Enid Lakeman

WHEN LABOUR FAILS

THIS BOOK
SHOWS WHAT
UT
OF
SM

Published by
HERBERT JOSEPH LIMITED
LONDON

WHEN LABOUR FAILS

HERBERT JOSEPH LTD

WHEN LABOUR FAILS

WHEN LABOUR FAILS

BY

Enid Lakeman

LONDON
HERBERT JOSEPH LIMITED

MADE AND PRINTED IN GREAT BRITAIN

CONTENTS

WHEN LABOUR FAILS

SWEPT into power in Commons and Council Chamber, secure in a majority for whatever they may wish to do, why should victorious Labour be troubled by any thought of failure?

Why should they mind the Conservative croakers who write to the papers saying that Labour has no mandate for its nationalisation measures? They have quite as much mandate as most governments of our generation have had. They have a clear majority of 147 seats in the House of Commons; among that solid phalanx, who cares that a majority of the people voted against Labour?

Perhaps that Member cares who has slipped in with but a handful of votes to spare. He must be very well aware that failure to hold his seat is only too likely.

Can he rely again on the support of those who voted Labour simply because anything seemed better than another five years of Tory rule? Can he make up for the loss to safe Labour seats of votes he can ill spare—of the evacuees who voted him in for Hitchin or Taunton but next time will swell the majority in Lewisham or Limehouse? Can the party he supports fulfil sufficiently the hopes that put it in power? And what is he to do when his constituents' wishes conflict with the government's programme? Which is the worse risk—to defy the Whips or to lose the Friendly Societies' vote?

It is beyond question that the government cannot satisfy all who voted for it in 1945. Many a factory worker voted Labour in the delusion that war-time pay-

packets could continue. Many a soldier voted Labour believing he was assuring a speedy return home. A mother coping with her family in two miserable rooms, a young couple longing for their first home, voted Labour in the hope that houses would spring up like mushrooms. Completely unreasonable? Of course, but unreasonableness is not a disqualification for voting. All those people may well be on the other side next time.

The unreasonable are a negligible minority? Small, yes; negligible, no. Our voting system gives great power to the few. Twelve Labour seats are held on majorities of 432 or less; twelve seats will be lost if 432 people vote for some other party or abstain. Lucky the constituency which does not contain 432 unreasonable people!

Twelve seats lost would not be a catastrophe, but 75 seats lost and the great Labour majority is no more. There are 79 Labour seats held on majorities of less than 10 per cent. of the electorate. What are the prospects of holding these?

Let us write off the inevitable loss of the wildly optimistic and the returned evacuees, and consider the voters who remain. Some are attached to the Labour Party as convinced Socialists, others as Trade Unionists who see in the party their instrument of power. Some voted Labour for a home or a job, some in protest against the Conservative record. To retain power at the next election, the Labour Government must convince all these diverse elements that it has done as well as could be expected in difficult circumstances, or at least that any possible alternative would be worse.

What indications are there that this not very ambitious aim can be realised?

The *Daily Express* public opinion poll in January, 1946, showed that the percentage of people dissatisfied with the Labour Government had risen from 28 to 34 since the previous November. Moreover, the "satisfied" (57 per cent., fallen from 59 per cent.) included those who said: "give them time." The main reasons expressed for dissatisfaction were: "that controls and restrictions are hampering the nation's recovery; that shortages are as acute as ever; that housing progress is poor; and that the government is devoting its attention to nationalisation instead of to more immediate problems." Some may doubt the accuracy of the percentages, but most can confirm from their personal experience that complaints of that kind are at any rate fairly common.

Let us look into the complaints that come from various quarters, and see how far they can be met. Let us see what progress the government is making towards building our brave new world, towards restoring either our liberties or our material well-being.

Uncontrolled Controllers

It was appropriate and significant that the Labour Government should meet very early in its career opposition over the question of controls.

Controls in war-time we all accepted as necessary, though few of us liked conscription, direction of labour, priorities or cropping orders, and most of us felt we could do something better with our time than fill up the accompanying stacks of forms. No reasonable person could expect that on VJ+I we could fling all the forms into the salvage bin and betake ourselves to what-

ever occupation we fancied. But five years! Are we really to have our lives regulated for us nearly as long again as we have already endured it?

Ah, but the government will not find it necessary to use all the powers it retains. Probably not, but the powers are there. I might have no desire to change my occupation, but yet be irritated by the fact that I could not if I wished. The farmer about to plant potatoes would still express himself forcibly on receiving an order to do so. A party which excuses excessive power on the ground that it will not be abused lacks understanding of human nature and lacks appreciation of the nature of liberty.

If five years is too long to retain war-time controls, what is the right time? Nobody knows, and there would seem to be no particular reason for the Conservative choice of two years. The only logical proposal is the Liberal one year. The existence of our Army depends on the annual passing of the Expiring Laws Continuance Bill; can anyone pretend that the War Agricultural Executive Committees are so much more vital than the Army that they cannot be subjected to the same procedure? If the people's representatives in Parliament are satisfied that any given war-time measure is still nedessary, they can be trusted to renew it for another year; if they are not so satisfied, it should be within their power to make an end of it.

Our ancestors who put the Army thus under the direct control of Parliament did so because they knew it was a dangerous instrument in the hands of the King; so is conscription a dangerous instrument in the hands of the Cabinet.

The power of the Cabinet has long been increasing at

the expense of the power of Parliament. The Labour Cabinet has taken another slice of power by appropriating the private members' time. Even if we admit that this was necessary as a temporary and exceptional measure, it is a symptom which certainly needs watching. No one denies that in a crowded session the less important matters must give way to the more important; the danger is that the Cabinet may tend more and more to think "that is important which we consider important; your Bill cannot be important because you are only a private member."

. . . . . .

If we don't like being bossed by the Cabinet, what about being bossed by the Trade Unions?

Decasualisation is an awful specimen of a word, but the thing for which it stands is greatly to be desired. We have all had enough of queues without wishing dockers to continue queuing for work; whatever we may think of the dockers' strike, we agree that their Union is right to press for a more reasonable system.

But did you imagine that the dockers' Bill was to share out the available work equitably among the available men? Then you were wrong. The work is to be shared, not among all the men seeking it, but among a strictly limited number. If you are registered at a dock, you are sure of a job; if not, no matter how willing and fit for the work you may be, "you've had it." Unless indeed you can persuade one of the lucky ones to sell you his place. Another commodity for the black market!

Moreover, the first clause of the Dockers' Bill, as drawn up by these Labour champions of the working class, contained a provision that any man refusing to work where directed would be liable to criminal prosecu-

tion! This from the party so much concerned to maintain the right to strike! And who led the revolt against this provision? Why, the Liberal leader, Clem Davies, standing up for "the right of a Britisher to choose where and for whom he shall work."

The dockers will not be the first to close their occupation in this way. If you want, for example, to be a printer, you may find it exceedingly difficult unless you arranged to be born the son of a printer. A firm will not employ you unless you belong to the Trade Union; the Union will not admit you unless you work as a printer. The Union thus has power to decide who shall and who shall not follow a particular trade. As the Unions strengthen their position under a government dominated by them, we may expect our choice of trade to become more and more limited.

The origins of the pressure for a closed shop are understandable enough, but it can hardly have been the intention of the early Trade Unionists to entail a man's job upon his son or to limit a youngster's opportunities.

Direction of labour is direction of labour, whether practised by a government department or by a Trade Union.

It is odd that men who take a pride in having sprung from the common people, who claim to have special sympathy with the troubles of the ordinary man and woman, should treat ordinary men and women as subordinate to the organisation, as so many "hands" to be used here or there as required.

It is odd that Labour should worship mechanical efficiency to the detriment of human values. We are told, for instance, that it is wasteful to have two shops of the same kind in a certain area. That is, it is a waste

to give the housewife a choice between being served by Mr. Smith whom she likes, and Mr. Jones whom she doesn't; it is a waste to allow a shop at the end of the road when there is another a twopenny bus ride away; money spent in enabling the dissatisfied customer to say, " all right, I'll go elsewhere," is money wasted.

Have none of our shop planners ever hastened thankfully to change their retailer at the end of a ration period? Have none of them groused because there is no alternative milk supply?

Town Planning is a very fine thing in its place, but the plan must not take precedence of the people. Welwyn Garden City is an example of town planning to which admiring visitors come from the ends of the earth, but no one can be in it long without hearing one complaint: there is virtually no choice of shop. If that is a grievance when there are at least streets of shops in other towns within reach, what will be the state of public discontent if all our towns are converted to the Garden City model?

The Retail Trades Advisory Committee of the Ministry of Town and Country Planning has reported on the number of shops desirable for each 1,000 of the population. If these planners have their way, part of Manchester will have five or six shops instead of twenty-one, part of Birmingham eight instead of thirty.

What is to happen to the men and women now running the shops that are to disappear? The returning ex-Service man is supposed to be assured of his old job; what about the man who left his shop to join up? He ought to get damages from the government as his pal does from a former employer who refuses him work, but even so he cannot spend those damages on

setting up for himself. He will not be allowed to add to the number of shops; he could only buy out an existing shopkeeper—and what chance will the small man have of doing that? Because public house licenses are limited, you may wander over half a county before finding a village inn not owned by one of the big brewers; if shops are limited we shall gradually be reduced to a choice between Woolworths and the Co-op.

The Socialist planner looks at the docks and sees a thousand men idle; he looks at a street and sees two competing grocers. Having the nice, tidy type of mind that would win favour in H.Q. Orderly Room, he declares those thousand "bodies" or that extra shop redundant and "remusters" them in another trade. Ask any of your demobbed friends how this sort of thing goes down, even among men in the Services who expect to be pushed around! Imagine the reaction of the man who has just cocked a parting snook at his sergeant major, only to find himself falling in for yet another working parade!

Service experience does not encourage one to think that the British people will submit to this kind of life even for the sake of security and full employment.

Nobody could be more secure, in the economic sense, than the Service man or woman. We could not lose our jobs; our pay, provided we behaved ourselves, was assured; we were fed, clothed, housed, treated when sick; housing problems, fish queues, clothing coupons, all belonged to another world. Yet what was the one thing we all wanted? To get back to a life on much smaller rations, in a job we could be sacked from, with the worry of finding a house, saving up coupons for a

new coat instead of just bringing the old one to a clothing parade.

Some indeed prefer army security to civilian responsibility, but even they grouse. We like to have our food supplied, but not to have to take whatever is handed out; we like to have new clothes on demand, but not to be told how we shall wear them; we like, many of us, to go to church, but we detest church parades.

No, the people who gave up their freedom for the duration want it back; those who fought Hitler's tyranny will not take kindly to a different tyranny at home. If Socialism does in fact mean that many of us will share the experience of the would-be docker or printer, then the Labour voters will soon repent their bargain.

Of course Socialism does mean that. It is quite appropriate that "The Red Flag" has a German tune. Liberals have been saying so for years and have not been listened to. As rosy dreams of industry for the workers fade into the reality of control by fallible men, as our choice of employer narrows down towards the inescapable State, the number of listening ears will increase.

The Doubter's Dilemma

But our Labour Government, still more its supporters in the Commons, must include many who have had their fill of regimentation and have no more wish than I have to restrict a man's choice of occupation or way of life.

No doubt this is true, but what are such men to do?

They have sincerely believed and preached that "the nationalisation of the means of production, distribution and exchange" was the remedy for all our economic ills. Suppose they find it doesn't work, or works only at too high a price, what then? They have the choice of three courses. They may openly acknowledge their mistake and seek another party that accords better with their new beliefs. Such defection, it is obvious, will greatly weaken Labour's position as a government, and will be resisted with all the power of the party machine.

Second, they may toe the party line and continue to support the Socialist programme because they fear by upsetting the Labour frying pan to land the country in the fire. In that case, the electors will decide at the next election, and it is quite safe to say that if some Labour M.P.s are dissatisfied then dissatisfaction among the much less firmly attached Labour voters will be quite sufficient to turn the government out. (Remember that the government majority depends on seats held with majorities of less than ten per cent. of the electorate).

Finally, if the disillusioned Socialists are sufficiently numerous, they may force a change in government policy. Then we should presumably get the kind of Labour Government New Zealand has—no Socialism, but social reform: pensions, housing and the like.

Which would be just fine if we could believe all we were told when Labour candidates held up New Zealand as a model to tempt the electors. But let us see what a New Zealand Socialist has to say about it. G. le F. Young, writing in the *New Statesman* of the 19th January, 1946, says the Labour Government of New Zealand has accomplished a good deal in ten years, but "prosperity is due to high wages and full-time employ-

ment"—to Hitler, not to Labour. "This is no Socialist government. The Socialist will is in the rank and file, but it is seldom strong enough to make any impression on the bosses." Note a Socialist's admission of the power of the party bosses! "If the pressure of the rank and file for a particular measure is too strong to be resisted directly, the bosses let it through, drawing its teeth on the way." He instances the nationalisation of the Bank of New Zealand. "Centralised control," he has found, "stifles democracy." "The individual citizen is losing his sense of responsibility to the community. The government is 'they,' not 'us.'" What an admission from a party that is supposed to be of the people!

Mr. Young blames the real Socialists in the New Zealand Parliament for submitting too easily to the party bosses. They postponed the revolt that would have entailed their expulsion from the party, they tried and failed to reform it from within, and now they find there is no future in either revolt or conformity: their party is too weak to survive a split, too uninspiring to survive more than one election. British Socialists are duly warned.

The truth is that, if a Labour Government cannot afford to press its Socialism beyond the point an individualistic people will stand, neither can it afford to compromise with its Socialism.

A Labour Party that ceases to be Socialist has no further reason for existence. For what remains? Merely a social reform programme, such as the Liberal Party carried out far more effectively in the past and which is still drawn almost entirely from Liberal sources. Labour may keep Beveridge out of Parliament; they cannot dispense with his Plan.

The Labour Party cannot displace and succeed the Liberals as the reforming party, simply because it has not the necessary brains. Men accustomed to thinking along well-defined lines of nationalisation and control cannot alter the whole cast of their minds so as to direct them effectively to the difficult task of increasing individual freedom and developing personality. If it is a Liberal policy that people want, they will get it from a Liberal Government and from no other.

Why, even within the Labour Party itself there is no freedom. Have we forgotten that Sir Stafford Cripps was expelled from the Labour Party? Expelled, not for turning his back on Socialism, not for advocating any policy contrary to his party's official programme, but for urging what he conceived to be the best way of getting at least part of that policy put into effect—an alliance with other anti-Conservative forces. Nor is this an isolated case. Sir Stafford is merely the most distinguished of a long line of Labour Party members "disciplined" for seeking Labour ends in the company of men from other parties. A nice co-operative attitude for the people who claim to be the party of peaceful co-operation with other nations!

The Labour Party's Standing Orders provide that:

(a) Before a member tables a motion, amendment or prayer from which a division may follow he must consult the officers of the Party.

(b) The Party whip map be withdrawn from a member.

(c) A member may abstain from voting on conscientious grounds.

Ah, but, exclaims Labour in triumph, those Standing Orders are suspended; you may see we are now a free party! Exactly—*suspended*. Of course there

is no need to enforce the obedience of every member while dozens of them may revolt without endangering the government's majority. Of course Labour can afford to dress its window with the colours of liberty as long as it has a majority of 147. A show of independence on the back benches can do no harm and may serve to attract to the Labour ranks Liberals and others with libertarian bees in their bonnets. But is the window dressed with honest-to-goodness hardware or with posters and empty cartons? If the liberty Labour displays in its window is real, it must not be subject to the whim of party headquarters. But note that the Standing Orders are only *suspended*—suspended experimentally until the end of the 1946-47 session. Not revoked by the will of the whole party in conference, but suspended by the Whips—suspended over the heads of their followers. This is a Lobby Correspondent's version of the matter: "The Labour backbenchers sought a reward for good conduct. Morrison saw at once that his crew could be more perfectly disciplined if they were on their honour to be good boys and girls, than by being formally bound. But the thing would work as he wished only if Standing Orders still existed. Therefore, he pointed out that they could not, under the Labour Party Constitution, abolish Standing Orders: they could only suspend them.

"And suspended they are, like the sword of Damocles, for the present session; but, of course, they could and would be reinstated if the boys and girls do not obey them. There is no intention whatever to suggest to the Party conference that the constitution be altered to abolish the Standing Orders of the Parliamentary Party.

"The thing is working out according to the Morrison plan. Back-benchers are imposing a discipline on one another much more drastic than ever the Whips could impose. Nobody can persuade a Labour M.P. now to move an amendment to anything."

