set up in the New Year. In this new Legislative Council 5,000 Europeans will have 7 representatives, 40,000 Asians have 7, and 5.25 million Africans have only 14.

For his opposition to the British Government the Kabaka was summarily deposed and deported. The Tory Government claims it has taken action on the basis of an agreement of 1900 whereby the ruler of Buganda was recognised so long as he co-operated loyally with the British. In other words, so long as he remained a British stooge.

'AGREEMENT' BY FORCE

No Socialist can recognise as binding on a colonial nation agreements imposed by an imperialist power through its overwhelming military and economic strength. The British rulers themselves have not carried out the terms of this 1900 agreement. The right to elect sixty members to the native Parliament has yet to be granted, although it was specified in this Anglo-Uganda agreement of 1900.

For British Labour the issue should be simple. We are pledged to end imperialism and imperialist interference in the affairs of other nations. For that reason the Tory Government's activities in Buganda should be opposed right to the end.

The Parliamentary Labour Party tabled a motion of censure on the Government. Mr. Griffiths has stated that the Opposition would be willing to withdraw the motion if by so doing the "cause of peace in Buganda could be increased".

The Tory position was made absolutely clear by Lyttelton and Hopkinson. With similar firmness the Parliamentary Labour Party must proceed with a motion of censure, on Buganda, and on the entire colonial policy of the Tory Government.

There will be no peace in Buganda while its people are oppressed. Imperialism there must be opposed root and branch. Under British rule the inhabitants of this province have come to refer to their country as the "land of the black martyrs". Labour can remove that shame only by sharply opposing and exposing the Government's actions and developing a campaign for the freedom of the people of Buganda from colonial oppression.

Peake told us: "It is estimated that the additional cost would be £220 millions a year now rising to reach £400 millions in 25 years' time. The additional weekly contribution required from insured persons on the present basis would be about 2s. 6d. for men and 2s. 8d. for women, but in the case of employed persons one-half of this additional contribution would be payable by the employer. The extra contributions would produce about £130 millions a year, leaving the Exchequer to find the balance of the extra cost."

But he told us, too, that by this we would save about £30 million a year in National Assistance. My question: "Do you think we might withdraw a few bombers from the Colonies and give the savings towards the Old Age Pensioners?"

I suppose that would be considered unstatesmanlike! Devil of a thing this STATESMANSHIP! Perhaps a little more common sense and less statesmanship would do us all a power of good.

Colour Bar in Holborn, W.C.1

We read in the papers (with many regrets no doubt) about happenings in Kenya and Buganda—but we have examples of this horrible racial and colour discrimination right on our own door-step.

A little coloured boy, six years old, living in Holborn and attending a church school in that London borough has continually been made the butt of other little (white) boys and has even been physically assaulted.

No doubt the reverend gentlemen and the teachers of this particular school are very busy people, perhaps even too busy to notice the antics of the children.

The boy himself is the adopted

child of two white parents. Perhaps there are people who think that for this courageous couple to adopt a coloured boy is highly "irregular"? I hope not—but in any case, unless the Church stamps out all forms of the colour bar, the church pews will continue to remain empty. Awake ye Christians of England! Cast aside your blinkers, get out to meet the foe and help stamp out this evil thing called the colour bar.

Don't imagine it can't happen here. Holborn is only one example. There are other London Boroughs—some Royal and some not so Royal—which can give similar experiences.

Holborn (Mrs.) F. E. Barwell

EVEN CAESAR TRIPPED!

HISTORY tells us that when Caesar landed on the shores of Africa he tripped and fell. This was supposed to be a bad omen and as we well know the Romans found Africa more of a handful than they had expected.

To-day, in the House of Commons, we never know what next is coming out of the old "Dark Continent", we have now withdrawn our recognition of the Kabaka of Buganda and condemned him to exile from his own country. Then Fenner Brockway told the Secretary of State for War that the moral consciences of a large section of our people have been outraged by the evidence which has been given in the court-martial in Kenya.

