

# Freedom

THE ANARCHIST WEEKLY

"A man whose limbs have been bound from birth, but had nevertheless found out how to hobble about, might attribute to the very hands that bound him his ability to move."

—ERRICO MALATESTA  
"Anarchy".

## LABOUR'S HISTORIC ROLE

THE 'Labour' referred to in the above title is not 'labour' in the sense of the working class, nor as used by Marx in his interminable analyses of labour, price and profit, around which Marxists have argued for decades on the question of whether a worker sells his labour or his labour power. It means quite simply the Labour Party.

A glancing reference in the *Observer's* Political Diary has prodded me into considering for a moment whether the Labour Party—now apparently so strong and permanent an institution in our national life—actually has much of a future to look forward to, in spite of the title of its famed, glossy, policy pamphlet.

The *Observer's* political correspondent wrote last Sunday:

Two or three months ago it was difficult to find one Labour M.P. in a marginal seat who was prepared to bet on his chances of being returned. The party would infallibly lose the next election; perhaps it had even fulfilled its mission and would presently go the way of the Liberals. This defeatism was common talk, especially in the Radical wing of the movement.

And it seems that there certainly can be something in this idea that whatever historic mission the Labour Party had, it has now fulfilled it and has come to a deadend.

### Stagnation

Nobody can deny that the Party has all the earmarks of a moribund organisation, and the apathy of those who should be its most ardent supporters amounts to stagnation. The pathetic fumbblings for a policy over the last decade is surely an indication that it has shot its bolt—a particularly limited and feeble bolt as it turned out.

Whatever the original aim of the Labour Party, when founded in 1906, may have been, I—and I fancy practically everybody else—have forgotten. It could presumably be looked up in the files. But from the day in 1914 when the party decided to support the Great War, it was clear that no new concept of society

### GREAT WHITE QUEEN MOTHER WITCH DOCTOR

NAIROBI, Monday.

For hundreds of scantily-clad Masai tribesmen, glistening with liquid red ochre, today's tribal gathering in the Masai capital of Narok produced what looked like a near-miracle.

The Queen Mother, who is touring Kenya, told warriors and monkey-skin-clad elders that she knew of their love of cattle.

Looking out on to the parched grazing lands, she said: "I earnestly hope that in the coming season you will be blessed with good rains."

The warriors gravely raised their painted shields and burnished spears.

Ten minutes later came thunder and torrential rain which swept the little administrative station and made the Masai delirious with happiness.

The warriors left for shelter—to protect their lion-mane head-dresses, their waving ostrich plumes and their paint.

Old men smiled mysteriously and said that the deluge was the best possible omen for the future prosperity of Masailand.

*News Chronicle* 10/2/59.

In view of the trouble the farmers have with the weather in this country, can't the National Farmers' Union persuade the Queen Mother to do her stuff for them next summer?

animated its membership. The feeble back-sliding during the General Strike of 1926, the failure of Ramsay Macdonald's government and the triumph of Bevin over Lansbury in 1937, finally destroyed any possibility of the party presenting an alternative to the Tories.

Since then Labour has played a part which can only be described as the consolidation of capitalism by the elimination of its worse excesses and most glaring anomalies. A role which has earned the opposition of the more reactionary and paleolithic of the Conservatives but which, ironically, has now been usurped by the advanced and 'progressive' Tories.

### Demonstration

The Conservatives, after all, have always been progressive in that which they have conceived to be in their interests. Where they have been most backward is in recognising where their true interests lie.

They should now be thanking the Labour Party for making it clear to them.

For the Labour Party has demonstrated to the Tories exactly how a capitalist society should be run—or not run. And those Conservatives

who are sufficiently alert to rate survival pretty high among their priorities have not been slow to learn the lessons, with the result that the Labour Party is now seeing its welfare statism being taken over by the Tories and run with very little difference from the way a Labour regime would run it.

This, then, may well have been the historic mission of the Labour Party. Not to act as a harbinger of socialism, as so many of its more thoughtless but enthusiastic supporters have supposed, but simply to be the midwife of the Welfare State—a capitalist state with bureaucratic checks upon the excessive greed of the economically powerful.

Much remains to be done, of course, in this direction. The extravagant waste of surplus wealth is still flaunted by our smart set—but even the Queen, in terminating the high spots of the debutante racket, is playing her part in the process which can only be described as "mediocratising" our society.

### Extinction

Well now that its fifty years of existence has had this effect, where does Labour go now? The answer

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## Reflections on Mass Education

ACCORDING to a United Nations report only a little more than half of the world's children go to school. One is not surprised by these revealing statistics if one pauses only for a moment to consider how and why education (or rather schooling) for the poor ever developed in countries such as Britain—where today it can be boasted that probably all children go to school.

It was only with the rise of industrialism that the need for some form of elementary education was considered necessary for the mass of the people. Prior to that, education was looked upon as a privilege reserved for a select few. It was not until 1839 however, that Parliament voted grants for the purpose of elementary education in England and Wales, and 1883 before the first real steps towards state intervention in education. It is significant that the post-1918 period gave a great impetus to university training, and was almost all centred in scientific and practical studies, and great extensions took place in Liverpool, Bristol, Leeds and Manchester, while such cities as Southampton, Reading, Nottingham and Exeter made definite moves toward securing their

own charters. As one authority puts it: "In any educational review of that post-war period it is important to recognise the great influence of the commercial world upon higher education". Again, the outbreak of the Second World War appears to have been a spur to further reform and in this post-war age of nuclear fission and cold-war the call for more scientists, more technicians comes from government spokesmen and Industry alike. Higher education on a mass scale is now considered as such a necessity to the health of the State and Commerce, as was mass ignorance less than 150 years ago (and still is in many parts of the world today).

