

# CT ION

The sham Battle of Controls	- p.2
It's only our Living	- p.3
Something rotten in Cotton	- p.5
Report from America	- p.6
Tea Break	- p.7
International News	- p.8

Vol.5.No.1.(No.40)

Twopence

January 21, 1950

## D O N T V O T E !

On February 23 the working-class of this country will have the opportunity of putting an "x" against the name of the politician and the comic-opera political programme which they prefer, or dislike least.

The national press has already started a campaign to persuade us to use this opportunity, and to vote for this or that political programme. The politicians are again emerging from the most productive gas-producing plant in Europe to canvass our votes on the streets of such out-of-the-way places as Clydebank and the East End of London.

Quite a lot of fuss. Yet the only issue which hangs on our decision is which particular set of ambitious politicians will be assured of five years' steady employment at £1,000 a year.

In asserting this we call on facts to bear us witness. In "Let us face the future" the Labour leaders promised us 4,000,000 new houses in five years - if given is the right word - just over 800,000, according to the statement of Mr. Copperk (general secretary of the N.F.B.T.O.). They promised us a "rising standard of life" - they gave us, instead, the wage-freeze policy. They assured us that they would "do away with privilege" - then proceeded to raise their own wages, as M.P.'s, from £600 to £1,000 a year.

Would the Tories have done any better? Certainly not. They would have done the same, probably a little more blatantly. And if the Communists had been given a chance? Well, then there wouldn't have been an election at all this year - just a unanimous "vote of approval".

In this election, as before, the politicians will promise us anything and everything. They will kiss our babies and clap our backs. They will promise us the Kingdom of Heaven on a plate if we



only put a cross against their names. The only  
do is get off our backs, and "take with them the  
and butterflies".

To the working-class in 1950 we repeat what we  
in 1945 :-

DON'T VOTE FOR POLITICIANS, WHO WILL

Red Cross all the wounded,  
Wooden cross those who fall,  
Iron Cross the heroes,  
And double-cross us all.

DON'T VOTE - ORGANISE TO TAKE OVER INDUSTRY.

## CONTROLS-SHAM FIGHT

The Tory press has made Government control - of food, money and industry - the chief election issue. The Tory party is allowing it to be thought, but not saying so, that if they were elected to office, they would remove all controls.

This was their policy in the 1945 election, which they carefully and deliberately lost by allowing it to be thought that, if elected, they would abolish rationing and price control. Had they, against the wishes of the bosses, been elected, they would not have abolished any controls and would have been able to say "Well, we never actually said we would". As it happened they were never tested on this, for a Labour Government was one most likely to serve the post-war interest of British capitalism - so "Labour" it was.

### SHAM FIGHT

Nor, even five years later, is a Tory Government likely to abolish more than a fraction of the controls we groan under. Present-day capitalism needs government control as much as Nazi Germany did - it cannot exist without it.

The issue of control or no control is a false issue in a general election sham fight.

It may be, of course, that a Tory government would remove some controls out of the many thousands, but they would be those likely to quietly lower the wage-level and raise the profit level.

As a matter of fact, many - indeed most - capitalists have done exceedingly well under controls, and some are worried about their possible removal.

The large milk wholesalers and retailers now fear a possible Tory victory and a removal or reduction of the milk subsidy which might follow. The subsidy has allowed these firms to pour out



money like water in rebuilding premises and buying new machinery. Now they are seized by a fit of economy and are already sacking men. Strange that capitalists should fear a Tory victory.

Sir F. Handley Page recently made a public outburst on "controls" and referred to "this bloody government". But Handley Page is a man who has lived most of his life on government subsidies. His aircraft firm has existed on this form of economy for 35 years. Without wasteful government subsidies and contracts there would be no Handley Page Ltd.

"DOG EAT DOG" America is often held up as the grand example of "rugged individualism"; most Yanks call it "dog eat dog". But U.S.A., too, has government control. There a railroad company cannot buy a half-mile of track without Washington's permission.