If you want your M.P. to be allowed to have a mind of his own, choose a Liberal.

Paradise Lost

I HAVE said that the British people will not sell their birthright of freedom for a mess of security pottage. But suppose I am wrong; suppose people do after all prefer a comfortable cage to the risks of the wide open spaces. What prospect is there that the cage will in fact be sufficiently comfortable to discourage the activities of escape clubs?

When we elected the Labour Government, hopes were high. Too high, no doubt, but whose fault was that? We were, after all, assured that "Nationalisation after the war will ensure that goods are available at decent prices to everybody." It is hardly the electors who should be blamed if the man who said that during the General Election is transformed a few months later into Austerity Cripps, while his colleague, Sir Ben Smith, celebrated his appointment as Minister of Food by declaring: "There is no prospect of any immediate improvement in the rations," and Chuter Ede warned us that clothing and footwear must be rationed for some time to come.

We must of course remember the difficulties of the

government's task, and we ought perhaps to discount as mere advertiser's puff words like Miss Ellen Wilkinson's to the Labour Party Conference just before the General Election: "Our aims are not only millions of houses, jobs for all and social security, but also educational opportunity for all and a national health service based on and paid for by a highly efficient industry and properly planned agriculture which will make possible a steady advance in the standard of living." We ought not to take this as a promise of what Britain will be like this year or next, but we are entitled to look for the fulfilment of concrete pledges.

Aneurin Bevan in his election address said: "Low rents, spacious houses filled with all the labour-saving appliances invented by modern domestic science, can be made available to all if only the task of house-building is organised on a national plan." This national plan, we were assured, was to be carried out by a Ministry of Housing, to cut out the muddles and delays inevitable when the would-be builder has to go from one to another of half a dozen different Ministries. "There should be a Ministry of Housing," says Labour's manifesto, "Let Us Face the Future." Here is a specific action specifically promised and not difficult to perform. Yet, as we all know, there is no Ministry of Housing. Aneurin Bevan said in October, 1945, that the Government had fulfilled the substance, if not the letter, of its promise, inasmuch as it had "concentrated responsibility for housing in one Ministry." At least one Labour M.P. (Garry Allighan, writing in the *Daily Mail*) considers nevertheless that this promise has been broken, and there will be many of the same opinion.

Among them is no doubt the private builder who

wants to do his bit towards reducing the house shortage. Before he can start building, he has to complete seven different forms (some of them very complicated and some to be accompanied by plans) and send them to five different authorities—two to the local council, one to the highway authority, one to the Ministry of Works, two to the Ministry of Supply Timber Control, and one to the Iron and Steel Control. The London firm who reported in the *Sunday Times* to have spent seven months getting nowhere with its factory extension may also be excused for thinking that all is not well. Plans submitted in July, 1945, were passed by the L.C.C. in September, but at the end of February, 1946, the Ministry of Works was still sitting on them. Meanwhile the Board of Trade, also involved, had inspected the firm's books. Another firm wanting to extend its factory has got the approval of the local authority and of the Board of Trade, and has bought its new plant, but after four months it is still awaiting the Ministry of Works' permission to build. Not even enough co-ordination between departments to prevent a firm buying plant which it cannot house! Yet another firm tells of six months taken up in negotiations between the Board of Trade and the Ministry of Labour on the question of the supply of materials, labour and fuel.

Then, take the Minister of Works' statement on the 25th March, that the monthly production of bricks was only one quarter of the demand, that "exceptional efforts would be necessary on the part of all concerned if a brick famine were to be averted." How are we to reconcile this with the Minister of Health's statement the very next day that "before very long the provision

of permanent homes would begin to outstrip the temporary houses"?

Does the government's right hand know what its left hand does? Does anyone know where we are with the housing problem?

Garry Allighan is not the only Member on the Government side who shows dissatisfaction. Labour M.P.s very naturally and rightly are concerned not only for those who have no homes but also for those who get homes only at inflated prices. Mrs. Mann, raising the subject of the selling price of houses in December, 1945, said: "I feel that I am dealing with a national emergency situation that has so far been left untouched. All of us here who have put questions to the Minister of Health have met with the attitude " abandon hope all ye who enter here," or in other words with the reply that causes our hearts to sink, " refer to some other reply," which means there is nothing whatever doing." The same day, to a question whether he would consider legislation to make premiums illegal in the leasing or letting of houses, Mr. Bevan replied: " There will be no opportunity in the present Session for such a Bill. I am afraid there is equally no chance of early legislation . . . the House is already fully occupied."

There we get back to that other complaint of the *Daily Express* poll—nationalisation at the expense of getting on with the job. Certainly the House is fully occupied—but with what? Partly indeed with matters that everyone recognises to be urgent, but partly with issues that have much more to do with Socialist theory than with the bread-and-butter questions that fill most voters' minds at present. Few of us could tell from its effects on our daily lives whether the Bank of England

is nationalised or not, but we are very well aware of the presence or absence of checks on the rapacious landlord. The Trade Disputes Act was a highly controversial matter, bound to take up much Parliamentary time. Couldn't it wait? Seeing that the Trade Unions are in so much stronger a position, the government on their side, their own officials risen to key Cabinet posts, would it really hurt them to let the situation of the last eighteen years continue a few months longer? Labour likes to make out that it is now no longer a class party but a national one. This remains unconvincing so long as the legislation programme shows such a partisan, sectional view of what is urgent.

. . . . . .

Where Labour has tackled the urgent things, has it tackled them well? Among the greatest urgencies is food: ask any housewife what she thinks of that Minister! Ask experts in the food industries how Sir Ben compares with Lord Woolton for quick grasp of facts. The outcry over the dried egg muddle did not come only from Conservatives eager to make the most of Labour's difficulties; it came from millions of citizens unattached to any party; it came from Labour sympathisers. No one could call the *Co-operative News* an anti-Labour paper, yet it says, "The housewife has an increasing justification for grumbling . . . . It would be more tolerable if those who rule the destiny of our food were not so complacent about it, or at least if they would give to the public the plain unvarnished truth. . . . It is not good enough." The *Co-operative News* contrasts the present Minister of Food unfavourably with his war-time predecessor. So does the public.

Of course the Minister of Food is not to blame for the

shortages that exist. It is not his fault that hungry millions in Europe compete with us for the small supplies available; it is not his fault that harvests have been bad. Where he is to blame is in not forseeing either the situation or the public reaction to his way of dealing with it. He could not know in advance what the harvests would be; he could and did know even before he took office that lend-lease would end with the war. A really foresighted man would plan ahead against a possible shortage of wheat; anyone with a grain of sense could be expected to plan ahead against an inevitable shortage of dollars.

And anyone with the knowledge of the people which a working-class Minister presumably possesses should know better than to give unpleasant news in the most unpleasant manner. One day we had an announcement that seemed to mean " from next month there will be no more dried eggs ever for anyone," the next day a bungling treatment for shock in the form of a statement that Sir Ben didn't say—or didn't mean—what everyone thought he said. First we could have no dried eggs; a week later arrangements had been made to import 20,000 tons, with more to come. Only after public outcry did it occur to the Cabinet that other purchases from America might be cut instead of food. Only after public outcry was it decided that 800,000 young men would be better employed on the land than in the army.

The Ministry of Food first announces a cut in the fat ration, then denies it; the Minister first repudiates indignantly the suggestion that contradictory statements have been made, then admits a " regrettable error " on the part of his department.

The party that asks us to believe that our whole

economic life can be planned by some super brains trust has shown itself incompetent to plan even a reasonable balance between food, films and fags. It has demonstrated what Liberals have long insisted was a danger of Socialism: when thousands of private traders buy our food, a mistake by one of them is of little consequence to anyone but himself; if one Minister does our buying, a miscalculation on his part may involve whole nations in hardship.

The brave new world of Labour election speeches depends on production. Not even the reddest agitator now alleges that after six years of destructive war we can all live in comfort merely by taking from the rich. If you and I are to have more, more must be produced.

The Labour Government knows this as well as anyone, and is trying to increase production. But with what success?

The difficulties are enormous. No degree of good management by industry or government will produce goods with non-existent labour from raw materials that are not there. But what is being done to make the best of the resources that are available?

First, in private industry. The government has decided that for the present some big industries—such as cotton—shall be left to private enterprise. "For the present." What does that mean? For a generation? A few years? Only till the government has cleared the decks of present legislation? Nobody knows, but industrialists are expected to make their plans all the same.

The government demands emergency powers for five years because it feels the need to be sure of its position for that time ahead. But no factory owner is sure of his

position for five months ahead. I am, let us suppose, the owner of a cotton mill badly in need of modernisation. Very well, I will order the best up-to-date machinery. But by the time that machinery is delivered, where shall I be? Shall I be still the mill-owner? Shall I be running the same factory as a State employee? Shall I have retired on compensation for my nationalised business, my living assured with no further responsibility? No one can tell me. I do not know whether my business will be taken over, or when, or on what terms.

Of course, if I am a public spirited person, determined that in my mill happy workers in the best conditions shall produce as much as possible for those who need it so badly, then I shall modernise my mill regardless of whether it will benefit me or not. But the case for nationalisation rests on the assumption that most business men are not dominated by such motives.

Labour speakers tell us that the working man cannot be expected to produce his best in conditions of insecurity. How, then, can they expect the other partners in industry to tackle unprecedented difficulties with no assurance for the future?

. . . . . .

After private enterprise, what of the nationalised industries? It is early days yet to say what success they will have, but the omens are not good.

Coal mining is vitally important to all our other industries, and it is very widely considered a fit subject for nationalisation. The state of the industry satisfies nobody. Conditions of work are bad, machinery antiquated. Output has been going down, absenteeism up.

Labour assured us that even the promise of

nationalisation would improve matters. Once the industry was theirs, or even in prospect of becoming theirs, the miners would work as they had never worked before. Well, nationalisation of the mines was promised and a bill to effect it was introduced early in the government's career. Yet production remained down. The last monthly figures issued before the introduction of the Bill show the coal raised to be nearly 400,000 tons a week below Shinwell's target. Absenteeism was as bad or worse. While the Bill to nationalise the coal mines was before the House, Mr. Shinwell said: "I am sorry to tell you that my efforts have not met with the success I expected .... Unless production is improved we may experience a grave industrial crisis." He put most of the blame for the situation on absenteeism. Output, he said, had been satisfactory in November and December, and if the miners could produce the coal then, they could do it in February. Indiscipline was forcing him to consider whether he would not have to restore the old penalties for voluntary absenteeism and other offences.

Investigators in the mines report that some men stay away because, weakened by inadequate rations, they are in real need of a rest. Others, however, say more work would be done if the men had more inducement to earn—if, that is, there were more things they could buy with their money. Evidently we have not reached the stage where men can be relied on to work for the good of the community, without the stimulus of the profit motive!

The Coal Mines Bill clearly did not inspire the miner with the enthusiasm which is necessary if we are to increase output while still handicapped by the aftermath of war. Why, indeed, should it?

The miner pictured a socialised industry in which he and his fellows would control their own destiny. Instead, he found himself being put under a Board imposed on him from above. "Under New Management" will be displayed prominently in the window, in case anyone doesn't notice the difference, but the miner will no more talk proudly of "my industry" than does the London Passenger Transport Board's conductor.

The miner supposed that in a nationalised industry the profits which used to go into the owners' pockets would swell his own wages. He finds that compensation for the owners is provided for now, while a rise for him is a matter for the future to settle.

The miner works in dreadful conditions, and very rightly demands something better. Does the Bill give it him? It may, but it may not. The mines have a new owner; the new owner is reputed to treat men better than the old, but that is all. Nothing in the terms of the transfer indicates what changes will be made. The new owners have a free hand and nobody knows how they will use it. The Minister of Mines himself has said that under his Bill a bad Minister could "go far to wreck the whole economic structure of the industry, and thereby that of the country." How much confidence can the miners feel in a future that depends so much on one man? Or in a government whose proposals are so ill-defined?

There are signs that the administration of the Act may prove to be better than the preparation of the Bill. It is devoutly to be hoped that this will be so.

On Tap or on Top?

Nor is this the only case where nationalisers have not foreseen the difficulties or the consequences of their actions.

If there is one thing which Labour has always proclaimed as an enemy, it is the financial interests. The banks, the financiers, are the villians of the piece. If a Labour government failed in its task, it was due to the machinations of the City; if some promised scheme of welfare for the workers did not materialise, it was because big money withheld its support. Take any Nazi article about Jewish financiers, expunge the word "Jew" and the obscenities, and it will do nicely for a Labour paper.

This Labour government apparently intends to deprive itself of that scapegoat. The Bank of England has been nationalised, and at the same time its power over the Big Five has been increased. Labour now has control of finance as well as of legislation. Unless indeed it has bungled the nationalisation business.

Having been incubating for so long, the Act nationalising the Bank must be assumed to be the embodiment of Labour wisdom, and not a thing whose shortcomings can be excused by the need for hasty improvisation. The Treasury knew what it was about—or should have done.

What, then, are the first fruits by which we may judge this Act? They are the presence of the Deputy Governor of the Bank of England representing the British Government at an international conference. Not, be it noted, a brand new Deputy Governor, appointed by the People's government to run the Bank in the

People's interests, but one of the old gang who came in for so much abuse.

Is he supposed to have changed his spots because his employer has changed? Hardly. He is still, as he was before, a man whose prime interest is banking, an expert in that particular field. If there is a case against the banks, it is that they did or might look at public questions too exclusively from the point of view of their special interest. That is a failing to which we are all prone. That is the ground for Lord Cecil's dictum that "the expert must be on tap but not on top."

What our Labour government has done is to give this expert who was said to be so dangerous a power he never enjoyed before. Montague Norman might say this or that, and his words would carry the weight of expert authority, but they did not automatically commit the British Government. If Mr. Cobbold went to Canada on behalf of an independent bank, or as a technical adviser to a Government delegation, the Treasury would no doubt listen with respect to his opinions, but it would be fully at liberty to reject any that seemed to conflict with the public interest. When Mr. Cobbold is appointed by the Government, the case is altered: his words will everywhere be assumed to represent the official view, and cannot be repudiated without laying this country open to charges of bad faith.

The experts which were on tap have been placed by the Labour government on top. And they are the very experts whom Labour has taught us to distrust.

> "When I make a word do a lot of work I always pay it extra."—Humpty Dumpty.

The fact is that this is the first time Labour has had to define its terms.

When you are in opposition, it is easy to put forward nationalisation as a cure for everything from queues to unemployment. Nationalisation may mean anything you or your hearers wish it to mean, from the complete State management we see in the Post Office to general control of a public utility company.

When you take office, the case is altered. You must then define your terms. You are expected to redeem your election promises by legislation. You must produce a Bill, saying not only what you want to do but how you propose doing it. And you must be prepared to have every line of your proposals criticised by experts.

Shinwell was not prepared. A life-long association with the mining industry has not been enough for him to give practical form to his ideals. "I have been talking about nationalisation for forty years," he said, "but the implications of the transfer of property have never occurred to me."

This lack of detailed preparation (during eight years continuously in opposition) shows itself in every field.

In the mines, the government appoints a Liberal as recruiting sergeant. Excellent—but ought it really to be necessary at this stage for Mr. Noel Newsome to undertake research into the reasons why men dodge mine work or why some mines are more unpopular than others? Couldn't the miners' leaders have done that piece of work even more efficiently before now? We all know that improvement both of output and of miners' conditions is a matter of urgency; time saved in that way would have been invaluable.

In India, the government sends out three Cabinet Ministers to negotiate agreement. Excellent—but would not their task have been easier had Labour not

started its term of office by disappointing Indian opinion? It may or may not have been wise to promise, as Mr. Bevin did at Blackpool in May, 1945: "If we are returned, we will close the India Office and transfer it overseas to India. The very fact itself will give confidence that they are no longer governed from Whitehall." It was certainly unwise to give such a pledge and nevertheless appoint a Secretary of State for India to work from Whitehall in the same old way.

Mr. Shinwell admits he had not seen the implications of the transfer of property. Neither had those concerned in the nationalisation of the Bank of England. Neither have those who talk of nationalising the land.

Infirm Foundations

The trouble with the Labour Party is that it has elevated the Socialist expedient to the status of a principle and is blind to the need for seeking and applying real principles. It does not foresee the consequences of its policies because it does not trace them down to their roots; it acts with inconsistency because it does not see that actions in different fields are subject to the same laws. It does itself what it condemns in others, because it is unaware of a law above the sovereignty of nations, parties or classes.

Two big questions exemplify the failure of Labour to grasp fundamentals: trade and the land.