The world now knows that there has been competition as to which units have the greatest kill. British prestige in Colonial Africa must have now reached an all-time low as a result of the revelation that money was paid out for kills at the rate of "five bob a nob."

When Richard B. Sheridan was a Member in the 18th century he was roused by the operations and treachery of Warren Hastings in his dealings with the people of



by Harold
Davies, M.P.



India. Sheridan spoke for five hours in the Chamber. The speech according to Burke was "the most astonishing effort of eloquence, argument, wit, united, of which there was any record or tradition." Pitt was so affected that he moved the adjournment of the Debate. That was over 150 years ago. Sheridan was voicing the people's feelings then.

To-day, Africans can be shot at the scale of five-bob a nob. Whippings and killings take place and the House, with a nod, seem to pass it all by. Labour must go on with that vote of censure.

We cannot longer tolerate the totalitarian approach to our colonial problems. Is it any wonder that the Sudanese in their elections showed favour towards Egypt. The Bomber and the Bren gun are first class election agents for the Egyptians.

LET'S ALL GO TO MARY'S HOUSE!

Some of you will remember that rollicking old song about going over to Mary's House and having a real good time. Well, let me assure you I know a Mary that lives in one of those houses that would tumble around your ears like the walls of Jericho if you started up the old piano and radio at the same time.

Mr. Marples, this week, told us all he wanted us to know about Housing Repairs and Rents Bill.

He was so businesslike that I thought that he had come to measure us all up for a new greenhouse. Behind it all the rents would go up.

Now we all know that repair work costs three times as much as it did in 1939 and the Labour Party recognises that there is a problem. We ask that these low priced properties be taken over

and treated as part of a Social Service.

We know that of the 7½ million houses owned by private landlords over 2½ million are 100 years old or more; another 1½ million are more than 75 years old, and a further three-quarters of a million are over 65 years old. Thus there are nearly 5 million very old houses on our hands. As Herbert Morrison pointed out in the debate the burden of this near slum clearance is, under this Bill, being thrown on the local authority on a 50-50 basis, yet all postwar legislation up to now has been on a three to one basis. That is 75 per cent has been found by the State and 25 per cent by the local authority.

He summed it up neatly thus: "If there is any money to be lost socialise it". That is how this Bill will work.

PERSECUTED BY PETTY ECONOMIES

All of us these days seem to be persecuted by petty economies. Soon the kids will be wanting all those things for Christmas and we shall see the Old Age Pensioners getting their parties too. Now who can be feeling the pinch more than the Old Age Pensioner?

We were told last week how much it would cost to give a basic weekly pension of £2 10s. 0d. a week or £5 in the case of a couple.

The Minister of Pensions, Osbert

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Engineers' Battle— All Out For The 15%

DESPITE a press campaign against them, despite the attempts of certain trade union leaders to undermine the stoppage; the response of engineering workers to the call for a one-day strike was rightly described as "magnificent" by Gavin Martin the Secretary of the Confederation of Shipbuilding and Engineering Unions.

In area after area the vast majority of unskilled men as well as skilled joined in the strike. The membership in engineering of the Transport and General Workers Union and the General and Municipal Workers Union is mainly

**From Our
Industrial Correspondent**



Only four out of the eleven hundred workers in this factory did not participate in the one-day stoppage. Members of all unions in the factory were united in action as is shown by the banner held by pickets outside the factory.

among the unskilled workers. But the attempt of the leaders of these unions to break their members away from the strike achieved little.

The Executives of both unions publicly "regretted" the decision of the Confederation to call for a one-day stoppage. An article in the "Daily Herald", by Harold Hutchinson, on the morning of the action made it clear they hoped it would be "patchy", and indeed were doing their best to ensure that. Their hopes were not realised.

While, no doubt, the employers were given a shock by the extent of the stoppage, the one-day strike by itself was not sufficient to shake an increase out of them. Discussion among the engineers, both leaders and rank and file, is now on the question of what further action to take.