The "New Deal" of Roosevelt was needed to save Yankee capitalism as are the present rearmament and Marshall plans, "social security", farm subsidies and the rest.

So America, with her F.V.A., soil erosion plans, afforestation, U.S. Army river flood schemes and such like, has a much greater degree of state economy than Britain has, but most of this is ignored because Americans are allowed to buy as much butter and beef at 5/- a pound as they can or wish.

The days of "free capitalism", the days of Liberalism and "that government is best which governs least" Toryism are dead and gone. Whoever wins the election, controls will continue in one form or another.

The only alternative to state control is workers' control.

The only free economy is the social ownership of the means of production.

---

## IT'S ONLY OUR LIVING

The press has always had a way of making figures tell a story which is entirely inconsistent with the facts. A recent example was its recent reports on the "National Conference of trade union executive committees."

The conference, held at Central Hall, Westminster on January 12, was called by the TUC General Council for endorsement of their support of the government's wage-freeze policy.

WHO DO THEY REPRESENT? 187 executive committees were represented by 1,600 delegates, who endorsed both the wage-freeze and General Council's policy on a card vote by a majority of 657,000. The actual figures were 4,263,000 for the freeze and 3,606,000 against.



January, 1950

The "Daily Mirror" greeted the results with the headline: -  
 "By a small majority - But the wage-peg is on". Other newspapers  
 published equally misleading conclusions.

What they refrained from telling their readers was that only  
 one union, the National Union of Mineworkers, had taken the trouble  
 of consulting its members on the issue. NUM members voted 518,000  
 to 147,000 against the freeze - nearly a 4-1 majority.

Neither did the press point out that if the 350,000-strong  
 Union of Shop, Distributive and Allied Workers had voted the opposite  
 way, the result would have been a 43,000 majority against the freeze.  
 Although this union did not consult its members, it was still a  
 fairly close decision, as they gave their 350,000 block vote for the  
 freeze on the basis of a 9 to 8 vote on the Executive Committee.  
 The executive have since been receiving telegrams of protest from  
 their members, who realise that their decision contradicts the  
 mandate, which the 1949 annual delegate conference gave the E.C., to  
 push for a £6 a week minimum wage for their members.

#### GOOD ADVICE

These, then are the facts. The press reports were  
 misleading, the General Council's management of  
 the conference was wrong, the 'no consultation' method which 186  
 union E.C.'s adopted was scandalous.

Let us, therefore, sum up by quoting Sir William Lawther,  
 President of the N.U.M., Chairman of the Conference, and the leading  
 wage-freeze fanatic: -

"Thus the ideal of direct action, open revolt against  
 capitalism, with its tools of Labour M.P.'s, parsons and  
 trade union leaders, arises from existing conditions.  
 The person who has nothing to lose except a "soft job" will  
 not fight for the overthrow of capitalism (except in  
 election times, when he moves further on the workers' backs).  
 To you, my fellow slaves of the lamp and pick, I appeal to  
 carry on the fight. Do not wait for any leader to show you  
 the way. The time is rotten ripe for change of tactics.  
 Make the change yourselves. You have the capacity for  
 thinking: think and act, then, for only thus will your  
 freedom from all tyranny be secured."

Lawther wrote this excellent advice in "The Herald of Revolt" -  
 in February, 1913. That was before he became a trade union boss.

#### PRESS FUND:

(up to January 20, 1950).

Manchester: J.S. 10/-; London: G.S. 5/-, E.S. 2/6,  
 J.G.P. 11/9; Huddersfield A.L. 5/-, 6/-; Sunland, Calif. A.S.  
 £1.3.7; Paris, O.B. 1/6; Llanelli: E.G.R. 4/3; New York: J.W.  
 £1.4.10; Fresno, Calif. A.B. 14/2; Glasgow R.L. 4/6; Chicago:  
 G.P.M. 8/10; Argyll H.D. 7/-, TOTAL: £6.8.11.