. . . . . .

One would think that a party so much concerned with economics would attach great importance to trade. One would think that a party professing to believe in

the solidarity of the working-class throughout the world would be only too eager to make the very labour of the people forge links of mutual benefit and interdependence. Instead, we find the Labour Party treating it as a matter of minor importance that a British worker should find a market for his products in China or should share in the benefits of American inventiveness. The Labour Party is even behind the Conservatives in this respect, for it does not see that any big issue is involved. The Conservatives have at least an idea behind their Empire Free Trade campaigns, even if it is a mistaken idea; Labour doesn't even think the matter important. Therefore, in any Free Trade debate Labour members are likely to be found on the one side or on the other, according to the merely sectional and temporary interests involved.

In the debate on Empire and Commonwealth Unity in the House of Commons on the 20th April, 1944, one Labour Member (Mr. Bellinger) said, "I would say to hon. Members on the Liberal benches that it is impossible to hope that we are ever going to give them back Free Trade, which only made private enterprise possible in the 19th centry." (He does at any rate see that Conservatives kill by Protection that very private enterprise which they are supposed to favour). Another (Mr. Shinwell) claimed to speak "without any prejudice on the subject of fiscal policy" and thought that there had been "too much talk of fiscal policy." Mr. Greenwood "did not believe that the terms protection, tariff reform, Ottawa and preferences have any meaning whatever in the middle of the 20th century," while Hugh Dalton (now in control of our financial fate) was at pains to disclaim for the Labour Party "any unreasonable or

pedantically uniform view in opposition to Imperial Preference." Thus it would appear that to the Labour Party the issue of Free Trade or Protection is a question on which it is unreasonable to feel strongly, pedantic to stand consistently on the one side or the other.

In that debate, it was left to a Liberal (Sir Percy Harris) to draw attention to one of the really great opportunities of our time—an opportunity which Labour has quite failed to seize. Article 7 of the Mutual Aid Agreement providing for the settlement of lend-lease offered us the chance to make an end of the great American tariff wall and start a free trade area which other countries would be encouraged to join. That this opportunity would occur was perfectly well-known before the General Election, yet it would never have been mentioned in the campaign had not the Liberals raised it. That a decision on the point would have to be made was perfectly well known to the Labour Party before it took office, yet it was not prepared. The American Under-Secretary of State (a very good friend of Britain) was driven to complain that neither before nor after the change of government did he know where Britain stood. And once Britain led the world in its trade policies!

Out of the end of lend-lease arose the American loan. What went on in Washington during those long negotiations we have not been told, but it seems only too likely that still the United States did not know where Britain stood. Did we say to the Americans, "This is a great idea, this scheme to break down the barriers that add to the width of the Atlantic. We'll help you to pull down the barriers; will you help us to get our goods moving

again over the freed ocean?" If we did, the world would surely have heard about it before now, the negotiations would surely have been over sooner, with less fear of failure, President Truman would surely have recommended the loan to Congress with warmer words of praise for the co-operative spirit of Britain. We might even have got better terms.

It was a Conservative Minister whose spiritual descent was traced from Ethelred the Unready, but the royal line continues also in the Labour Party.

Labour missed its first great chance of building peace, because it had never concerned itself with the ill-will engendered by trying to export unemployment.

. . . . . .

"God made the Land, the Dutch made Holland."

As Labour fails to see connections between trade and peace, it fails to see differences between the various things it seeks to nationalise.

Not only does Labour give us no rule by which to decide which industries should be nationalised and which (if any) should not; it shows no suspicion that different rules may apply to the industry man made and to the land God made.

Labour proposes, for the good of the nation, to take from some people the "means of production, distribution and exchange," which those people have created; it shows much less anxiety to take from other people the land they have *not* created.

And when we finally do get down to the land, what is proposed? Apparently the same sort of thing that is put forward for any industry. Apparently the owners are to be bought out, converted into rentiers, with their

income from the land as safe as ever but relieved of any responsibility in connection with it. Public opinion will hardly favour expropriation without compensation, so the landowners must be bought out. To what end? It is certainly an advantage for the State or the town to own its own land, but much of the advantage is lost if the community is still burdened by the ransom it has paid to the former owners. That burden is just as heavy whether it is paid now as rent or in the future as interest on the compensation fund; and it is that burden which is the evil. In its eagerness to control the uses to which land is put, Labour overlooks that little matter of rent which enables one private person to prevent another from using land at all. Only a party much more concerned with freedom than Labour is can be expected to approach the question from the opposite angle.

"The Dutch made Holland." Imagine what an outcry would be raised if a polder newly reclaimed by the joint efforts of the Dutch nation were to be handed over rent-free to some one Dutchman! Obviously, if the new land is to be of any use, someone must occupy it, farm it or build on it, but obviously too that person ought to pay in rent to the State for the work the State has done to his benefit. The English have not made England, but they have made valuable to man "this fortress built by Nature for herself." The rebuilding of London as a finer city is hampered by the sums which must pour into the coffers of ground landlords for land which would be worth nothing if that great community were not there. Yet this Labour government has not yet suggested taking for London any part of that value which London creates. The Labour L.C.C. indeed has in the past shown more wisdom; may it now show that

there is some value in the vaunted link between Commons and County Hall; may it press the rating of site values on a government too much busied with changes less well calculated to give every man his due.

Pie-Crust.

Unfortunately, one must not be too confident that what Labour demanded when in opposition it will carry out when in power.

We have not yet got that Ministry of Housing that was promised.

That Secretary of State for India who was to have been transferred to India still has his office in Whitehall.

We have heard Labour speakers denouncing the iniquity of the Means Test—and now (in the House of Commons on the 11th October, 1945) the Labour Minister of National Insurance saying "opportunity must be left for supplementary pensions to be paid *when the circumstances of the applicant make it necessary.*"

We who are members of the great Friendly Societies heard Labour candidates pledge themselves that the Societies would find their place in the new Insurance scheme as in the old. That was only an unauthorised pledge by individuals? So the Minister would have us believe. But his Parliamentary Secretary has let the cat out of the bag. Asked at a Labour Party conference at Norwich whether the government had not broken faith with the Friendly Societies, Mr. Lindgren replied "Perfectly true." The government, he said, could not risk wrong development because of a slip at head office

in giving advice to candidates at the General Election. So the advice of head office is to be passed off as a " slip " when it has served its vote-catching purpose and become inconvenient! And this admission is made, not by the Minister apologising to Parliament, but by a subordinate answering questions at a party meeting.

When an explanation is finally given in Parliament, it is that Transport House was " very short-staffed " (Mrs. Ayrton Gould, House of Commons, 26th March, 1946) and that consequently the directives were "written by a not very experienced young man." So the Labour Party spends £60,000 a year on its central organisation and can't do better than that! This is the party which thinks itself competent to run the country!

An unpromising beginning, which suggests that before it has finished the Labour Government may even challenge the Conservative record for broken pledges.

Co-operative Society?

At home, nationalisation works out differently from what was expected; abroad, foreign policy works out differently from what was promised.

Nothing was easier at the 1945 election than to attack Conservative foreign policy. Nothing was safer to promise than that Labour's foreign policy would be better—it could hardly be worse—but how much better would it be, and in what ways?

A cardinal error of the Conservatives had been to cold-shoulder Soviet Russia. The suspicion engendered by years of this was, we were told, to be cleared up by the mere existence of a Socialist government in Britain.

Stalin and Attlee would walk hand in hand and the vital friendship of two great powers would be assured. Is it so? Instead, we find the main feature of the United Nations' first meeting is a duel between those very two powers. We find the Soviet Union singling out Britain for attack; we find Foreign Minister Bevin welcoming the opportunity to dispose of what he describes as malicious and unfounded charges.

What right had we in fact to expect anything else? I certainly expected nothing better when, in election speeches, I demanded to know how a party that "disciplines" its members for daring to appear on the same platform with an English Communist can consider itself qualified to get on with Russian Communists. The Communist Party is still refused affiliation to the Labour Party, and it is made pretty clear that the reason behind this is suspicion that all the Communists want is to undermine the Labour Party from within and capture the machinery. This attitude may or may not be perfectly justified; what is not justified is the attempt to persuade the public that Stalin & Co. will hail as brothers the party which holds that attitude.

Bevin is everywhere praised for his firmness in that first difficult session of the United Nations, for the skill and determination with which he resisted ill-founded attacks. He did indeed perform admirably the task of defending our national honour and interests. An odd testimonial to the Foreign Minister of a party which has been inclined to decry patriotism!

Mr. Bevin is not necessarily wrong because he has pleased the opposition, but we cannot dismiss as unimportant the points on which he has displeased his own supporters.

" It is not thus," says a Belgian paper (*Le Matin,* 8th February, 1946), " It is not thus that, during so many years of oppression, millions of men and women pictured the friendly, brotherly and peaceful diplomatic conversations of the post-war world." The blame for this may lie chiefly on the Russian attack, but it seems a pity that Bevin should tend so readily to hit back rather than try to lift the whole thing on to a higher plane. A man who habitually looks for a reconciliation of divergent views would have reacted differently for example to the question of a commission of enquiry in Indonesia. What need was there to stand like an old-fashioned diplomat on his country's dignity? Why not have said instead, " We see no occasion for such an enquiry, but if the Council thinks it would be useful, go ahead—we have nothing to hide." But Bevin has not been accustomed to act thus for his Union, so he misses opportunities that, on reflection, he may well wish he had seized.

Any duffer can keep peace with a nation that thinks as we do; the test of statesmanship is, without sacrificing justice, to maintain peace with those who differ from us.

What signs does the Labour Party show of possessing that talent? Very few. The party was born in conflict, and in terms of conflict it continues to think. It may call on the workers of the world to unite, but they unite only *against* someone else; this is no more world unity than is an international cartel. What good will it do us to wipe out national frontiers and national wars if we merely divide the world on a different plan?

Unquestionably, the Labour Cabinet hates war. So, one must suppose, did Neville Chamberlain. Hatred of war is a good foundation for a peace policy but it

is not everything. Skill, as well as good will, is needed. And it should not be necessary to tell working people that skill is developed only through practice.

A Foreign Minister whose party has been out of office for many years cannot be expected to have experience in that job. No, but he can have experience in tasks of the same kind; he can have developed by long use the qualities of mind that are needed.

Ernest Bevin has a long experience as a negotiator in weighty and difficult matters. The man who can negotiate successfully on behalf of a great Trade Union should, one would think, be a good negotiator on behalf of Britain.

So he may be, but that is not what the world needs. The training of a Trade Union official is a training in the art of getting one's own way. "My Union right or wrong." He has to prevail over the employers; their case exists only to be overcome. This may be excellent preparation for hard bargaining *against* Russia or America or whoever happens to be concerned; it is no asset in discussion *with* other countries to reach a solution acceptable to all.

We have—happily—a number of people whose ideas of peace-building are based on something more solid than a liking for the Russian system of government, the Chinese people, or the French language. People who believe that war can be ousted only by law—by law before which all nations shall be equal as all men are equal before a British judge. People who strive to replace national sovereignty by a law above nations.

Some of these people are in the Labour Party. But is the Labour Party a good instrument of such ideas? I maintain that it is not, because such habits of mind

are foreign to the Trade Unionists who dominate the party. Does a Bevin or a Morrison seek to merge the sovereignty of his Union in a law above both workers and employers? They show no signs of it. On the contrary, they often resist proposals which, by reducing the need to fight the employers, will, they think, weaken the Union. Are those the men to understand when it is necessary to subordinate national interests to the claims of a higher law?

Labour foreign policy may differ from Conservative; it is only too likely to resemble it in one essential—the lack of an adequate guiding principle.

Power Politics

The Labour government has found time in an overcrowded session to repeal the Trade Disputes Act of 1927.

The public attitude to this repeal recalls our attitude to the German breaches of the Treaty of Versailles. We were aware of faults in the treaty; our conscience was uneasy over our own part in its fulfilment; we felt we were in no position to be strict about its observance by the Germans. None the less, German re-armament, the occupation of the Rhineland, were acts of lawlessness that led to terrible consequences. Conscious that the 1927 Act had bad features, we are less critical than we should be over its repeal. The repeal may nevertheless be worse than the Act.

Why did this repeal figure among the priorities of the Labour programme? It was not promised at the election —on the contrary, very few Labour election addresses

referred to it, and it is not to be found in "Let Us Face the Future." It will not bring one man back from the Army a day sooner or settle him more quickly in a job. It will not lay one extra brick on any housing estate or add one ounce to our rations. Its sole purpose and effect is to add to the already great power of the Trade Unions. Now that is not necessarily and in itself a bad thing, but let us look at its implications.

The Labour Party points to the number of its non-Trade Union M.P.s as a proof that the party is no longer dominated by the Trade Unions. It then proceeds to allot precious parliamentary time to a measure that will benefit nobody but the Trade Unions. More than that—the measure amounts, if not to a declaration of war, at least to drastic re-armament threatening the rest of the nation.

The 1927 Act arose out of the General Strike—an act of war by the T.U.C. That the Act may have been vindictive—as the Treaty of Versailles was vindictive—does not alter the fact of the original aggression. Neither in the one case nor in the other is the injustice of some provisions an excuse for going back to the situation that produced the war.

The repeal of the Trade Disputes Act has precisely the same significance as the German repudiation of Versailles. It is an attempt to get, not what reasonable men agree to be just, but the power to demand what the Unions want, whether just or not. It is an attempt to get the power to be judge in one's own cause, which Labour so much condemns in the affairs of States.

This attitude is all of a piece with the rest of Labour's conduct. The fact that the vote of less than half the people has given them a dictator's power in Parliament

is not for them an evil to be provided against at the next election; it is a "triumph." The Minister of National Insurance said, in introducing his Bill, "The Beveridge Report has taken its place as one of the great documents of British history. I am sorry that Sir William is not with us in the House to take part in the translation of his report into legislation." But we cannot regard this as anything more than crocodile tears. Labour put up a candidate against Beveridge, and Labour insists on clinging to the absurd system under which this intervention gave the seat to a Conservative.

The suggestion that the Conservatives, Liberals and what not who have so little voice in Parliament might be allowed some compensatory influence in local affairs has no attractions for Labour; that would be "sabotage." The power Labour already wields is made a reason for demanding ever more power; a thumping majority in Parliament requires in their view a thumping majority on every County Council, every Borough Council, every Urban or Rural District Council, so that the 52 per cent. who voted against Labour at the General Election shall be left without any possibility of resistance.

That in six London boroughs the non-Labour elements are left without a single voice even to state their point of view is thought to be a cause for rejoicing—by these people who call themselves democrats. An all too typical comment appeared in a letter to the *Islington Gazette* defending a 100 per cent Labour Council: "Even a small whimper from a minority opposition may retard progress." Don't you dare whimper, you with different opinions!

These Labour majorities can at least claim to have

been elected, though by an unfair system, but in the methods by which they are added to the electors have no say whatever. An outstanding instance is the Middlesex County Council. Having secured a majority of six in the 1946 election, Labour proceeded to add to it by taking all the thirteen aldermanic seats. To do so, they displaced nine aldermen of long and distinguished service, all of whom had originally been elected as councillors. None of the new aldermen has been elected: eleven of them had not even made the attempt, and the other two had been rejected by the voters. The excuse for packing the aldermanic bench with unelected persons is given in an official statement by the Middlesex County Council Labour group: "This course has been adopted largely because there is evidence in plenty to show that electors are rather tired of elections just now." What earthly right has a group of councillors to decide that the electors are tired of exercising their rights? It does not seem a very big step from this to a new Hitler deciding that the whole country is tired of all elections.

It is this sort of thing which makes us echo Victor Gollancz's exclamation at a meeting in December, 1945: "It is time the Labour leaders realised that Socialism is not National Socialism."

At the other end of the scale, the World Federation of Trade Unions is manœuvering for power. At the great Albert Hall meeting where the United Nations Association welcomed delegates to the first United Nations Assembly, Sir Walter Citrine spoke of the Trade Unions' wish to help the United Nations. His words won little applause. Why? Probably because his audience remembered what the World Federation of

Trade Unions had in fact said to the United Nations. Not "If you want advice on matters of which we have special knowledge, we shall be happy to give it," but "We want a representative on the Economic and Social Council." Not an offer of help but a demand for power.

United Nations delegates are appointed by governments. That may be wrong, but the way to alter it is not by giving some one non-government body a privileged position. It might be a good idea for the people of the world to choose their representatives on the basis not of nationality but of occupation or interests, but if so, *all* interests must be covered. Of course the workers organised in Trade Unions are an important section of mankind, but so are the employers, the shopkeepers, the churches, the women, and many other groups. If the Trade Unions had proposed that *each* of these should be represented, they might have been listened to with respect; to ask for the representation of only *one* is nothing but another move in the old game of power politics.