The leaders of the General and Municipal Workers Union have now announced their intention to press for a ballot of the members of the Confederation on the issue of a national official strike or arbitration. Their argument, according to "Reynolds News" is "that one-day stoppages, or bans on overtime and piece-work, would create confusion among workers and make no effective contribution to the wage claim."

Many engineering trade unionists will agree on the limited effect of one-day stoppages and the difficulties of bans on overtime and piece-work. But, nevertheless, they loyally strove their utmost to ensure that the one-day stoppage was a success. The leaders of the two General Workers Unions did otherwise. Trade union leaders who break the battle front in face of the enemy can expect their new suggestions to be viewed with suspicion by the rank and file.

The issue in a ballot could only be for or against a national strike. That is the opinion of a great many engineers, and they will consider that by introducing its proposition of strike or arbitration, the leadership of the Municipal Workers is only confusing the issue.

As the chairman of a shop stewards' committee pointed out in last week's "Socialist Outlook," the engineers have no alternative in arbitration. His conclusion that nothing could be expected from that course had already been borne out in an article by Oscar Hobson, City Editor, in the "News Chronicle" of November 28th.

On the basis of calculations made by a Professor Paish of the University of London, Hobson made the astounding statement that the real earnings of workers in the engineering, shipbuilding and electrical goods industries are up 4 per cent on 1949. According to Professor Paish, on this basis, it

was difficult to justify the 15 per cent claim.

The engineer and his wife who have to grapple with real experience and not statistical sunshine know very well that it is costing more to maintain home and family. But it will be the statistics of the professor and not the experience of the engineer on which the Arbitration Court will base itself. Hobson concludes: "If, as one hopes, they (the engineers) will allow their case to be submitted to Arbitration, the Arbitration Court is bound to take into consideration the statistics which Professor Paish now presents."

The National Committee of the Amalgamated Engineering Union has recommended that, to further the 15 per cent claim, there should be a ban on piece-work and overtime throughout the engineering industry. This recommendation will go before the Confederation.

WORKERS ORGANISE

Prior to the one-day strike call of the Confederation of Engineering and Shipbuilding Unions, the workers at Samuel Butler, Ltd., of Stanningley, near Leeds, were not well organised.

Approximately 100 workers are employed in the factory. Forty are skilled men and 35 of these were members of the Boilermakers Union. The other sixty workers who are unskilled were not union members.

In line with the Confederation decision, the skilled men decided to strike on Wednesday, December 2nd. A special meeting of the sixty labourers was held on the day before the strike. The labourers there decided to support the 15 per cent claim by coming out with the skilled men.

The stoppage was a complete success. As a result the five skilled men, formerly non-unionists have now applied to join the Boilermakers Union. On the Friday after the stoppage at another meeting, 95 per cent of the labourers joined the Transport and General Workers Union.

The men have elected shop stewards for the various departments. Overnight, as a result of the Wednesday strike, a union organisation has been created at Butler, Ltd.

As the A.E.U. is the largest union affiliated to the Confederation, and as its recommendation has the support of other unions, it is almost certain to be adopted.

Unless the employers grant an increase in the next few weeks it is then likely that the engineers will take further action in the form of a piece-work and overtime ban. **SOME UNIONS WOULD OPENLY REFUSE TO OPERATE SUCH A BAN** said Harold Hutchinson in the Daily Herald. The emphasis was his, and he was obviously speaking for the T.G.W.U. and the G.M.W.U. leaderships. Such conduct would be rightly condemned by every loyal trade unionist as strike breaking. It would help the employers and increase the sacrifices of engineering workers.