## SOMETHING ROTTEN IN COTTON

People who have tasted a standard of living higher than that to which they are normally accustomed are loth to revert to the lower standard. With the speed-up and the wage-cut comes solidarity and class-consciousness. It is at this juncture that textile workers find themselves today.

The Moelwyn Hughes report of last year was an uninspiring document which mainly said that redeployment - variations on the Bedaux them - was desirable. The speed-up part was in force in many mills without the proposed wage-reckoning system. It was on this account, you may remember, that the union gained the rise of 4/6d "pending redeployment". Thus, when the Weavers Amalgamation accepted redeployment on November 19, 1949, it actually meant they were accepting the principle of wage-cutting.

If one took notice of the pretty pictures of cotton queens working twelve automatic looms, and the "success" articles written by the pretentious poltroons of the "News Chronicle"; or took account of the recent award to a weaver for spending all his spare time in the mill in addition to his working hours (this is strangely reminiscent of conditions in another country) one would know as much about the textile industry as a lounge lizard knows about a set screw.

Since the end of the war, there has been a phoney peace in textiles, and the workers have enjoyed a fools paradise. But not all fools. The pre-war years are not forgotten, and the false security has not lulled them into complacency as timorous revolutionaries might think, for the sleeping lion of Lancashire could shake England. That is why the talk of Saturday morning work can, with confidence, be anticipated to remain talk.

Profit-sharing is not new to textiles. After 1926 an attempt was made to break the workers organisation by this method - called "self-help", a term borrowed from mills run on co-op lines sixty years ago, and sabotaged out of existence by the employing class. Profit-sharing may be a shrewd, tactical move on the part of private enterprise. The dulling effect of the reformism of the Labour Party among a traditionally socialist working-class can only be overcome by the dynamic of workers control, when conditions deteriorate.

Everyone believes that conditions WILL deteriorate - undercutting the U.S. and U.S.-controlled textile industry for world markets is not conducive to the textile workers' well-being.

Evidence of working-class awareness in textile press is the



good attendance at general membership meetings of the textile unions. But these unions have all the faults of trade unions, and a few more. A weaver working, for instance, in Nelson and living in Burnley, belongs to the Burnley branch and could not be a union representative on this account. Even if she lived in Nelson and all her fellow-workers in her shed wished her to represent them, she could not do so, for representatives are appointed by the committee, and not elected by the membership as delegates.

This divorcing of the union from the job makes the organisation little better than a talking shop, and a platform for skirmishes between the Labour and Communist Parties. These people see the General Election as a fight between capital and labour - an anomalous position when we have nationalisation of industry. Labour's struggle is not in paltry politics, but in the workshop, on the street corner, and in the "dark satanic mills".

- J.O. PILLING

#### Report from America

## MIGRANTS' FLIGHT

Unemployment, misery and starvation is the grim winter prospect faced by more than 100,000 migrant workers who were, in November, picking cotton in California's great San Joaquin valley. Six babies of families, whose living conditions are the same as those described in "The Grapes of Wrath", have already died of malnutrition in San Benito county.

Some newspaper reports have pictured the cotton pickers as receiving "big money", but the best information available to us indicates that they are paid 65 to 75 cents an hour.

Causes of the deaths of babies in farmworkers' families were investigated by the Kings County (Calif.) Board of Supervisors recently. The supervisors heard an appalling story of "intolerable conditions of misery" in the squalid tents and shacks dotting the highways, according to the "Sacramento Bee".

Dr. Donald Upp, County Health officer, said that "the problem of malnutrition is spread over the entire valley". Kings County has a health ordinance requiring all labour camps to have health permits, but it has not been put into effect.

Unemployment on a huge scale hit the cotton-picking families in mid-December, as the picking finished then instead of continuing into March as in previous years. The shortened season was due to the widespread planting of a new cotton strain, known as Acala 4-42, which matures early and uniformly, so that nearly all of it can be harvested in a single picking. Perfect growing weather and perfect



picking weather contributed to the shortening of the season.