You are represented on the United Nations through your government. If you want to be doubly represented, join a Trade Union. But you will still be expected to believe that Labour disapproves of plural voting!

TAMMANY

We have long taken justified pride in the incorruptibility of our Civil Service. We have congratulated ourselves that we are not as other nations. We have come to take it for granted that a permanent official serves

one government as faithfully as another; we have poured scorn on the " spoils " system by which American officials change with changing governments. Yet here is a Labour M.P. proposing that very thing! Mr. Warbey objects to the appointment of Sir Alexander Cadogan on the Security Council of the United Nations, because forsooth he was a faithful servant of his former Conservative masters. One can only suppose that Mr. Warbey would prefer a civil servant who refused to serve whenever he disagreed with his government's policy, who therefore could never be relied on to carry out any orders but his own.

Suppose the nation changes its mind by the next election and votes in a government of quite a different colour. Are we to expect that by then the Civil Service will be packed with Labour men who will sabotage the new government's plans? Fortunately, no—Ernest Bevin and Hector McNeil have emphatically committed the government to the opposite view—but the symptom is still disquieting. It fits in all too well with other Labour tendencies.

Pots and Kettles

We all see clearly enough the mote in our neighbour's eye; Labour is particularly good at ignoring the beam in its own. How often have we heard Labour speakers attack Conservative governments for their carelessness of our liberties! Yet when these same Labour people get the chance they often better instruction. What is wrong when Conservatives do it to get their way is

apparently right when Labour men do it to get their way.

The committee on Ministerial Powers which reported in 1932 condemned the practice of setting up special tribunals which usurped the functions of the ordinary courts of law. Even since this report, we have had instances of Labour putting appeal to the courts out of reach of the very people whose interests Labour claims to defend. It is an admirable thing to remove the financial barrier that often stands between the poor man and justice, but what is the use of this if we impose an even more impassable barrier?

The present government's Industrial Injuries Bill provides for appeal to the courts in a number of cases that rarely occur, but on the most frequent and important issue there is no such appeal. The commonest dispute is whether a man's injuries arise "out of and in the course of his employment." Eminently a matter for legal decision, but the Bill allows no appeals to the courts on this question.

Similarly, in the Insurance Bill, appeals concerning entitlement to benefit can be made only to the Commissioner, not to the courts.

One hesitates to say that all this is deliberately designed to give the Insurance Commissioners and other government nominees a despotic power over our lives, an authority which is above the law, but that is certainly the effect. Moreover, it is not an accidental effect, due merely to oversight. Apart from the report on Ministerial Powers, the government has been challenged on these particular points; it must be aware of what it is doing.

In an earlier instance of a similar thing, Labour's

intention was all too clear. Under the Unemployment Act of 1935, there could be an appeal from the court of referees to the umpire, if the referees were divided or if leave were given. Not exactly a great privilege for the employed man, but that was not all. The appeal could be taken up only by a Trade Union. One would think that Labour M.P.s should be full of sympathy for *any* unemployed man, but no. If that man chose not to join a Trade Union, or if he worked in an occupation where no Union existed, his meagre opportunity for appeal had gone. Labour saw a chance to strengthen the hands of the Trade Unions, and—not for the first time nor the last—entered into unholy alliance with the Conservatives against Liberal protests.

Bias in favour of the particular class of workers who are organised in a Trade Union, bias against the man who employs himself, crops up again in the Industrial Injuries Bill of our Labour Government. Although this Bill puts compensation wholly into the hands of the State—that is, nobody's compensation need depend on his having an employer—it still makes no provision for the self-employed man to be compensated for injury.

On another unemployment issue, Labour Members did support the Liberals—that was in trying to get the Unemployment Assistance Board made responsible to a Minister. It remains to be seen whether, now Labour is in power and has the opportunity, it will remedy the defect it then attacked.

The Official Secrets Act of 1922 gave compulsory powers of interrogation to the police—the first time such powers had ever been granted to anyone outside a court of law. Liberals attacked this, and did in fact secure some amendment of the original provisions. They

were supported in this by Labour—but now that Labour is itself in power we find the same thing in the National Insurance Bill. Or rather, not the same thing but worse. In the former Act, it was at least the police who were armed with these excessive powers, and they had at least the excuse that the safety of the State might be involved; under the Labour Bill, inspectors could force us to answer questions, and no one can say that refusal to answer would endanger the State. The Labour Government has yielded to pressure to modify these objectionable features of the Bill, but they would never have done so had not the Liberal leader raised the matter in the House.

Labour said frankly that it would follow the Conservative example of governing by Orders in Council. An undemocratic method, but possibly inspired by nothing worse than a desire to get through more business than an overworked House of Commons could tackle. Or so we might believe, if Labour did not resist Liberal attempts to remove one of the faults of this method. Delegated legislation would be less objectionable if Parliament could amend it. But there is no procedure for so doing, and Liberal attempts to create such procedure have so far been frustrated by the other parties.

The need was pointed out in 1939 by Sir Stafford Cripps in his book "Democracy Up-to-date." Orders in Council, he says, require either "a positive confirmatory resolution by the House giving approval to their continuance in operation, or a negative resolution which brings their operation to an end if it is passed. The farcical nature of this procedure was well demonstrated recently when a small verbal misprint was dis-

covered by the Opposition which made nonsense of that part of the Order. Nothing could be done to correct it though the entire House, including the Minister in charge, urgently desired its correction. Eventually it had to be withdrawn after a great waste of time and a new Order substituted for it." So Labour is not ignorant of the need for power to amend, but it still will not help Liberals to get it.

I must not imply that Labour Members have never been known to protest against power being taken out of the hands of Parliament. They have—when the proposals have come from the Conservative side. Labour supported the Liberals against the creation of an Unemployment Assistance Board not responsible to a Minister; they supported the Liberals against handing over old age pensioners to this same Board.

One is driven to the conclusion that the Labour Party has no principles in the matter. It does not really care that all citizens should have the protection of the courts; it only agitates when its opponents infringe that right. It objects to special tribunals when they are the instruments of Conservative policy, but is ready enough to set up its own. It has no settled opinion about delegated legislation: that expedient is right if it serves Labour purposes. Powers in the hands of officials are right or wrong according to what government employs those officials. The share which a group of people should have in government is determined not by the number of people in that group but by the pull which they have at Labour Party headquarters.

Power politics. "My party right or wrong." Surely it is time we advanced beyond that. Surely Labour could do better than to play in the modern industrial

world the rôle of the autocrat of by-gone days whose delight in worldly power was unlimited by any sense of responsibility to a higher authority.

Pyrrhic Victory

If anyone's worldly hope has prospered, it is surely the Trade Unions'. Others may grumble, but surely they at least are happy. All over the country, their nominees have won seats in Parliament; the old stalwarts of the industrial towns are joined by new men who have stormed ancient Conservative strongholds. Trade Unionists hold high office; the policies for which they have striven are being put into effect. The Trade Unions are glorying in their victory. The government is theirs; the future is theirs.

Or isn't it?

Some Trade Union members aren't so sure. Their M.P.s aren't so sure either. They are having to answer awkward questions about the position of Trade Unions in nationalised industries.

"Shall we still be free to strike?" Imagine any Labour M.P. facing a Trade Union audience and daring to answer "no"! But suppose he says "yes." There follow the supplementaries. "If we strike against the State, shall we be treated as rebels?" "Will our State employer use troops to break the strike?" The highly unpopular answer now being given to dockers is "yes, if that were necessary, because a strike of workers in a State-owned industry would be sabotage of the Government and a hostile act against the people."

The Labour member for Gateshead says that "The poor M.P. who has spent most of his political life denouncing the use of troops as strike-breakers is not finding it easy to explain that, when the docks become State-owned, dockers and soldiers will both be State workers and, therefore, the use of troops would merely be the employment of alternative labour." The workers have exchanged King Log for King Stork.

Another supplementary: "If miners are State employees and miners may strike, what about the Post Office, the water works, the B.B.C., the Army?" Surely they must be in the same position, and the repeal of the Trade Disputes Act seems to indicate that the Government thinks so too. If several thousand R.A.F. men can mutiny with impunity, there would seem to be no limit to the people who may strike.

Are we then to look forward to an era of strikes in all industries, including the most vital public services? Will nationalised miners or railwaymen be satisfied to retain their right to strike at the price of one day finding themselves without postal services, wireless or schools, unable to cash pensions or draw on the savings bank?

If the Trade Unions do find themselves thus at war with their State employers, what becomes of their relations with the Labour Party? Will they leave the party, taking their political levy with them and using it to get their own nominees elected to Parliament? At least one Labour M.P. sees this as a possibility, and doesn't like it. Garry Allighan says: "It would not be difficult to foresee Trade Union M.P.s holding the balance in Parliament, using their vote-power on either side as the welfare of their organisations demanded. That, of course, would be the midnight of Parliamentary demo-

cracy; it would change to the dawn of the Corporate State."

Right, Mr. Allighan, it would. And for that reason, those who joined the Labour Party for ideals rather different from that of the Corporate State are not going to remain in the party unless the Trade Unions go out of it.

Labour tries to impress the electors with the number of its non-Trade Union M.P.s. This is supposed to prove that Labour is no longer a class party but a national party. In reality, all it will do is to ensure that the party splits up sooner than it would otherwise have done.

Trade Disunions

If Labour finds itself in difficulties with the Unions in nationalised industries, it has only itself to blame.

The trouble is inevitable as long as Labour retains its out-of-date combative attitude. Trade Unions were formed, as national armies were formed, to fight an enemy. No one who has read novels of early nineteenth century industry can doubt that many—perhaps most—employers *were* the enemies of their workpeople, that decent wages and conditions could be wrung from them only by a powerful organisation of the workers, just as Britain could save her liberty from Hitler only by organising herself for war.

But are we to remain forever at that stage? We are busy creating the means by which Hitler's war could have been avoided; we are setting up world organisations on the assumption that the interests of all can be

reconciled if only we talk sensibly instead of fighting about them. Do not the same principles apply to the conflicts between employer and employed? It is really absurd for the Unions still to set most store by those things which were essential when Dickens' blacking factory or Hood's "Song of the Shirt" represented the attitude of the average employer; it is absurd still to regard themselves primarily as strike machines.

If the Unions generally had progressed to the stage of regarding themselves primarily as part of the industry and only a long way after as opponents of the boss, then it would be easy enough to fit themselves into a nationalised industry without the risk of becoming saboteurs of the State. It is only because Trade Union technique is founded on the idea of the boss as an enemy that it won't do when the boss is the State.

In some happy factories the employer-worker relationship has progressed from what we might call the competitive armaments stage to the United Nations stage —but the initiative has not come from Transport House. Now that Transport House finds itself in the position of employer, it must reap what it has sown.

Learn or Perish

The Trade Unions, indeed the Labour Party generally, are faced with the necessity of learning in two or three years the lesson they have persistently neglected. There isn't a hope that they will do it.

If the Government of which they are so large a part is to survive, they have to reconcile their duty as repre-

sentatives of a certain class with their duty towards the whole country. The reconciliation of conflicting views and interests is no easy task for anyone; it is virtually impossible for people trained in antagonism. States are finding it hard to renounce their sovereignty; Trade Union leaders show no sign that they have even heard of the need for such a thing on the part of their Union.

Men and women everywhere have had enough of quarrelsome States making wreckage of our lives every twenty years or so. Are those same men and women going to tolerate the same sort of behaviour by warring factions within the State? Strike committees have indeed no atomic bombs at their disposal, but they are just as determined to coerce, by force of a different kind, those who disagree with them. They are just as little inclined to seek a reconciliation between their views and those of others, to acknowledge that there is anything above themselves to which allegiance must be given despite grievances, however real those grievances may be.

The peaceful neutrals who have to walk to work, shiver in fireless rooms or watch food rotting on the docks will surely demand that the Unions find some more rational way of settling their disputes. The housewife who cannot strike will hardly be encouraged to think that the men who use the strike weapon are those best fitted to get the world out of its troubles. The dead man gassed as the result of the gas works strike cannot use his vote in protest, but his relations can.

The Labour Party is dependent on the Unions, but it is also dependent on the votes of millions outside the Unions. It cannot retain power unless it can somehow

reconcile these two, and that it cannot do so long as the strike mentality remains. The Labour Party has vigorous seeds of discord within its own ranks and it is faced by a task of government that might well daunt even the strongest, most united party. The war has proved that people held together by a great idea can keep their solidarity in apparently impossible conditions; a mere collection of interests will shed a few of its members every time one of those interests is disappointed. The Labour Party has no great idea that inspires all its members. It is a heterogeneous collection of practical social reformers, idealistic Socialists and self-interested Trade Union bosses, quite unfitted to rise to the great occasions of our time.

WITHOUT A CHARACTER

THE Labour Government, then, is doomed. Doomed, not to go the way of all flesh in some distant future, but to meet a more violent death at a date near enough to demand our consideration now.

After Labour, what? Will the swing of the pendulum carry an opposing party into power? Are British politics essentially a two-party affair? And if so, which are to be the two parties?

Will the waning popularity of a government in difficult times automatically bring back the Conservatives for another period of office? The Conservatives themselves have no confidence in this and for once at least they are right.

. . . . . .

If the Conservative Party is to return to power it must be on its merits, and not merely by virtue of its position as a British Institution. The Conservative Party is no longer an Institution, whose disappearance is as unthinkable as a transformation in the English climate. No longer does it rest upon a class accepted as the natural leaders of the nation; no longer do rich and poor alike believe that a duke inherits statesman-like qualities that must be forever lacking in a dustman. Nor does the idea of Conserving appear to this generation much more fruitful than Canute's command to the tide. Change is all about us, and if one political change proves a failure then there is an infinity of other possible changes that can be tried rather than return to the

old order or to a party associated with it. The electors can no longer be relied on to run home to their Conservative mother if the Socialist bridegroom turns out a disappointment.

But supposing the Conservative Party also moves with the times? Suppose it transforms itself à la Quintin Hogg into a party of reform; can it then regain its position? The omens are not favourable. There is little sign that anyone is about to do for this generation of Conservatives what Disraeli did for his, and if there were a drastic change in the party, is it to be expected that the electors would believe in such a conversion? At the General Election of 1945 the Conservatives were led by a great Prime Minister with all the prestige of a victorious war leader, a man famous for getting things done, a man who in the past had not been afraid to differ from his party and had turned out to be right. Surely if ever the Conservative Party could be thought capable of tackling the new world in a new spirit, that was the time—but the electors would have none of it. With all Churchill's pull, with all the advantages of choosing their time, the Conservatives lost votes as compared with 1935. While each of the other main parties increased its poll, the Conservatives and their "National" hangers-on lost support all over the country.

Delayed Action Bomb

That great defeat was in the main due to political memories being less short than is often supposed. The people would not be deceived a third time. They would not re-engage a servant of proved incompetence and dis-

honesty. The revolt was no sudden whim, no affair of a Red Letter or a savings scare; it was a delayed-action bomb with explosive accumulated during twenty years. What takes long to learn will take long to forget.

Not alone among my generation I have a loathing of the Conservative Party that dates back to my student days. Days when we slunk around Geneva trying to look like Greeks or Finns or anything but nationals of the country "represented" by Lord "Crush-'em-down." For eager young men and women, to be made to feel ashamed of their country is an experience they do not readily forgive. The bitterness of the days when we watched Britain cramp the League of Nations because this action would mean a little risk or that development would cost a few pounds is still with us, and our ranks have been joined by all those who rose in revolt against the Hoare-Laval agreement or writhed in shame under Munich.

We of the betrayed Geneva generation are the allies of that other embittered legion, that "forgotten army" of the peace who dragged out idle, aimless lives until a grateful government found a use for them at last in the war it had allowed Hitler to plot. If anyone thinks those years have been forgotten or forgiven, let him spend a few weeks among soldiers waiting for release, talking of their fathers' fate after the 1914-1918 war.

The nation no longer trusts the Tories. It may have trusted Churchill, but it would not even for his sake vote into power again the party that kept him out of office till our need was desperate. The use of the "National" label for party advantage served its purpose in 1931 and 1935; to-day it seems indecent to many who were deceived then. When Mr. Beverley Baxter says, "We

regard him (Mr. Churchill) as the greatest Englishman of our time, too great, too vast in imagination and ability to be harnessed to the service of a party," the reaction is merely one of disgust that such words come from a party which so recently used Mr. Churchill merely as a worm on a hook wherewith to catch votes.