Other workers are watching the engineers. The railwaymen are angry at the smallness of their increase; building trade workers, the miners and other workers are demanding higher wages. The Government and the employers may believe that now is the time to give battle in an attempt to stem and turn back these demands for higher wages throughout industry. Then will come the real test of strength. In it, the engineers can rightly demand the support of the entire trade union and labour movement. For what is at stake is not only the 15 per cent increase, but whether the Tory Government and the employers can defeat a section of the workers to carry forward an offensive against wages and living standards all along the line.

Will The Rail Workers Be Next?

THE Railway Tribunal accepted the Management's arguments in awarding a 4/- increase to railwaymen. They accepted the argument of Mr. Allen who represented the Transport Commission and who urged that wages in 1953 should not be compared with those of any year before 1952, when the last award was made.

For Mr. Allen wage history only begins after the 7/- rise of 12 months ago, so he argues that rail-

As a well-reasoned argument for the extension of Public Ownership to certain vital industries and the drastic reduction or elimination of the present burden of compensation, we recommend this statement recently issued by the Edmonton Trades Council. They have performed a real service to the Movement with this statement.

THAT: This Trades Council, having carefully considered the T.U.C. reply to our communication concerning increased fares and compensation payments relating to the financial position of the British Transport Commission; has reached the following conclusions:—

The references in the T.U.C. letter to:

Large increases in costs during 1952; Loss of revenue due to amendments to the previous Fares Increase Scheme; The need to increase revenue to fulfil its statutory duty to 'pay its way'

represent an attempted justification of fares increases, which, in their recurrence have now become a major factor in lowering the living standards of our affiliated membership and their families. This attempted justification is deeply disturbing and Council is compelled to take up the further references in the T.U.C.'s reply.

Council notes that Compensation Stock and Interest payments are beyond the scope of the Transport Tribunal's powers, but we reject the statement that, because the Trade Union Movement accepted the principle of full compensation in the passing of the 1947 Act, it is now too late to amend it.

This Council asserts that it... is the duty delegated to us, and the General Council, to secure the welfare of our membership and their families, and thus the overwhelming majority of the people. With this in view, we note from the Transport Report that:

Total Profit was £55.7 millions in 1952, an increase of £6.6 millions over 1951;

Interest on Compensation Stock and Redemption Installments totalled £38.8 millions. Interest on loans bring this figure to £40.9 millions.

We are told through the Report that these payments will increase, that a further £96 millions compensation stock is to be issued for Road Haulage, thus further increasing interest payments. Whilst interest on sums set aside for Redemption will rise as the Capital sum increases year by year. Was this the picture placed before our Movement by the advocates of full compensation? We do not think so.

We are aware that the interest on additional compensation stock will be limited by the sale, to Private enterprise, of Road Haulage stock. This act of the Tory Government exacerbates the situation, increasing our alarm. **As the T.U.C. letter points out, the almost intolerable burden of interest on Compensation Stock is nevertheless, at 3 per cent, lower than the average return on Industrial Stocks and Shares.**

Thus we see either increased freightage charges on Road Hau-

lage reflected in commodity prices, or the diminuation of wages and deterioration of conditions of our members in this industry. Indeed, past experience warns us that both can happen.

We note the preliminary steps of the General Council to further discussion in certain unions around the question of a subsidy to the British Transport Commission, in the form of State responsibility for the Commission's capital charges. This provides for the continued payment of the Interest figure by the Commission, less certain costs increases outside its control and taking into account, charges, traffic, and the DEPRECIATIONS OF PRIVATE HAULIERS. Thus, whilst seeking to ease the interest burden on the Commission, compensation is maintained as a principle, and

THANKS!

I ask the hospitality of your columns to express the thanks and appreciation of the Holborn and St. Pancras South Constituency Labour Party to those many members and supporters of the Labour Party who came from all over London, and in some cases much further, to give such great help to the successful fight in our recent by-election.

George Sutherland, Secretary, Holborn and St. Pancras South C.L.P.

the burden of interest and, in the final analysis, of capital charges also, is still to be borne, through State taxation, by the people. We see in this a first concern for the Commission and only secondly for the people.