San Benito authorities have threatened prosecution of parents if they are found guilty of negligence in the deaths of their children. No-one has threatened State or County officials with prosecution for gross contributory negligence in the performance of their duties, nor has there been any talk of calling to account the cotton growers who are responsible for shortening the season without attempting to make any provision for the 100,000 workers directly affected by the technological change.

(condensed from the "Catholic Worker",  
New York).

## TEA BREAK

### WHAT AN INCENTIVE!

Painters, until recently working for Howlands Ltd, in the Royal Albert Dock, London, tell us that, working on bonus, they received 6d for 3 weeks' incentive pay,

x x x x x x x x

### MUGS CORNER

A packet of 20 cigarettes with their pay packet once a month, means that the 350 workers of Victor Products, Wallsend, makers of mining machinery, have again hit their production target..... it was introduced in 1938, and only twice in the 11 years have the workers failed to earn their monthly packet of cigarettes.

x x x x x x x x

### TURKISH DELIGHT

"A corpse was fished out of the Bosphorus, which flows between Europe and Asia. The corpse showed unmistakable signs of severe mishandling.. At the coroner's inquest (in Turkey) it was disclosed that the deceased had been in the hands of the police just prior to his exit from this world. A sympathetic jury returned the verdict: 'Death from over-interrogation'".

x x x x x x x x

### WHAT A JOB!

"Terrazzo shopmen, staircase hands and fixers required - only first-class men need apply. Guaranteed 60-hour week - rates according to experience."

Ad. in the "Star", 9.1.50.

x x x x x x x x

### CLOCK-WORK VOTING

The division bell system in the House of Commons, which was designed by GPO engineers in 1910, has now over 100 points. The bells are fixed all over the House, including the bar and restaurant. Some years ago it was extended to members flats and offices in the vicinity.



## BREAK IN SPANISH C.P.

IWMA, Stockholm) Complete disintegration of the Spanish Communist Party was theme of recent article in RUTA (organ of the Spanish Libertarian Youth, published in France). U.C.T. leader Del Barrio, up till now one of the C.P.'s most reliable fellow-travellers, has publicly stated his sympathy with the old Yugoslav members of the International Brigades, and the head of the P.S.U.C. (Catalan off-spring of the Spanish C.P.) has been expelled from the party. His expulsion dates from September and was kept secret for two months. Comorera will be remembered for his brutal campaigns against the Syndicalist and Anarchist movement of Spain: the communists themselves have now named him as a man who always represented a foreign ideology. He is accused of pillaging the peasants and splitting the People's Army during the Civil War; also of always have been an adventurer whose sole aim was to become President of the Generality of Catalonia. A good picture - painted by the Spanish Communists themselves. We couldn't have done better ourselves. Comorera has replied with a big document in which he makes no declaration of sympathy with Titoism, but represents himself as an orthodox Bolshevik. Further expulsions are awaited.

x x x x x x x x x x x

IWMA, Lyons) Italian revolutionary syndicalists met in Congress at Piombino, Italy on January 6 and 7. Object was that of re-forming the Italian Syndicalist Union (Unione Sindacale Italiana), broken up by Mussolini. Delegates named a national co-ordination committee, whose secretariat will be at Bologna. Aim of committee is the preparation of the Constitutive Congress of the U.S.I. in November next. "Guerra di Classe" ("Class War") will be published as the organ of the U.S.I. (A.F.B. have received the first issue of this paper.) The Congress of Piombino was a great success: it brought together good comrades. prepared for organisational work. We are very glad with the decision of the Italian syndicalist comrades to make a break with the Stalinist-dominated General Confederation of Labour and to set up a real fighting organisation on a class basis. Our greetings to them,

x x x x x x x x x x x

CAAB, Paris) The lot of our comrades in the Bulgarian concentration camps is steadily deteriorating. It is feared that most of them will die during the winter. Many comrades are now in a camp on an island in the River Danube, facing the village of Beleno. Among the detainees there is only one fascist. Only two days a year are allocated for ten-minute visits by relations.