The nation may have forgotten the precise words of Sir Samuel Hoare before the 1935 election: "In conformity with its precise and explicit obligations the League stands, and my country stands with it, for the collective maintenance of the Covenant in its entirety, and particularly for steady and collective resistance to all acts of unprovoked aggression"; few may remember just how much of Abyssinia Hoare and his associate Laval proposed to hand over to Italy a few short weeks after declarations of support for the League had won that election for the Conservatives. Nevertheless, the impression persists that Conservative promises have something in common with pie-crust.

A people that has so long been restive under war-time censorships wants the truth. It doubts whether the truth can come from a party which, with all the resources at a government's command, seemed itself so ill-informed on the danger that threatened us from Germany. As early as May, 1935, Sir Archibald Sinclair drew attention to the German air menace, and the following November Mr. Churchill gave figures showing that the Luftwaffe was much stronger than the R.A.F. All the government did was to reject Mr. Churchill's figures—but they turned out to be right. Was the Conservative government of that day merely mistaken, or worse? Time was when such a shocking suggestion could hardly be dared, but that was before a Conservative Prime Minister

declared in an election campaign, "I give you my word there shall be no great armaments," and after the election admitted that he believed great armaments to be necessary but had not said so for fear of losing votes! Our belief in the integrity of Conservative Prime Ministers belongs to the days before such a man was canonised as "Honest Baldwin," before Chamberlain in April, 1938, declared "We are almost terrifyingly strong" and only five months later justified our abandonment of Czechoslovakia on the ground that we were too weak to do otherwise.

. . . . . .

The Conservatives know they were beaten on their record. They cannot pretend that the days of their rule were good, neither have they any positive policy to fire the country's imagination. Instead, they have begun to call upon the country to support them in a battle against the tyranny of Socialism. They may recall the moving words in which Neville Chamberlain summoned us to fight the "evil things" of National Socialism. They ought also to recall that this same Neville Chamberlain, only nine months earlier, after his experience of National Socialism in action at Munich, declared to the Foreign Press Association, "I find it difficult to rouse much excitement over different systems of government." Is it any wonder if some still think that it was not for our free system of government the Conservative Prime Minister called on us to fight, but for the threatened interests of big business or finance?

And were we so free under the Conservatives? It is all very well to attack the Labour Government for its attachment to controls, but the regime which Lord Chief

Justice Hewart called "the New Despotism" was a Conservative one.

THE NOT-SO-NEW DESPOTISM.

> "I have never been a Socialist. I have never liked the idea of an infringement of liberty, or being told what to do by a clerk in Whitehall."
>
> Winston Churchill, Oldham, 26th June, 1945.

> "I grant the party opposite that where Philip of Spain, where Napoleon, where the Kaiser and where Hitler failed, they may kill the instinct for liberty in this country, simply because liberty becomes a legend which nobody remembers."
>
> Beverley Baxter, House of Commons, 9th October, 1945.

This is all very well, but, in Mr. Dingle Foot's words, "it is as if Madame de Pompadour had reproached Madame du Barry with being no better than she should have been."

The creators of "the New Despotism" are not entitled to attack in the name of liberty the authors of a newer despotism. Labour certainly shows little enough regard for our liberties, but (perhaps only for lack of opportunity) its record is at least less black than that of the Conservatives.

"Your policemen are wonderful" may be a joke, but it is also a tribute to a country where the policeman is the friend of every decent citizen, where freedom from wrongful arrest or imprisonment is taken for granted and even accidental infringement of that right is treated as a very serious matter. Conservatives are supposedly attached to our great traditions. They ought to be the

first defenders of that great instrument which for three hundred years has protected the British people against wrongful imprisonment. Yet it was a Conservative government which, in 1934, passed the Visiting Forces (British Commonwealth) Act. This Act does not merely suspend Habeas Corpus for a period of emergency; it permanently cancels it as far as concerns Dominion forces in this country condemned by their courts martial. No matter how improperly constituted the court, no matter how flagrantly wrong its verdict, those British subjects have no redress. It may be that few people will ever be affected by that Act. The fact remains that never before in our history has a class of people in this island been deprived permanently and in time of peace of the protection of Habeas Corpus. Surely the Conservative Party contains enough lawyers to make them aware of the seriousness of such a precedent!

It is another British tradition that a man is deemed innocent until he is proved guilty. Again, the Conservatives threw this overboard in the Incitement to Disaffection Bill. Under this Bill in its original form, the possession of a copy of the Ten Commandments could incriminate you as a person desirous of persuading a soldier that he ought not to kill the enemy. The onus would be on you to prove that you had no intention of using the sixth commandment for that purpose!

Nor is that all. Another clause of the same Bill made it an offence to commit an act preparatory to an offence. Thus, the Attorney General of that day admitted that a man might have been indicted for buying a railway ticket to Aldershot, since it might have been said that this was an act preparatory to an attempt to seduce a soldier from his duty. The Bill was described by that great legal

authority Sir William Holdsworth as "the most daring encroachment upon the liberty of the subject which the executive government has yet attempted at a time which was not a time of emergency."

It is true that the Bill never became law in its original form, but no thanks to the Conservatives for that. The Conservatives put forward these outrageous proposals; it was the protests of the Opposition, chiefly the Liberals, which secured the removal of some of their worst features.

It is useless to contend that such measures are really harmless because they would in practice be used only in a sensible manner and the extreme instances suggested would not arise. Such powers *may* be abused. They *have been* abused. The Official Secrets Act of the 1922 Conservative government gave the police compulsory powers of interrogation—the first time such powers were conferred on anybody outside the courts. Liberals—supported at that time by Labour—contended that those powers might be used to obstruct a journalist in the legitimate exercise of his profession. The Conservative answer was to pooh-pooh the suggestion and to give a categorical assurance that the powers of interrogation would never be used in that way. Nevertheless, in 1938, a Stockport journalist was convicted under the Official Secrets Act for refusing to disclose to a police officer the source of his information concerning a man wanted for fraudulent conversion. Be it noted that no question of "information to the enemy" was involved.

Worse was to follow. In attempting to get the Act amended, Mr. Dingle Foot said, on the 24th May, 1938, "It is not only the Press that is threatened by powers of this kind. They might even affect Members of this

House. Suppose a Member of this House, in the course of debate, made certain assertions from which it was suspected, reasonably or unreasonbly, that he had been the recipient of an unauthorised disclosure by a person holding office under His Majesty, he might the next day be approached by a superintendent of police holding a copy of the Official Report and be required to state the source from which he obtained his information. If he refused, he would have committed an offence and would be liable to imprisonment for a maximum of two years." Conservative Members shouted "No!" However, only one month later, Mr. Duncan Sandys, Conservative Member for Norwood, rose to state that the Attorney General had asked him to disclose the source of figures which he had quoted in a written question to the Secretary of State for War. When Mr. Sandys asked what would be the consequence of refusal, the Attorney General "read me the text of Section 6 of the Official Secrets Act and pointed out that I might render myself liable to a term of imprisonment not exceeding two years." So the Liberals were proved right, and a Select Committee was necessary to protect an M.P. against the misuse of powers that should never have existed.

Labour has since bettered instruction in the matter of powers of interrogation, but that is no encouragement to flee from Labour to the Conservative originators of the method.

I have condemned Labour for depriving certain people of the right to appeal to the ordinary courts of law. But here again it would be foolish to turn to the Conservatives in the hope of anything better.

The Conservatives created the Agricultural Marketing Boards. Now, if a dairy farmer has a disagreement with the Milk Marketing Board, who settles the matter? Why, the Milk Marketing Board! No appeal there, to the courts or to any impartial body.

Some of us have long been urging that nations should give up the claim to be judges in their own cause: the Conservative Party on the contrary establishes the Marketing Boards as judges in their own cause.

. . . . . .

The committee on Ministerial Powers which reported in 1932 condemned the practice of inserting in a Bill a "finality clause" such as "The making of any regulations under this Section shall be conclusive evidence that the requirements of this Section have been complied with." Nevertheless, the following year the Agricultural Marketing Bill appeared with this clause in it. The Liberals in the Commons fought this with no support from the other parties. Fortunately, Lords Samuel and Reading had more success in the House of Lords, which amended the bill, the amendment being later accepted by the Conservatives in the Commons.

Another retreat of a similar nature was forced on the Conservatives the next year. Under the Unemployment Act of 1934, the Unemployment Assistance Board was not responsible to a Minister. But the first regulations drafted by that irresponsible body were so bad that Parliament compelled their amendment.

Irresponsibility of Ministers has been extended by successive acts of Conservative governments. Parliament is no longer the supreme authority when a Minister can legislate on his own account. If anyone doubts that a

Minister can legislate on his own account, and in fact does so, let him look at the fat volumes of Statutory Rules and Orders that appeared even before the war gave an excuse for such expedients. Even after years of agitation for the reduction, these things are still appearing at the rate of twenty-five a week—and every one of them has the force of law.

Now, this delegated legislation, like nationalisation, is all very well in its place. It is very much out of place, and all very ill, when it enables a Minister, or worse still a permanent official, to override the declared will of the people's representatives in Parliament. M.P.s are overworked already without being asked to concern themselves with the details of administration. Ministers must be allowed to make orders translating into day-to-day administration the intentions of an Act. But the matter is otherwise when these orders exceed the original Act in volume and go far beyond its original intention. The "Henry VIII" Clause enables a Minister to do pretty well what he likes. The Rating and Valuation Act, 1925, says: "If any difficulty arises in connection with the application of this Act to any exceptional area . . . or otherwise in bringing into operation any of the provisions of this Act, the Minister (of Health) may by order remove the difficulty . . . or do any other thing which appears to him necessary or expedient . . . for bringing the said provisions into operation, and any such order may modify the provisions of this Act so far as may appear to the Minister necessary or expedient for carrying the order into effect." "Anything which appears to him necessary or expedient"—no matter how unnecessary or inexpedient it may appear to everyone else.

Most of us resent interference with our lives by conscription; at least that interference should be confined to what is specifically authorised by our own elected Parliament. It may have been necessary for the Conservative government in 1939 to introduce the Military Training Act. It was not necessary to include in that Act the clause: "His Majesty by Order in Council may make provision for such consequential matters as it may appear to him expedient to provide for by reason of the passing of this Act, and may by any such Order modify any enactment relating to such matters." When we consider that "consequential matters" might include such things as age of call-up, length of service and exemptions, we see how far the Minister's powers extend. Not only may he make Orders to carry out the will of Parliament with regard to such matters, but he may modify the Act expressing that will. What use is it for Parliament to say that students or apprentices shall not have their studies interrupted, if an Order in Council can call them up at any time?

Not only do a large number of Conservative Acts of Parliament provide for such Orders; they also make it as difficult as possible for those Orders to be challenged, cancelled or modified.

There is frequently no appeal to the law courts. The Roads Act, 1920, says: "An Order made by the Minister under this sub-section shall be final and not subject to appeal in any Court." Nor can these Orders be amended by Parliament. They can indeed be annulled —if any overworked M.P. manages to spot them in time

—but there is no machinery by which the House of Commons can amend them. Liberals have repeatedly tried to remedy this state of affairs but the Conservatives continue to resist all such attempts.

With such a record, the Conservatives dare to pose as defenders of liberty against Socialism!

Power Politics Again!

"If your savings are used by the government for political purposes you do not like, I would urge you to withhold them and invest them in normal Stock Exchange activities."

Viscount Hinchingbrooke, to Wembley Conservatives, 28th February, 1946.

"Quislings in British industry and commerce—those who co-operate with the government in the nationalisation of industry."

Sir Herbert Williams, at the Annual Meeting of the City of London Conservatives and Unionist Association, 1946.

"Those who thought fit to disgrace themselves and the City of London by acting as collaborators with the Socialist Government."

Commander Braithwaite, at the same meeting.

So the beaten Conservatives mean to sabotage the government. They mean to justify the charges Labour has made against financiers. They speak of "Quislings" and "collaboration," as if our elected government were the equivalent of a brutal foreign invader.

But, say the Conservatives, this is not "our" elected government; it is elected only by 48 per cent. of those

who voted; the majority of us are just a conquered people.

Exactly: this is just as little "our" government as was the Conservative government of 1922 or 1924. But it is the government legally elected under the system for which the Conservatives are more responsible than anyone else. If they insist on maintaining that system, and are quite satisfied when it happens to benefit them, they must also accept it when it benefits someone else.

Alternatively, they may decide that they have made a mistake, that the electoral law which now hits them unfairly is unfair all round, and that they will try to get it altered. But no; these upholders of the British Constitution have not yet learned that lawlessness is worse than a bad law, that if the law is wrong it must be changed, not flouted. They are prepared to use force to upset the result of a perfectly legal election; they are ready to stage a financial strike against the party whose use of the general strike they so bitterly attacked.

Certainly, Viscount Hinchingbrooke seems to have an inkling that his methods might be too dangerous, for he went on to say that a wholesale withdrawal of savings would have a very serious effect and he could not advise it. That is, he sees nothing wrong in the strike weapon itself; he only gets a bit frightened when it works too well. He is like a person horrified by the atomic bomb but quite complacent about killing on a smaller scale.

Conservatives have in the past been able to impose their will on the country thanks to majorities in Parliament out of all proportion to their support among the people; they preserve the old electoral system in the hope that it will give them this advantage again. They will not institute a voting system that would give them their

rights, because that system would prevent them ever again having more than their rights.

A group of Conservative M.P.s reported in March, 1946, that the House of Commons does not reflect the people's opinion as expressed in votes, but that they do not propose to take any steps to alter this because they attach more importance to having " two strong parties." A party which thus upholds injustice will get what it richly deserves if it finds itself no longer one of the strong parties.

Conservatives affect to favour a " National " government, yet they above all are responsible for the fact that over half the nation have no voice in our government. After the 1914-18 war, the Conservatives were the only party a majority of whom voted for the retention of the old, unfair system; aided by nearly half the Labour members, they succeeded in defeating the establishment of fair voting. After this last war, an unholy alliance of Conservatives and Labour foisted on us again the system that gives less than half the nation absolute control over our destinies. But do Conservatives (or Labour) see the remedy for this in electoral justice? Certainly not; they see it only in getting more power for themselves. Parliament is weakened by being unrepresentative; Conservatives would weaken it further by trying to override its decisions with the weapon of the financial strike.

The " Quislings " whom Sir Herbert Williams denounces are merely following their normal instincts. (And incidentally demonstrating the fallacy of the Socialist remedy). Why should they care if their concerns are nationalised? The business must still be managed by somebody, who will get his salary in Civil Service security, undisturbed by any fear of failure. Power in

a government department is not so very different from power in a great corporation, equally desirable to seekers of power, and perhaps even more easily to be had by those who know which strings to pull. A big business man who already owns a large part of some industry may well picture himself with pleasure as the controller or commissar of the whole industry, far more powerful than when he had to consider the likes and dislikes of a million small customers—or lose their custom. We may well see repeated in this country the history of Hitler, who got votes by propaganda for the small man, promising to close the chain stores, but whose funds came from big business.

When politics are determined by moral principles, each of us can know where the other stands, but in a pursuit of power for one class or another any unholy alliance is possible which serves to exploit the weak.

IMPROPAGANDA
(Or should we spell it Gandar?)

With their love of power, their belief that power for their class is automatically in the best interests of all, it is natural that the Conservatives have devoted to gaining power energies that might have been better employed. They have also used methods which were better not employed at all.

One may argue endlessly whether anyone in 1935 was justified in promising "I give you my word there shall be no great armaments." It is surely beyond

argument that "Honest Baldwin" was not honest when he said this, being quite convinced in his own mind that great armaments were necessary. To use a pledge like that to win an election—well knowing that it would have to be repudiated—was impropaganda with a vengeance. As if that were not bad enough, the people who used that method of getting back into office blamed the Opposition for preventing necessary arming. They—the government, with all the relevant information at their disposal—pretended the need was not there, and then blamed the Opposition for believing them!

Was "Honest Baldwin" an exception, so named in sarcasm because he was so different from other Conservative politicians? Not a bit of it; their standard of honesty was really as low as that. Before his enormity, we had our warning of what Conservative promises meant, our taste of the methods by which national danger could be turned to party advantage. The 1931 election could hardly be beaten for "impropaganda." Not only was the crisis magnified in the well-founded hope that panic would drive people into the "right" camp, but explicit pledges were given and were thrown overboard as soon as they had served their vote-catching purpose. When the National Government was formed, its Prime Minister promised: "It is a Government of individuals, formed to do that work. If the work takes little time the life of the Government will be short. When that life is finished . . . the general political situation will return to what it was last week. . . . The election which will follow will not be fought by the Government. There will be no coupons." Within a fortnight, a section of the Conservative Press was agitating for a general election. As we all know, those Conservatives got their

way. The election *was* fought by the Government; there *were* coupons, and the Parliament resulting from that election lasted four years.