State-sponsored mass education today cannot be considered as an example of "enlightened" government. In a world of mass communications whether they be government orders or advertisers' announcements, Income Tax forms or Football pools to complete, a minimum of literacy is essential for the smooth functioning of society. And mass-production, competition in world markets and the struggle for power between nations—based on the development of the best and most deadly weapons of destruction that science and industry can combine to produce,—make even greater demands on brain-power for their achievement. This brain-power can no longer be drawn exclusively from an economically and socially privileged class in society if only because the demand far exceeds the supply. Those in authority have no alternative, therefore, but to look for the brain-power among the masses. The present system of elementary education is designed to serve as a rough and ready clearing-house where at the tender age of eleven plus one has sorted out the sheep from the goats, the bright children from the dull ones, the potential egg-heads from the duffers. For the former a future of subsidies and universities, for the latter a trade and perhaps the General Certificate of Education, if they manage to rise above their educational surroundings!

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TO return to our United Nations report. Of that "little more than a half of the world's children" who go to school of what proportion can it honestly be said that schooling has served any useful purpose? True, it is better that children should

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## The Steel Nationalisation Snoop

### Are the Questions Really Necessary?

THE British nearly made it! While in France political scandals were being dragged up every few days, and hurled at each other by supporters and opponents of de Gaulle, nothing was happening to disturb the placid flow of the river of British democracy.

Suddenly, it seemed that trouble was afoot. The secretary of the Labour Party, Morgan Phillips denounced what was described in *Reynolds News* as "the mystery survey on nationalisation". The facts were that a firm of "management consultants" were sponsoring the survey, which was being carried out by the British Market Research Bureau. The strange aspect of this was that the Bureau were using 100% interviewing. The survey was confined to electoral marginal constituencies, and this meant that every single resident there was asked the set of five questions, and the answers recorded together with names, addresses and electoral numbers. Morgan Phillips' accusations, which were turned into parliamentary questions by Harold Wilson during the following week were that the survey was phoney and dishonest; that far from being an objective attempt to discover opinion it was an effort by the steel capitalists to frighten the Labour Party away from nationalisation, and at the same time to provide the Conservative Party machine with information which would be invaluable to it on election day.

### "Made it an Issue"

Quite apart from the wider issues, this particular survey does betray quite a few peculiarities, but these were far outdone by the reactions of its political opponents and the organisers. The Labour Party were determined to make it a weighty issue. The news leaked out to the Sunday papers first, and *Reynolds*



'Now, tell me would you like more nationalisation, or less?'

went to town with an inside article by Tom Driberg in which he paid tribute to those devoted workers for socialism who had written to party headquarters and helped reveal the devilish plot, and violent denunciations on the front page. It almost seemed as if they didn't want public opinion to be made known. It was equally apparent that the sponsor of the survey, Mr. Colin Hurry, was interested not in investigation, but in proof. He was reported to be rubbing his hands with glee because the referendum had shown that nationalisation was unpopular, and that generally, even among Labour voters only a minority wanted more of it. The week ended with his remark that the so-called referendum was going to be cut short on Feb. 14th, since it had fulfilled its purpose in making nationalisation an important issue.

On the question of the 100% sample, no one who wanted information for a purely objective reason would dream of taking one. Despite the natural doubts of people who are not in the know, sample surveys can give remarkably precise estimates of opinions on certain types of questions, and since errors of various kinds creep into even a complete investigation, a sample of a few thousand, properly planned would be just as effective as one of two million, unless the investigator really wanted to know the actual details of each small area.

### Biased Questions

Another charge made by Phillips was that the questions were so biased that a survey of answers to them would be of no value as information. A glance at the questions as printed in the *Observer* shows that they are alternatively 'angled' so that the answer 'Yes' will favour, then oppose, support for nationalisation. On this general issue an American psychologist during the war looked at the questions put by interviewers on labour affairs, and found a general tendency for them to be slanted against the working class viewpoint. This is probably a simple consequence of the fact that the types who go in for opinion research are anti-working class by background, which is significant rather than sinister.

The most severe charge however, was that the completed questionnaires, together with names, addresses and numbers, might be handed over to big business and the Tory agents. The Market Research Bureau denied emphatically that this could happen, and gave reassurances designed to maintain public confidence in its work.

Can it be possible that a firm of Management Consultants would

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## Where's the Surplus?

### PROGRESS OF A DEFICIT! WEEK 6

|                        |      |
|------------------------|------|
| Deficit on Freedom     | £120 |
| Contributions received | £119 |
| DEFICIT                | £1   |

January 30 to February 5

|   |                  |
|---|------------------|
| Glasgow: M.B. 6/6; London: A.F. 11/6; San Francisco: O.M. (additional) 12/6; London: Anon. 1/9; London: J.E.S. 2/6; London: J.S.* 3/6; Corsham: G.C. 2/7; Wolverhampton: J.G.L.* 2/6; Compton: D.Y. 2/6; Oxford: Anon. 5/6; University City: N.E.M. 12/6. | Total ... 3 2 10 |
| Previously acknowledged   | 116 14 1         |

1959 TOTAL TO DATE ... £119 16 11

GIFTS OF BOOKS: London: H.; London: A.U.; Coleman's Hatch: D.M.

\*Indicates regular contributor.