We recognise, of course, that although the burden still remains and is merely borne in a different way, its spreading over the taxation field would ease it in some degree. This recognition, however, is by far overshadowed by the facts of the Transport Report and we are compelled to ask: is this enough?

We have taken particular interest in the question of Costs and INCREASED costs and note that the British Railways and London Transport under-spent by £7 millions the allocated investment figure, due to steel shortages, and that this is maintaining a condition of the inefficiency of the old private ownership which is deplorable.

New carriages are 2,177 in arrears. Repairs to obsolete stock represents additional and highly uneconomical expenditure, NOT NECESSARY IN NORMAL CIRCUMSTANCES. Half of the 341,000 of the old private owners' wagons are of the old grease-box type which CANNOT BE RUN AT ANY SPEED. (Time is money).

We are fully aware that the

steel shortage results from the Armament programme and must state in passing that its effect is the complete proof that the armaments figure is beyond the economic capacity of our nation.

Already injured by fallen living standards through increased fares, we are insulted by the knowledge that our proud achievements in Public Services are being undermined by the lingering dereliction of private ownership, not bequeathed, but purchased, at a price only possible of payment through the mortgaging, not only of the working lives of our people but of our children also. Far from being too late to amend our compensation policy, it is now a burning necessity.

We note, and we applaud, the T.U.C. recognition that only the economies due to Nationalisation have enabled these services to "pay their way". The Transport Report contains abundant evidence of such economies by Planning within the structure of British Railways. This has impelled us to approach the question of costs from the standpoint of external economies over the whole transport field. In doing so we have found in the Confederation of Shipbuilding and Engineering Unions' "Plan for Engineering" important data and conclusions specifically related to our Transport needs.

We find that the main supplies of heavy vehicles for London Transport are obtained from the Associated Commercial Vehicles Group. Indeed the whole business of this group is closely linked with our Public Transport Services and the conclusion that **Public Ownership of this group, by eliminating private profit from costs of supply and facilitating a planned development of our Transport system, would contribute greatly to economy in the Service, is entirely justified.**

Even more so is the Engineering Plan's conclusion for nationalisation of Wagon manufacture and repair, and the advantage of extending this to include Locomotives. Co-ordination of both of these with the British Railway's workshops would facilitate major economies and a planned elimination of obsolete rolling stock.

Such a policy is entirely consistent with the T.U.C.'s recognition of economies **only possible under Nationalisation.** It raises sharply, however, the question of compensation, and this Council rejects the implication that the British electorate, given the true facts, would place the interests of a group, privileged to the extent of an increasing £40 millions per year, before the basic needs of our people.

Far from regarding the reduction, deferment, or complete elimination of compensation, as a breach of contract and thus damaging to the electoral prospects of our Movement, we believe our people would respond with great enthusiasm to a programme so obviously in the interests of those who work in order that our people may live.

waymen are only entitled to receive an increase based on the rise in the living cost since that date.

Mr. Campbell of the N.U.R. showed, however, at the Tribunal that railway wages have lagged far behind since 1947 and that to date they have dropped by as much as 14 per cent compared with the increase in prices. But the Tribunal was not tuned in to Mr. Campbell, only to Mr. Allen, hence the 4/- award.

The 4/- is equal to about 3 per

By **Bob Shaw (N.U.R.)**

cent increase on the average which is about the amount that prices have crept up during the year. Railwaymen are therefore to be left lagging 11 per cent behind in the standard of living stakes, and that is going to mean real hardship for them and their families when Mr. Butler gets to work on a new budget, and when the landlords and Tory sharks have had their whack.

Another curious fact emerges from this award. It is that the total cost to the Transport Com-

mission for one year of this award is a round £5 millions.

This is just one million less than the surplus piled up by British Railways for the 1952 takings, after paying out the shareholders their £32 million.

So these people can now breathe freely once more, "Justice" has been done.