We were assured in the 1931 election campaign that Free Trade or Protection was not an issue, and that in any case no import duties would be imposed on food. Neville Chamberlain, on the eve of the poll, said of tariffs: "All these matters are going to be examined carefully, thoroughly, impartially by the National Government when it is formed again." Protection was not to be fastened on us without an impartial enquiry first. No such enquiry was ever held, but we got the tariffs.

Nor did these breaches of faith arise from an honest change of opinion, or changes of circumstances, after the election. Some of those who gave such pledges may have intended to honour them, but some clearly did not. One "National" candidate to whom I gave some help in the early stages of the election repeated in his speeches and on his posters all the promises designed to catch the Free Trade vote. Only from an intimate friend of his did I learn that in private he was saying very different things—and he got no more help from me.

Is this the past history of a now reformed character? Certainly not—the last election was run on similar lines. The Conservatives gave us no policy but plenty of impropaganda.

We were to vote Conservative in order to support Churchill—quite forgetting that all through the years when war might have been averted Churchill and his warnings were abused and derided by almost all other members of the Conservative Party, that finally, when we were on the edge of disaster, he was pushed into

office by Liberal and Labour support—half the Conservative Party still voting against him.

We were to send Churchill back to "finish the job," but we were not allowed to finish the job before having an election. Churchill himself, knowing of the atomic bomb, must have known that if the election were postponed till the October there was a good chance of the war being over by then. Whether he used his influence for postponement we do not know, but if he did he was overruled by the Conservative Central Office. Of course Central Office would not want to wait till the war was over, for what would then have become of their one election cry? How could they work the "National" stunt if the national emergency were over? So we had to have an election with no time for proper preparation, on ill-compiled registers, just so as not to waste the one thing that *was* ready—Conservative impropaganda.

One user of the "finish the job" slogan was an obscure Conservative candidate who managed to defeat the Liberal leader by promises which at the time of writing he has taken no steps to fulfil. Gandar Dower asked for election to help Churchill "finish the job"; when the job was finished, i.e,. when the Japanese war was over, he would resign his seat. Nine months after VJ Day he is still there. (Still in his seat at Westminster, that is, not in the constituency where he promised to reside but does not). And does Gandar Dower's party repudiate the conduct of this honourable gentleman? Far from it—the Caithness Conservative Association urges him to retain his seat. Well, at least there is one constituency that should not fall for any more impropaGandar in a hurry.

ETHELRED

> "It is said with some truth that the Conservative Party never reformed anything, and that is the main reason for the divorce of the Party from the people. It does nothing to capture the imagination of the people."
>
> Viscount Hinchingbrooke, Conservative M.P. for South Dorset.

So that is the Conservative Party! A shocking past, and a present that fills its own members with gloom.

How does it set out to recapture the lost votes? By a pamphlet that inevitably provokes the comment "more money than sense." Charming pictures of the England that belongs to all parties alike, from its battleships to its babies. Two factory chimneys which are meant to represent private industrial enterprise but to most people will recall the public enterprise of Battersea power station! Plenty of fine words about democracy and freedom, but never a concrete proposal to achieve them. Not even—which is far easier—a criticism of anything the Labour government has done. One gathers that the Conservative Party still thinks a strong Britain more important than a strong United Nations, and that it still believes the Dominions can be bound to us in friendship by confining their trade within the Commonwealth and Empire. Beyond that, it would be difficult to say what it does believe.

The "Evening Standard" calls this production "a Pamphlet of the Commonplace," which "lacks imagination, truth or purpose."

Is this the best a great party can do in a desperate

situation? For the situation of the Conservative Party is desperate. Labour will be hard put to it to retain votes, but at least it has its chance while it lasts. The Liberals have a tough job to raise their votes to the point where they will secure a reasonable number of seats, but at least they do know that their nucleus of two and a quarter million votes is to be relied on; they can justifiably hope that this number will grow substantially in more favourable circumstances; they have no cause to think that the country hates them.

The Conservatives have no such comfort. They, alone of the big parties, lost votes at this last election. These votes were lost not through any accidental circumstances but because the people really disliked the Conservative Party. To an unknown but obviously large extent, the Labour vote was simply an anti-Tory vote. Moreover, the ten million votes the Conservatives did collect are by no means theirs " for keeps." An unknown but certainly large number of them were votes for Churchill; no one at the next election will vote for Colonel Blimp or Lord Tomnoddy just because he belongs to Churchill's party. An unknown number of Liberals who had no candidate voted Conservative as the less of two evils; this cannot be relied on to recur. In such a situation the Conservative Party produces its " Pamphlet of the Commonplace."

. . . . . .

Are the actions of the Conservative Party any more inspired than its literature?

It is, after all, the official Opposition, and the Opposition, even when weak in numbers, has opportunities to make itself felt. An Opposition that can mobilise behind it a vocal public opinion may bring considerable

pressure to bear even on a strongly-placed government. How have the Conservatives used their opportunities?

Early in the life of the new Parliament they tabled a vote of censure. And the terms of their motion showed them to be quite out of touch not only with the mood of the country but with the traditional British spirit, which they would like us to think they know so much about. "Give a fellow a chance" is a good British maxim, and certainly at the time of the censure debate last December our people were in the mood to give the Labour government a chance. Yet the Conservative opposition based its censure motion not on what the government *had* done but on what it had *not* done in its four months of office. Had they not the sense to see that such charges could rally little support? Their motion served no purpose but to give their speakers practice in making the best of a weak case.

Had the motion instead been based on objections to what the government *had* done in its short life, it might at least have attracted some interest.

Attack is indeed difficult for a party which at nearly every point is open to the retort "you're another," but that is a poor excuse for choosing to attack just where success is least likely and least deserved.

The official Opposition is supposed to be the leader of anti-government opinion in the country. What leading does the Conservative opposition do? Precious little. Instead, it waits to see how the cat will jump; it tries to take not the right course, but the popular one.

Look at that lamentable exhibition over the American loan. We see a great party, recently the government of this country and hoping to be so again, unable to make up its mind on a practical issue of the first importance;

unable to weigh our benefit from the loan against hard terms and get an answer. We see the Conservatives pleading in excuse that if they had been the government they would not have been faced with the same hard decision. There is little evidence to support this, but even if it were true, it is no excuse for not giving the country a lead when the hard decision must in fact be faced. The Liberals in 1938 had far better ground for saying that they would never have allowed our foreign relations to drift to the point of Munich; nevertheless, Munich having come, the Liberals were perfectly clear whether that bargain ought to have been accepted or not —and said so, without waiting to discover whether theirs would be the popular line.

We look at His Majesty's Opposition and see it being asked by its leader to abstain from voting on an issue which was both highly important and of great public interest. If this is what happens when that leader is a great fighting man, the last to favour "masterly inactivity," what on earth are we to expect of the party when he gives place to a less militant personality?

Is it true that the Conservatives could not make up their minds whether the financial bargain was for us a good or a bad bargain? They would have us believe that they knew their own minds perfectly well but did not choose to express them—or would express them only in words and not in the deed of voting. Worse and worse! For what possible grounds could there be for abstaining if they really knew which side they were on? A party might legitimately abstain if it were in the position of saying "we dislike this measure, but our vote against it might turn the government out, and that would be a worse evil"—but if the whole Conservative Party in the

present House of Commons had gone into the "No" lobby, and if it had been followed by every non-Labour Member in the House, there still was no danger of the government being defeated. Nor would the Conservatives have thought it an evil if it had been!

If that legitimate reason does not exist, we are driven to the conclusion that there is a less legitimate reason—the fear of unpopularity. The loan was not popular—so there was a temptation to mobilise against the government public discontent with hard terms. But hard times are even more unpopular than hard terms. If the Conservatives curried favour with some by moving the rejection of the loan, they would incur the disfavour of others by thus advocating the cessation of American supplies. So they decided to do neither—in the hope of being able to plead in the future that they had no responsibility, whichever way things turned out, Vain hope! As Lord Samuel said in the House of Lords debate on the loan, abstention is itself an act. The British public will forgive a mistaken act prompted by generous motives; it will not forgive an act prompted only by craven fear of unpopularity. It will not entrust with the responsibility of government a party which has shown itself concerned mainly to dodge responsibility.

The Conservative Party's attitude in the loan debate was dictated by pure opportunism—because the party holds no principle that was affected by the matter. For the Conservatives, it was merely a question of a bargain, to the immediate advantage or otherwise of this country. That the debate concerned not only the loan but Bretton Woods was a secondary matter, and that Bretton Woods meant not merely currency arrangements but a new chapter in world finance was hinted at only by two back-

benchers. It was left to the Liberals to suggest that to get the nations working together on their financial difficulties was the really important thing, more important than any question of the particular method employed. Edgar Granville pledged the support of the Liberal Party "because it believes that this is a step towards the well-established Liberal policy of free trade and economic co-operation." He pointed out that the International Investment Board was a suggestion to be found in the Liberal Yellow Book of nearly twenty years ago, he pleaded with the leaders of the great powers to produce a United Nations reconstruction plan, and to realise that "this may be our last chance to prevent the nations of the world from beginning another economic war." Hopkin Morris thought this was "one of the issues that ought not to be dealt with in an accounting spirit." Rather different, this, from the Conservative opposition, who, lacking any realisation of the agreement's potentialities for the world's future, was guided by merely tactical considerations. The party which asks us to vote it into the House of Commons merely "to keep the Socialists out" is equally unconstructive when it gets there.

. . . .

"Difficulties are opportunities in disguise."

The Conservative Party in office was equally a party of opportunity-missers. It doesn't know an opportunity when it sees one—unless it is an opportunity to get itself elected to power.

The Conservative Party was in power nearly all the time between the wars. For most of that time there were

anything from one to three million men available to do all those things which had perforce to be neglected while all our resources were turned to war. But was this treated as a glorious opportunity to be lavish with labour, to spread ourselves on doing all those things which can't be done when there is neither a builder nor a housemaid to be had for love or money? Not a bit of it. The opportunity was treated as a difficulty—a difficulty with which the government could not cope. The great labour force was an embarrassment—of which the government could not rid itself.

At that time there was no rationing, no one talked of anything being "in short supply," the world was what we should now consider a world of plenty. But was this called an opportunity? No; it was called "over-production." Abundance overseas was shut out of our country by tariffs and quotas; abundance at home was cut down by government-encouraged rings to limit production.

What would we have given in 1940 for the men and materials to build more aircraft? What would we give now for the men and materials to build more houses? Yet when men and materials were here in plenty they were left idle. The coming of the war disclosed that the Conservative government had failed to arm us against the war its foreign policy had made certain; evacuation disclosed that one of the richest countries in the world had failed to provide the elements of decent life for many thousands of its citizens.

The Conservative Party which now refuses to make up its mind about Bretton Woods wrecked the great opportunity of the 1932 Economic Conference when Neville Chamberlain declared the day before that we would

cling to our tariffs even if the rest of the world went Free Trade.

Successive Conservative governments missed countless opportunities for using the League of Nations and strengthening it by use. They rarely seized an opportunity even for saying what was right, let alone risking anything in the defence of right. "A policy of defending British property while letting British ideals go by the board will lose us all sympathy abroad," said Professor Toynbee. It did. Thank goodness that it is now the Conservative Party and no longer Britain's good name that is suffering the consequences.

Here lies the party that died of missed opportunities.

THIS WAY OUT

In 1945, the people knew what they did not want. They did not want the Tories, and they told them so in the plainest possible language.

They didn't want Munich, they didn't want depressed areas, they didn't want stunt elections. They didn't think the pre-war world was good enough; they didn't want the party that mismanaged the last return to peace to have a chance of mismanaging this one.

By this time, increasing numbers of people are discovering other things they don't want. They don't want direction of labour by a Ministry exchanged for direction of labour by the Trade Unions. They don't want to be bossed. They don't want war-time powers extended indefinitely. They don't want nationalisation if it gives them only a change of masters, not mastery of their own lives. They don't want incompetent Ministers who spring food crises upon them with a suddenness unknown in wartime. They don't want election pledges repudiated with the casual explanation that Labour's head office made a slip in advising candidates. They don't want a government that represents less than half of them but behaves as if it were the voice of the people and the voice of God.

Having voted once against what they don't want, and having got something else they don't want, people may now have a clearer idea of what they *do* want. They may even go to the length of voting for it.

What the average Englishman (or Scotsman or Welshman) wants can hardly be better stated than in the words of Mr. Elliott Dodds:

" He wants a Britain in which he's got a solid foothold of security—in which he isn't haunted by the fear of unemployment and hasn't to worry about his old age. At the same time (especially if he's a young man) he wants a Britain in which there's room for adventure; a Britain in which he's free to take risks, but knows he will have to pay for it if he plays the fool. He wants a Britain in which there's fun as well as security, and there are prizes for boldness and initiative; a Britain in which he's the chance to make good.

" If he's an older man, he wants a Britain in which he can bring up his children in decent comfort, knowing that they are properly fed and soundly educated, with opportunities of good careers when they grow up. He wants a Britain in which there are neither millionaires nor paupers, and in which everyone's " got summat." If he's employed, he wants a Britain in which he's got a voice in determining the conditions under which he works, and a fair share in the proceeds. If he's in business on his own, he wants a Britain in which there's freedom for enterprise, and no stranglehold by monopoly.

" He wants a Britain in which there's fellowship as well as freedom, and he can feel that he's contributing to the community without being lost in it. He wants a Britain in which he can think what he likes, say what he thinks, spend as he chooses, do as he considers right, and need touch his cap to no one, whether boss or bureaucrat. In short, he wants a Britain in which he can be a *man*."

The man who feels like that will not be content indefinitely to support one or other of two parties, each of which denies him some or all of these things. He

will seek a party which does offer those things which he feels to be his right. If no such party exists, he will create it.

Fortunately, such a party does exist. Small and little regarded, perhaps, but it is easier to start even from small beginnings than from nothing.

Discussion of whether the Liberal Party *can* be revived is out of date, if ever it was in date. A Liberal revival, a Liberal government, is a necessity for our survival as a free nation—and the history of Hitler's war shows that our people can be relied on to produce necessities of that order.

The basis of the Liberal Party is its belief in the rights of men and women as persons. A society that allows its members to develop their personalities, all their capacities, to the full is a good society. A society that stifles personality is a bad society, even if no one in it lacks the material blessings of life.

That is the really important thing about the Liberal Party—much more important than its policy at any particular moment, because it determines policy. Policies change according to the needs of the time, they succeed or fail and pass into history; principles remain, and will determine policy when our children and our grandchildren are considering how to cast their votes.

Freedom to Prosper.

Let us now see to what policies Liberals of 1946 are led by the value which they set on human personality.

Man must keep body and soul together before either can develop. A certain minimum of material well-being is necessary before capabilities can expand. Therefore Liberals demand that there shall be made available

all the means of maintaining a decent standard of life. Hence the great series of social security measures from which millions benefit without realising that it is to the Liberals they owe them.

Health insurance, unemployment insurance, old age pensions, all carried against the most determined Conservative opposition. Family allowances, first brought into politics by a resolution of the Women's Liberal Federation. The Beveridge Plan, used by Labour as a plank in its election platform while a Labour candidate tried—successfully—to turn Sir William Beveridge out of Parliament. School meals. A national minimum wage—one of those schemes not yet taken over without acknowledgement by some other party.

Measures like these are an important part of Liberal policy. But not the most important part. The world has moved a good way since aristocratic Conservatives declared they would not lick insurance stamps. The idea of social security is now accepted more or less by the other parties, though they still have to turn to Liberals for fair schemes worked out in a practical way. Thus far, the Liberal work is done, but there is much more to follow.

It is pretty generally agreed that the State has a duty to assure each of its citizens a decent existence. It is less generally accepted that the State should provide each of its citizens with the opportunity to improve on that minimum by his own efforts. It is less generally accepted that the State *can* do so.

Everyone should have bread before anyone has cake. But having attained that minimum, having eliminated actual want, what next? Something a good deal better must be possible in this age of scientific marvels.

The Liberal idea is not a uniform issue of cake for everybody, regardless of each person's tastes or deserts, but the opportunity for everyone to win by his own industry and enterprise the things of his own choice.