But not too fast, rank and file railwaymen will have the last word. The bottom rate porter and labourer and the top rate Driver and signaller, are they to be satisfied with the 4/-? To them this award will not seem like justice, not whilst £32 millions can be paid out to spivs.

After each wage award in the past railwaymen have patiently accepted arbitration decisions even although each award gave him less and less. But patience has gone too far, and now railwaymen are being robbed. A wage cut is masquerading as a rise and our living standards are being forced steadily down.

The Branch rooms will decide what is to be done and how the fight for the 15 per cent will be fought, for fight we must. There are methods of struggle which are

traditional to railwaymen but certain lessons can be drawn from the experience of others.

For the rank and file railwaymen the fight has to be short and sharp. This means using the whole strength of ½ million workers and hitting the office bureaucrats hard.

The fight for the 15 per cent must be pressed to success if the railwaymen are to defend their wage packets against attack. For the full 15 per cent and a defeat for the management who haggle over pennies for railwaymen but squander millions on shareholders.

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Tories Refuse Hall to Miners

Miners, like the engineers, are pressing a wages demand. According to a Scottish paper a miners' union official declared last week: "There is a strong feeling that the National Executive of the N.U.M. is not facing up to the Coal Board on this issue and if things do not improve the men are ready to follow the engineers example."

Last Sunday a mass demonstra-

tion was held against the Coal Board's rejection of the miners claims. A theatre and two miners' institutes were booked to cope with the attendance.

The Tory Town Council of Edinburgh refused an application from the Scottish area of the National Union of Mineworkers for the use of a hall. The council adopted a motion by Baillie J. B. Mackenzie, who stated that if the

application from the miners was not for a political meeting it seemed very like it. The council refuses to allow political meetings to be held in any of the city halls on Sunday.

Thus politically and industrially the employers are lining up against the workers claims. The lesson for Labour is that it also must fuse political and industrial action to further the wages movement.

Should the N.E.C. organise a Petition to Force the Tories Out?

The Chartist Lesson

Since I started reading the "Outlook" over a year ago, I have come to expect a fighting lead from it and have not usually been disappointed. Therefore, I was surprised at your Editorial of 27th November. Something must be done, and done quickly, to get the Tories out, but I cannot imagine Churchill resigning because of a petition, with however many signatures. I would particularly cross pens with you over the question of the Chartist Movement, and the struggle for the vote, since that appears to be your main justification for having such a petition.

The Charter was a fighting policy (not just "Please can we have an election") with six main points for electoral reform, all but one of which, for annual Parliaments, are now taken for granted, as you say. It aroused great enthusiasm among the work-

Our Readers Write . . .

The Tories Won't Be Impressed

A question that immediately arises in my mind is to whom do you intend addressing the petition? Maybe to Sir Winston and his fellow Tories all of whom I am sure will be very impressed indeed, and providing you get sufficient signatures will be certain to resign immediately. Just as they are impressed with the majority of Labour votes recorded against them at the General Election of 1951.

The real fight for the removal of Churchill takes place on the wages, rents and other concrete issues that affect working people. The replacement of the present Government by a Labour Government is a very tough and hard job. There are no short cuts and substitutes for a struggle.

For the "S. O." to create the impression that we can petition them out of power is a very serious matter. Surely we are not going to abdicate our hard won position as the authentic organ of Labour's Left Wing and become purveyors of stunts.

Leeds **Bob Pennington**

Vote Them Out

If our paper is to do its job of putting forward a balanced and properly-reasoned Socialist policy, then such tactics as those advocated in your leader of Friday, November 27 should be left to the well-meaning but politically unconscious minds who see in "monster petitions" an alternative to a correct political theory.

Do you really think, Sir, that if you collected twenty million signatures on such a petition that it would have the slightest effect on the government Front Bench?

Rightly, you proclaim in your editorial, "Something to fire the imagination is needed, something in which everyone can participate." Of course it is, but that something must be a dynamic Socialist policy put forward by the Labour Party and constantly pressed and hammered home week by week by you and all Labour publicists.

Let the whole country know that the Labour Party intends, without equivocation of any kind, to put into force a strong Socialist policy, not watered down by any fear of losing the votes of the middle class, and you need not wait for natural processes to take Mr. Churchill away from his

labours. The votes of the newly-enthusiased workers would soon do this.

Take your mind back through the last two years and think of the six or seven by-elections held by the Conservatives in which their majorities could have been swept away if there had been any enthusiasm for the Labour Party. By the usual arithmetical progression of by-elections as the life of the Government goes on, there should be, within the next twelve months, enough by-elections to wipe out their majority in the House of Commons if only they are fought on a dynamic Socialist policy.

Do you remember the by-election lost by the National Government between 1936 and 1939? Had they had a majority merely of thirty (with Liberal support) they would have been defeated within their first two years and been compelled to resign. But not a petition please. There were demonstrations all over the country—clashes with police and with troops—yet they did not resign. The Tories must be voted out—not pleaded out.

Now do come back to reality quickly and help to formulate a policy which will win every marginal seat from now on and force them out in the next twelve months. But if you persist in printing such footling editorials I will feel bound to cancel my subscription and ask the local parson to enrol me for his Parish Magazine.

Leeds **Charles Yelland**

Only One Way

Regular readers and supporter of the "Socialist Outlook" in Manchester, Salford, Ashton and Eccles, have expressed their strong disagreement with the policy contained in your editorial.

For the "S. O." to seriously suggest that a petition given enough support in the country will be an effective weapon to remove the Tory Government (an argument which, if brought to its logical conclusion, in effect means that if we can get enough support for socialism then we will get it without any struggle) shows a disregard for the forces, which are at present evident in the working class, which if given the correct leadership could successfully remove the Tory Government and replace it with a Labour Government pledged to a Socialist policy.

The "Socialist Outlook" has a fine record for supporting the working class in all its struggles for better conditions, don't let it mar that record by telling the workers that if they get enough signatures on petitions the Tories will just walk out and everything in the garden will be lovely.

No, there is only one way that we can rid ourselves of this rotten Tory Government and that is by united working class action on wages, rents, etc. If you want to have a petition side by side with these struggles, O.K. In that way a petition can be useful. But in that way only.

Eccles. **Pat Smith.**

An Illusion

Far from "frustration" and "helplessness" permeating the wards and trade union branches, a militant mood is arising which could be dispersed if our energies were concentrated in an illusory campaign for signatures. What

Movement, and many of the Trade Unions, to rally all those who normally only participate in politics at election times against the continuation of the Tory Government.

The result, at the least, would be to force the top leaders of the Parliamentary Party to really oppose the Government in place of maintaining a tacit coalition when so many issues demand a real lead. The struggle against rent increases, to reduce the cost of living, for restoration of social insurance

Test it Out

The Tories must go. This demand will appeal to millions of people and focus attention on the fact that this Government of scoundrels can be turned out if the organised movement says "Go."

Opposition to the Tories is rising week by week and struggles are developing. I think the petition your paper suggests can play an important part in these struggles. It is worth while finding out what the Labour Parties and Trade Unions think of the kind of petition you advocate. I intend to raise this idea in my Trade Union branch to get them to bring the matter before the Ipswich Trades and Labour Council, and I will send a report to your excellent paper.

Some Labour M.P.s say that the Tories have a majority and therefore nothing can be done. This creates the impression that the defeat of the Tories depends on getting a defeat through the House of Commons, whereas a government can remain in power only if the people allow it to do so. If the decisive sector of the people, the producers, refuse to allow a government to rule, then its downfall is certain.

The National Executive Committee of the Labour Party should organise this petition, which will be a means of revitalising the whole Labour movement and emphasising that Labour is in favour of reducing the cost of living, improving the lot of the old age pensioners and sick, and protecting the Welfare State—which the Tories are destroying.