Some of us can honestly say that we enjoy a life of hard work. Is this peculiar virtue on our part? Probably not. Much more likely it is because we are the lucky ones who work at something we think worth while and who see the reward of our work. See it, that is, coming to us and not to someone who hasn't earned it.

In a Liberal commonwealth, that happy state would be not the privilege of the few but the right of the masses.

How to attain this?

We are already removing more and more of the handicaps that spoil a child's chances at the outset. More children are decently fed and housed, more get a good schooling. But if as regards these physical and mental foundations we are moving in the right direction, can as much be said of the opportunity to build on those foundations? It is comparatively easy to provide schools, canteens, etc., which children must use. It is much less easy (and the work of a different type of mind) to provide adults with conditions in which they can make their own lives.

Liberals believe in the value of personality. Therefore they seek to remove anything that hampers the development of personality. Liberals believe we should each be free to live as we choose, subject to the law which preserves that same right for others. They therefore seek to destroy wherever they find it the arbitrary control of one person over another's life.

Socialists often talk of " wage slaves," and with quite good reason. Where they go wrong is in the remedy.

What, after all, is a slave? A worker who cannot change his master. It is no remedy for that condition to make us all State employees, reducing to nil the small choice of employer that now exists. No, a man is not a wage slave so long as he can say to the boss, "All right, if you don't give me a square deal I'll go somewhere else." It is the going somewhere else that is difficult and becoming more so; it is the going somewhere else that Liberals alone have any thought of making easy.

Other things being equal, the more different employers there are to choose between in any trade, the less will a worker be a slave to any one of them. The present-day tendency for industry to become concentrated in the hands of a very few very large firms gives those firms great power over their employees' lives. Most of all it gives them power over the ablest and most enterprising people—over those who have the ability and ambition to set up for themselves.

The casualty rate among small businesses need hardly be laboured; everyone is aware of it. Every demobbed man has been warned of the folly of risking his gratuity in anything so precarious. Better play safe; better cut out the excitement and look for a nice steady job with a pension at the end of it. And if our ex-fighter pilots find the prospect dull, if adventurous youth finds its outlets only in a crime wave, we read them sermons on changed times.

Labour has not the remotest intention of even trying to reverse this trend. Quite the contrary. It is easier to nationalise one big firm than a host of little ones, so good luck to the all-consuming giant. If a monopoly exploits the consumer, there will be all the bigger profits for a well-organised Union to demand a share in.

Conservatives talk of curbing the most dangerous powers of monopolies, but to destroy the monopolies themselves, to give the small man a chance to break them —nothing could be further from their thoughts. Only the Liberals look for reasons why monopoly exists, and, like a good doctor, set out to remove the causes of the disease.

The concentration of industry in a few great firms is not the inevitable result of any economic law. A committee that studied the question in America reported that combines were often much larger than they should be for maximum efficiency. This will easily be believed by anyone who has experienced the red tape, the loss of contact which seem inseparable from all very large organisations, whether industries, armies or Trade Unions.

If a firm grows beyond its economic optimum, not economic law but man's law must be to blame. Company law favours the combination of many firms in one holding company, and allows this to happen without the ordinary consumer being aware of it; protective tariffs hinder competition; the law permits the refusal of supplies to a firm standing out against a ring; rates bear more hardly on the small firm than the large, and so on. Remove all such inducements to excessive growth, say Liberals, and see what will happen. If we still find the shopper's choice becoming more and more limited to Woolworth's or the Co-op., if the small man still finds it more and more difficult to keep his independence, then, and only then, will it be time to talk of inevitable economic laws.

" Ownership for All " is an idea that could come only from the Liberal Party. Conservatives are satisfied with ownership for the few; Labour believes private property to be the root of all evil. Ownership for All is no mere

airy ideal; unlike Mr. Shinwell, Liberals have considered the implications of their theory. They have worked the thing out in practical terms. If a Liberal government took office tomorrow, it could frame by next week a law to curb effectually the monopolist who says to the shopkeeper, "Stop selling So-and-so's goods or you shan't have any more of mine." The Liberal Party has plans all ready to make death duties depend not on the wealth of the man who has left this world but on that of the legatee, who is still here with all his powers for good or evil. Liberals are all ready with changes in the company law, to make it impossible any longer for a handful of men to control vast industries merely by forming a holding company to buy up every firm they can lay hands on. Liberals have their amendments to the patent law, so that no invention shall be held out of use by those rich enough to buy it outright. Above all, the Liberal Party alone sees the danger of those two great friends of too big business—Protection and the land monopoly. The Liberal Party alone has its clear policy on these matters; the Liberal Party alone considers each of these two important enough to deserve a section to itself.

> "O God of heaven and earth, That provided greatly for mankind and wouldest not that all things should be found in one region, to the end that one should have need of another: we beseech Thee to bring it to pass that by friendly means and passage of trade, searching and carrying both over the land and the sea, friendship may be established among all men, and everyone seek to gratify all, to their own mutual benefits and peace and to Thy glory, which never shall have an end."
>
> From the Letters of Missive of King Edward the Sixth.

The Conservative attitude to Free Trade needs no emphasis. That party's attachment to protective tariffs is all too obvious to our generation and is reiterated in its recent pamphlet "We Fight for the People." Even though most Conservatives concede that Free Trade would be fine if only all countries would practise it, they entirely failed to seize the opportunity for general Free Trade provided by the Mutual Aid Agreement. Labour shows very little interest in the question either way but tends to range itself with the Conservatives on the protectionist side. Indeed, a party that looks forward to State control of industry can hardly hope to avoid interference with exports and imports.

Liberals on the other hand regard Free Trade as of prime importance. It is vital for our material welfare, it is vital for peace.

During the war, enemy submarines and aircraft maintained an all too effective barrier to goods entering this country; does it make sense that we should continue the enemy's work for him by erecting a customs barrier? We need food, clothes, all sorts of goods; for heaven's sake let them come in—and without any extra on their already high prices.

Each of us sells his labour or his produce for as much as he can get; how then can it make sense for all of us to sell abroad as much as possible and take as little as possible in return? Yet this is what the protectionist asks us to do when he labels a preponderance of exports a "favourable balance of trade" and talks of big imports as a bad thing.

Trade is exchange. We cannot sell if we do not buy; we cannot buy unless we sell.

The short-sighted see only a Ford made by American

labour displacing a Morris made by British labour; they forget that the Ford must be paid for, and can be paid for only by a product of British labour. They forget that the Ford probably comes here in a British ship; they forget that from the time we began to cut down the foreign cars and clothes and carpets our people wished to buy, from that day more and more British seamen joined the dole queues, more and more British ships rusted in our estuaries.

Liberals want this country to realise that "export or die" is true only because we must import or die; that we send goods out of this country only in order that others may come in, and conversely that what is brought in does not do any Englishman out of a job: it is paid for by the export of some Englishman's work.

Liberals want the British worker to get full value for what he sells abroad, instead of being fined for adding to the amount of wealth in the country; they want him to be free to buy what he really wants, instead of being told by someone at Westminster or Whitehall that he may have cotton but not silk, a Morris but not a Ford.

Free Trade is vital for the health of our industry. Who ever heard of a healthy man who was constantly "protected" against competition with his fellows? Who ever heard of an honest man brought up in the belief that he could get a living more easily by canvassing a patron than by working?

"Protection" is nothing but protection of inefficiency. Is not our foreign competitor already sufficiently handicapped by being further from his market, with greatly increased costs; by his necessarily less intimate knowledge of his customers? If the home industry cannot

compete with the aid of these advantages, it does not deserve to be kept alive at the public expense.

At one time, British shoe manufacturers, alarmed by the success of American lines, pleaded for protection. Fortunately, we had then a Liberal government, which told the shoemakers to cut out the lobbying and pull up their own socks. With the result that the public got English-made shoes that beat the Americans.

If we prefer honest industry to wire-pulling, then Free Trade we must have, for, as Arthur Chamberlain (brother of tariff reform Joseph) said, "A keen business man can make more money in one evening manipulating a tariff than in twelve months' honest work."

Free Trade is vital for peace. "If goods cannot cross frontiers, armies will." What is more likely to cause resentment than an attempt to export unemployment by closing our ports against other people's products? What, on the other hand, more likely to unify the world than the knowledge that we are all mutually dependent on each other's labours?

German propaganda against the British Empire was too clever not to be based on real grievances—and one of these grievances was Ottawa. So long as the foreigner could trade freely with British colonies, it mattered little to anyone how much of the world Britain "owned"; as soon as a tariff wall was erected round those colonies they began to inspire envy and covetousness.

Only the Liberal Party has learned this lesson. Therefore everyone who wants trade to engender peace and not war must join the Liberal Party.

"He Lives on the Land."
—Fisons' Advertisement.

The blessings of Free Trade we have had and lost; the blessings of free land we have never known. It is possibly for that reason that the subject does not occupy a place in any party's programme proportionate to its importance.

Nevertheless, it is in the Liberal Party's programme, and it is there in the right form. It may be overshadowed by matters of more obvious topical interest, but in every annual Assembly there it is, tucked away in one or other of the resolutions, bearing testimony that the party has not forgotten the reform frustrated by the first world war, ready at any time to serve the dispossessed millions who pay tribute to a ground landlord and who seek the remedy.

The last peace-time Assembly of the Liberal Party passed a resolution reaffirming "its conviction that by the derating of houses and improvements through the policy of Taxation of Land Values the cost of houses and improvements would be reduced and the purchasing power of the people increased." The last war-time Assembly related the same policy to the urgent need for house-building: "Resultant increases in land values must accrue to the community and not to the private landlord. If the Liberal policy of the taxation and rating of land values had been accepted in the past, many of the difficulties now to be overcome in relation to land, housing and planning would have been avoided."

The taxation of land values is a Liberal policy because it is a policy of liberty. It cannot be a Conservative policy because it attacks the privileged position of those

landowners who are still among the main props of the Conservative Party; it attacks the power of those great monopolies which are the newer pillars of Conservatism. It might be Labour policy—indeed it has its champions in the Labour Party and had a very nearly successful champion in Philip Snowden—but the Labour Party as a whole is too little concerned with freedom to be relied on to free our land.

To free land by taxing it? Surely a contradiction? Not a contradiction if we remember two things: that it is the *value* of the land that is to be taxed, and that land is essentially different from the other things we tax, inasmuch as it is not made by man.

Tax beer and you make it dearer; impose a purchase tax and it is added to the purchase price. Tax any commodity and you discourage its purchase and therefore its production; tax incomes and you reduce the incentive to make an income. But tax land values and you make land cheaper rather than dearer; you encourage its use, not discourage it. As things are, rates are levied on buildings. Once there was a tax on windows, and public opinion forced its removal; now there is a tax on windows, doors, chimneys, plumbing —everything that contributes to the value of a house. If I, a landowner, erect a building on my land I must pay rates on it—and the better the building the more I pay. If I add a bathroom to a house that had none before, my rates go up. I am fined for improving my town. If, on the contrary, I let my land lie idle, if I do nothing on it but cut down the scheduled weeds when I must, then I pay nothing. That land may be in the centre of a town, it may be desperately needed for a housing scheme, and the town will have to pay

me, the owner, perhaps many thousand pounds for the land I have made no use of. I, having paid no rates to the town, perhaps never even having lived there, profit from the town's existence and its enterprise.

Some of us may remember Gillie Potter's account of the notorious affair at Hogsnorton: "It is still a secret that the largest tripe factory in the world is to be built at Hogsnorton, but one gentleman in the know hastened to Hogsnorton and offered Lord Marshmallow £100 an acre for land that was not worth £5 an acre. Lord Marshmallow was staggered, but gladly accepted this. The gentleman then returned hurriedly to London and sold the land again for £500 an acre to a second gentleman in the know. This second gentleman is now negotiating the sale of land to the Government at £5,000 an acre." A true word spoken in jest.

And what of Arromanches? A little seaside resort finds itself overnight a great naval port. It speculates on "Mulberry" becoming a permanent institution, and owners of hitherto valueless plots sell them for high prices. Think what a patriotic speaker at a Conservative rally could make of these foreigners growing fat on the brains of British engineers and the blood of our invasion troops! But he can't, because it is the system his party upholds which makes such things possible.

The remedy? Simply for the community to take as rent the value which the community creates—or even part of it. Let the landlord pay rates or taxes not on the house he has built but on the value of the land which he has *not* created. Then, because my vacant site in the centre of the town is valuable, owing to its position in the centre of the town, I shall have to pay pretty heavily on it. Is it not obvious that I shall try

to recoup myself by making use of the land I could formerly afford to leave idle? Thus, less land will be left idle, more will be available for use—and because more will be available the price will fall. More opportunities will be open to everyone who needs land, whether to farm or to build on. Taxes shifted on to land values will be shifted off buildings, goods and incomes; those burdens upon enterprise will be lightened. Those who now own land will no longer be able to control other people's lives through their absolute control over the land we must all have to live. For we are land animals; we do all live on the land, the bank clerk as surely as the farmer. The land must be freed from the landlords that we may have life and have it more abundantly.

"Why should we be beggars with the ballot in our hand? God gave the land to the people."

Blessed are the Peacemakers

It is beyond question that the vast majority of our people want peace. They may attach themselves to any party, they may be members of the Peace Pledge Union or of the Navy League, but it would be difficult to find one who could justly be called a war-monger or who would not resent such a title. Only a few, perhaps, have clear ideas on how to maintain peace, but most are ready to follow inspiring leadership in that direction. It is just this inspiring leadership which has been lacking in high places.

There have been great waves of popular enthusiasm

on peace issues. A great response to the Peace Ballot; a revolt against the Hoare-Laval proposals; cheers for Eden in his resignation. There was a huge sigh of relief when war was for the time avoided in 1938, but it was mingled with a sense of shame, a doubt whether after all we had done right.

The tragedy of our generation is that never from those in power have we had a clear and consistent lead in what was *right*. We have seen our government insisting that in no circumstances must the German and Austrian peoples be allowed to vote for a customs union of their two countries, and a few years later a government composed largely of the same men allowing Hitler to annex Austria completely by force with hardly a protest from us. We had a government bound by treaty to "respect and preserve as against external aggression the existing political independence and territorial integrity of each member of th .eague," saying, "We will not risk a single British battleship in the defence of Abyssinia." We had Munich defended as a bargain —as one might defend having paid an inflated price for a house—with hardly a hint that we might have no right to make such a bargain.

We have had Labour, with a far better record indeed but with its leadership vitiated by hesitation between pacifism and collective security, the clarity of its vision in cases of Fascist aggression somewhat blurred when the aggressor was of another colour.

Where is the clear lead that will inspire apathetic millions, where the proved adherence to principle that can win the disillusioned?

Common Humanity

Nowhere more than in foreign affairs is it obvious that the Liberal Party is the party of principle and not of sectional interests. Throughout its history, the Party has shown its capacity for seeing beyond the two sides of any question to the principle that includes them both. It has shown itself conscious that what is sauce for the goose is sauce also for the gander, and the gosling. It has not applied one rule of conduct to this country and a different one to all others; it has not condoned in one country actions which it has condemned in another; it has not sought excuses to dodge the inconveniences of the responsibility that rests on a great power.

Liberals believe in the rights of men as persons. They are less concerned with the rights of men as Britons, Americans or Russians, as labourers, officials or company directors. Liberals are accustomed to look beyond the conflicts of groups to the common interests that can reconcile those conflicts. Therefore they are better qualified to build peace than can be any party that habitually looks first at a sectional interest and only later at our common humanity.

The sincerity of Labour or Conservative desires for peace is not in question. But is the employer who can't see his workpeople's point of view, or the workman who writes down all employers as bloodsucking capitalists, likely to be able to understand Indians, to judge impartially between Russians and Poles, or to see when his own country ought to give way in the general interest? Is the man who regards the right to strike as one of

his most precious possessions really the man who can be trusted to renounce the right to make war? Those who will not accept compulsory arbitration in differences between master and man are hardly the ones to urge it in differences with a foreign State.

The Rule of Law

My disagreements with my neighbour are resolved without upsetting the town, because above both of us is the law. Either we recognise of our own accord our obligations in the maintenance of a peaceful society, or the authority to which we as citizens have ourselves contributed steps in to keep us in order. Disagreements between nations have involved the world in misery twice in a generation, simply because nations do not yet take for granted the same supremacy of law.

Some realisation of that fact is penetrating into all parties, but at very different rates. A Liberal government would be of all governments the best fitted to lead the world towards law because it has itself advanced furthest along that road. Other parties are learning their lesson; Liberals learned it long ago.