Ipswich **G. Brown**

A Focal Point

I think that the idea of a petition as the focal point of a great campaign of meetings, demonstrations, mass rallies, etc., to oust the Tories is great. Such a campaign sponsored by the National Council of Labour will bring into action most of the members of the Party, the Co-op

we need to get the Tories out is not a petition but a fighting lead from the Labour Party.

At this time, when the engineers and others are building up an offensive on the wages front Labour can best bring down the Tories by giving these struggles full support.

We would do well to remember the resolution presented at the Morecambe Conference by Salford West C.L.P. The last paragraph reads:—

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

The Tory Government has shown its determination to hang on to power by the way it has now come forward with its Rent Bill. I am surprised that an editorial in "Socialist Outlook", a paper with such a fighting record, should put forward the idea that the Tories can be removed by a paper war.

Clr. J. Dipple. **Tottenham**

must help them by bringing down the present government.

For these reasons, and many more, I welcome the idea of a petition, organised by the National Council of Labour, against the decision of the Tories to continue as the Government of this country in defiance of the wishes of the majority of the electorate. We must help to mobilise the Labour Movement for this urgent task.

Some opposition may come from those who think that petitions are not an effective form of working class struggle. If that were so, then there would be little use in passing resolutions at L.P. and T.U. meetings, but no one would oppose the passing of proper resolutions at such meetings.

Misunderstanding, regarding petitions, can arise if we confuse the form of struggle, with its political content. It is wrong to petition, or indeed pass resolutions, for objectives which if achieved would still not contribute to the solution of a given problem, e.g., Five Power Peace Pacts.

This misleads the workers into believing that such a pact would mean that peace was assured.

To make the point clear, it is wrong to have a petition calling upon the warmongers to agree with us not to make war. No one could have any faith in such an agreement.

However, there can be no doubt, that a petition organised by the National Council of Labour, if successful, could in fact lead to the end of the present Tory Government.

This would not cut across any other forms of struggle against the capitalist class, but would supplement them and even lead to an extension of such struggle, on to a higher level.

Petitions as such are capable of mobilising workers if the political content of the campaign is in keeping with the objectives of the Labour Movement, and do not create illusions about these objectives.

What can be wrong with a real mass petition to end the Tory Government? We do not have to wait for the next General Election to begin the fight for a Labour Government.

St. Pancras **Hilda Lane.**
Ward Secretary.

Leeds **G. Gifford**

Manchester. **Frank Allam**

Small Advertisement

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Likewise, if the colonial peoples are to free themselves, then we

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Socialist Outlook

FIFTH ANNIVERSARY MEETING

Chorlton Town Hall, All Saints, Manchester
SUNDAY, 13th DECEMBER, 1953 at 2.30

NO...
say these readers

YES...
say these readers

ers, despite any clear lead from the Convention; mass meetings, forbidden by the government, were held and many clashes with troops occurred. Three petitions, with one to three million signatures, were presented to Parliament, and were all rejected.

However, although the Chartists did not achieve their goal immediately, the movement undoubtedly helped to educate the working class, and when agitation for universal suffrage started again in the 1860's, due to the sharpening of the class struggle with the American civil war, the movement soon gained ground—without a petition.

The agitation reached a peak in the autumn of 1866, with huge demonstrations in all parts of the country, one in Hyde Park becoming a riot, when half a mile of railings were torn up. Thus Disraeli's 1867 Reform Bill was a concession to avert revolution following reform agitation, trade union revival and the formation of the First International.

What is required at the present time is not a petition, which would enable the N.E.C. and the T.U.C. General Council to continue to conceal its coalition with the Tory Government and the employers, instead the leadership must be made to issue a genuine working class policy, on the basis of which a call for action against the Tories, e.g., on the Rent Bill, wages, colonial freedom, etc., would rally the Labour Movement in its millions, and the Tory Government would be doomed.

Cheam, Surrey. **R. C. Coggar.**

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