Liberals have preached the doctrine of law, not war, in industry. More, they have practised it.

Workers and employers have their "vital interests" as nations have; workers and employers are prepared to fight for them, as nations are. In a strike or a lockout the right side or the wrong may prevail, just as in war. In a strike or a lockout both sides suffer and neutrals suffer, just as in war. "There are no victors;

only one side is more vanquished than the other." But, just as in war, each side will fight if it feels itself to be suffering wrongs for which there is no other remedy. The remedy must be provided before we can insist on its being used.

In our own country, the wronged have their remedy at law; the police see that we use that remedy instead of shooting one another. That state of affairs has existed long enough for most of us to have lost all thought of resorting to violence. In industry, the peaceful remedy exists but its use is not enforced. It is still considered permissible for one side to attempt to force the other into accepting its demands. The right to do this is still jealously preserved—just as it is by nations. Let employer and employed consult together, let them go to arbitration by all means, but seldom is either side willing to accept in advance a decision with which it may violently disagree. It is not yet admitted in this sphere that the "vital interests" of either party are not the highest consideration; that a bad decision is infinitely better than no law.

Surely everyone must recognise in this the precise situation that exists between States. We all deplore war, we use with gradually increasing readiness the means of peaceful settlement that exist, but we do it voluntarily, with a feeling still that our country is too great to take orders, that we accept the verdict of a court or of an arbitrator as an act of grace. There is as yet no policeman to enforce obedience, and we still cling to the idea of "vital interests" which we are entitled to defend by force.

The perils of the atomic age may force a change in this attitude, but the change is most likely to come

through men who believe this attitude to be not only perilous but *wrong;* wrong even if it did not imperil the existence of mankind. It is most likely to come through men who have abandoned that attitude in their relations with those with whom they work.

Consider the great Liberal firms. When did you hear of a strike or a lock-out in Cadbury's? They don't happen—but not because Cadbury's is miraculously exempt from the troubles that beset other firms. They don't happen because those difficulties have been tackled in a civilised manner. The employer no longer regards himself as the boss, who may give or withhold concessions as he thinks fit; he is one of the partners in industry, whose business it is to run the firm in agreement with the other partners. The workers have good conditions and a share in the profits, not as gifts from a benevolent employer but as rights under the scheme they have themselves shared in working out. No crises arise, because troubles are aired long before they reach crisis dimensions; employers and employed meet regularly, whether there is any grievance to bring up or not; both know the affairs of the firm, what it can afford, where its difficulties lie. Long practice of partnership instead of strife has brought such firms to the point where a strike or a lock-out is regarded, not as a natural right to be preserved at all costs, but as an altogether lamentable confession of failure.

We cannot afford to spend so long learning the same lesson in our relations with foreign countries. Industrial war causes suffering and loss, but not wholesale slaughter. Even another general strike would not wipe our great cities off the map; another international war would. All the more necessary that we should put in charge of our

affairs men and women who have already learned the lesson of co-operation, men and women to whom it has become second nature to seek the reconciliation of divergent views. In other words, Liberals.

. . . . . .

> "There are no longer foreign affairs, but only world affairs."
>
> Editorial, "Nature," 18th June, 1938.

How would a Liberal government translate into concrete foreign policy its belief in co-operation?

It would first announce to all the world the inspiration of its policy: that the most vital interest of this or any nation is the establishment of the reign of law in the world; the greatest national honour is to lead the march towards that goal. Peace is assured within our island because parliament, judges and police see that the good of all takes precedence over the will of one. Peace will be assured in the world only when a world parliament, judges and police are equally accepted institutions.

Such a happy state cannot be attained overnight, perhaps not even in our generation. It is the task of our generation to move towards it, to seize every opportunity to move in that direction, to reject anything that may hinder the advance.

We have our beginnings. The League of Nations was an imperfect instrument, but Mr. Churchill was right when he said that it could have prevented the war, if the governments had used it with honesty and determination. The United Nations is an imperfect instrument, but if we use it with honesty and determination it can prevent war while we build it into something better. The essential is that we make the United Nations and all that

it stands for the centre of our foreign policy and not a sideline.

Too long this country has forgotten its ancient role and waited upon others. "What will Hitler do next?" "What will happen in Europe?" "Events will show." It is for us to do, for us to make those things happen that we believe to be right, for us to create events—not merely wait upon them. Are we afraid of failure? If we fail, we perish anyway, so let us at the worst fail gloriously. Do we fear that none will follow us? None can follow if we do not lead. Is it any wonder Hitler was contemptuous of us, when from a friendly country could come a comment like this ("Populaire," 24th March, 1938): "It is perhaps a unique case in history for a great country to announce in advance that she will do nothing to prevent events which she would like, above all, to avoid. But England is intervening constantly in all questions which crop up on the Continent of Europe. She intervenes by her silence, by her granting of blank cheques, and by the atmosphere of impunity which she creates round the worst misdeeds of international gangsters." This was the reputation which years of Conservative misrule had earned for us; this is the reputation we have to live down. We must intervene now by our outspokenness for the right and against wrong; by our granting of all aid to the forces of law; by creating an atmosphere of inevitable punishment round every incipient gangster. The strength of the United Nations is there; let Britain use it at every opportunity. The weaknesses of the United Nations are there; let Britain lead in repairing them.

Our budding international democracy is marred by the privileged position of the great powers. Let Britain

at least refuse to be privileged by the veto; let her at least announce that she will abide by impartial decisions, whether for or against her, that she believes it more honourable to uphold the law than to set her national "honour" above it.

The United Nations has as yet no force at its command, though it has machinery for creating it. Let Britain declare that she at least believes a world police force to be better than competing national armies; let her at least offer to transfer a part of her national force to international control. We have given the right lead over trusteeship; let us not be too timid to give the same lead in more risky matters.

Let us give the lead in trade; a Liberal government can be relied on to do that because Liberals have always placed Free Trade high in importance—as a peacemaker as well as a prosperity-bringer. Our free trade will have to start over limited areas; British tariffs indeed can (and should) be abolished whatever other nations do, but we want if possible to lead others along the same road. Article 7 of the Mutual Aid Agreement gives us the chance to start a free trade area with America; other nations particularly associated with us in trade, or particularly attached to freedom, should easily be induced to join in. A Liberal government would seize on every sign of such inclinations, welcome every offer to trade freely with us, give a benevolent eye and a helping hand to any other free trade group in process of formation. The exact opposite of the Conservative government's conduct when it crushed the Ouchy agreement by rigid insistence on the letter of the most favoured nation clause in contradiction to its spirit.

Such free trade groups enrich themselves and threaten

nobody. What of other groups, what of alliances, of agreements to pool resources for defence purposes? These things need a Liberal mind to deal with them, for Liberals are most accustomed to take the point of view of the whole, most likely to realise not only what our actions mean to ourselves but what they may imply to others. It may be obvious to us that an Anglo-American alliance could have no aggressive intentions, but that may not prevent other countries from imagining that such intentions exist. If they do imagine this, then their fears —however groundless—are a fact that must take its due part in determining our actions.

By all means let us draw together with any country whose traditions, geographical position or what not make association easy, but if such association involves any military factor whatsoever it must be proved—not in words alone but in deeds—to be perfectly in keeping with our peaceful professions. A pooling of forces between two great powers may be an excellent thing if everybody knows that those forces will be used only for controlling a law-breaker; everybody cannot know that, unless such a proposal is accompanied by steps to put those forces more under the control of the United Nations than they were before.

Critics of Mr. Churchill's Fulton speech attack it for being threatening to Russia; those who defend it do so on the ground that we must be firm with Russia. "We?" Who is "we?" It makes all the difference in the world whether "we" means Britain and the United States defending their interests against another great power with conflicting ideas, or the United Nations defending world order against actions that tend to divide the world.

It is significant that one part of Churchill's speech

attracts no blame—the offer of squadrons for an international force. Unhappily, it has attracted little praise either, but it is this point in the speech which is the important one, this point which marks an advance on the old idea of alliances. It is this kind of action that Liberals praise; this kind of action which would come from a Liberal government. Wilfrid Roberts, speaking for the Liberals in the foreign policy debate on the 20th February, 1946, said: "The Foreign Secretary may have given great satisfaction to the Conservative Party by saying that continuity of foreign policy was to be preserved; he gave no satisfaction to me or to my hon. Friends by that assurance. What has our foreign policy been in the past? Before the war it was Appeasement, which we bitterly opposed and I think rightly. During the war it was a simple policy, expressed best by the right hon. Member for Woodford (Mr. Churchill) when he said, "Whoever kills Germans, is our friend." We have to find a new foreign policy to-day to meet the needs of the new situation. It has to be a positive policy. I want to see us on good terms with the Soviet Union and the United States of America. I want to see us the champion of justice for the smaller nations of the world."

Economic Citizenship

I have said that peace between nations links up with peace in industry, and the topic is worth pursuing further.

Liberals look forward to an ever-growing realisation of ourselves as citizens of the world. Liberals also seek

to give every worker the status of a citizen in his own country.

This is no new-fangled election stunt. To go no further back, the idea is to be found in the report on "Britain's Industrial Future," which the Liberal Party produced in 1928. According to this report, one of the main causes of industrial unrest is that the worker is still living, not as a free citizen, but in conditions more like those of the feudal system. "He may be dismissed at a week's or a day's notice, and thus deprived of his livelihood, without redress or appeal, perhaps for no better reason than that he has offended an autocratic foreman. While, as a citizen, he has an equal share in determining the most momentous issues about which he may know very little, in regard to his own work on which he *has* knowledge, his opinion is seldom asked or considered, and he has practically no voice in determining the conditions of his daily life, except in so far as Trade Union action has secured it.

"Indeed, where management is inefficient and autocratic, he is frequently compelled to watch waste and mistakes of which he is perfectly well aware without any right of intervention whatever. And this, despite the fact that, when these errors issue in diminished business for the firm concerned, he, and not the management, will be the first to suffer by short-time working or complete loss of employment.

"Knowledge of the financial results of industry and of the division of its proceeds is denied to the worker, and of this he is becoming increasingly resentful. He has little means of judging to what extent he is, in fact, participating in the fruits of his own labours, or whether he is getting a 'square deal,' and his dissatisfaction with

the existing order is proportionately intensified. He believes that the products of industry are unfairly divided between Capital and Labour; that under the capitalist system society is divided into two classes—a small class of masters who own the means of production and live luxuriously by owning, and a huge class of workers who receive in return for their work only what they can force the owners to pay. He believes that under such a system there can be for his children no true equality of opportunity with the children of the more fortunate classes."

It is this situation which the Liberal methods referred to in the last chapter are designed to remedy. Various Liberal firms have tested the remedy in their own affairs and have found it to work; can it be applied generally throughout industry? Liberals believe it can and should be so applied. They believe that the government should promote that application, and they have ready plans for that purpose which they will put into effect when a Liberal government becomes a reality. For a summary of what those plans are, I cannot do better than to quote from Elliott Dodds' admirable little book, "Let's Try Liberalism":

"To begin with, in every firm employing more than a certain number of workpeople there would be a Works Council, on which every important group or grade would be represented. This Council would meet at regular intervals (say, once a month), and would be consulted in all matters affecting day-to-day working conditions. Its agreement would be necessary for all works rules, which would include safeguards against arbitrary dismissal. Periodically, and at the very least every year, the Works Council would receive a statement upon the financial

conditions of the concern as full as that given to the shareholders.

"In industries where thoroughly efficient and satisfactory machinery did not already exist for negotiating wages and working conditions a Joint Industrial Council or a Trade Board would be set up. The Liberal Committee on the Remuneration of the Worker suggested that there should be both. The fact that there are appointed members on a Trade Board with the power to vote means that the employers have to convince them that they cannot pay the wages demanded by the workers, and unless they can do so the appointed members can force the payment of a wage which they consider the highest that the industry can pay. On a Joint Industrial Council, on the other hand, there are no appointed members with the power to vote, and the workers are thus deprived of a safeguard which has proved of the highest value.

"This is the reason for proposing that there should be a Trade Board, which would fix minimum wages, as well as a Joint Industrial Council. The matters, however, with which a Trade Board deals are very limited in scope, and it is most important that there should be a Joint Industrial Council also, representative of employers and workers, to discuss and make decisions on the wider problems of the industry. The wages paid by member firms would be settled by agreement with the workers' representatives, and in many cases would be higher than the minimum fixed by the Trade Board. The eventual aim would be to bring all firms into the J.I.C.

"The Joint Industrial Councils would fix standard hours. Among other matters that might come within their scope would be apprenticeship, technical education

and training, health conditions, research, the improvement of processes, machinery and organisation, the better utilisation of the practical knowledge and experience of the workpeople, and the means of securing them a greater share in determining the conditions under which their work was carried on. The Joint Industrial Councils would be furnished with full and accurate information about the financial position of the industry as a whole, and such other matters as might be necessary to enable them to carry out their work efficiently.

" In addition to the Trade Boards and Joint Industrial Councils, there would be a National Industrial Council. This has sometimes been spoken of as an " Industrial Parliament." It is more likely, however, that it would be a smaller and more manageable body, equally representative of employers and employed, and including some nominated members to represent the general public. It would seek to co-ordinate the work of the Trade Boards and Joint Industrial Councils—to prevent conflicting decisions. It would be called on to scrutinise any agreements they reached, and for which they sought legal sanction. In cases of dispute where the Joint Industrial Council failed to bring about a settlement, it might act as a court of arbitration.

" The National Industrial Council would be asked to examine principles and methods of profit-sharing and co-partnership, and other means of giving the workers a greater interest in the undertakings to which they contributed their labour. It would give preliminary consideration to measures affecting industry which it was proposed to introduce into Parliament, and generally advise the Minister of Industry (who, besides exercising the function of the present Minister of Labour, would

take over the powers of the Home Office under the Factory and Compensation Acts, the Mines Department of the Board of Trade, etc.), on all industrial matters.

"I have just said that among the responsibilities of the National Industrial Council would be that of examining principles and methods of profit-sharing and co-partnership. "Co-ownership"—for that is the ultimate object of such schemes—is an important feature of the Liberal plan for industry. Compulsory profit-sharing is not practicable at present. Even the greatest enthusiasts for this method of giving the workers a stake in the concerns in which they are employed acknowledge that. But with the workpeople's representatives taken into consultation not merely on the day-to-day problems of the workshop but on the larger questions affecting the well-being of the trade, with the suspicions caused by financial secrecy removed and the assurance that everything was fair and above-board, a considerable extension of co-partnership might be looked for. Indeed, it would be the natural result of the new system.

"It is easy to see how this Liberal plan for economic citizenship would affect the distribution of wealth and so equality of opportunity. A national statutory minimum wage is an integral part of it. Some industries or firms, it may be urged, would not be able immediately to pay this national minimum. If this were proved to the satisfaction of the National Industrial Council, it would be necessary to postpone the payment of the full minimum to a date to be determined by the Council, after which any firms unable to pay it would have to go out of business. No firm or industry should be allowed to make profits by the aid of sweated wages. In most of these cases, however, I have a shrewd idea that insistence on

a decent minimum wage would screw up the businesses concerned to increased efficiency in order to be able to pay it; and this would be all to the good, not only for them and the workers employed in them but for the nation."

. . . .

To many a man, the great problem is not good relations with his employer, but finding an employer at all. Economic democracy—on top of the other Liberal plans for increasing opportunity—would help him. For is it not clear that if we are to do any planning of our industrial resources to avoid unemployment, such planning is much more likely to be successful if all sides of industry can contribute their special knowledge? If we are to avoid the boom and slump sequence that has been our curse for so long, we must be able to foresee what our needs and our resources will be for some time ahead. Any individual firm can do that better if it pools the brains of its managers and men, and if it knows that it can count on peaceful co-operation in whatever programme is decided on. Any government will be better able to judge what measures will help or hinder employment, to arrange its own undertakings so as to fit in to slack periods, if it can draw from all industry the advice and support it needs.

We cannot have full employment if this country cuts itself off from the resources of the world; we cannot have full employment if one industry gets favours from the government at the expense of another; we cannot have full employment if the plans laid by managers knowing the situation of the firm are wrecked by men without that knowledge.

Firms in which economic citizenship already exists are more prosperous than the rest, not less so. We cannot afford in these days to be without that extra prosperity.

Government by the People

Most Englishmen know two things about Lincoln: that he believed in "government of the people, by the people, for the people," and that he said "you can't fool all the people all the time." If our democracy conforms to Lincoln's ideal, then a people that feels it has been fooled can change the government that is its own.

But at this point our people discover that they have allowed themselves to be fooled about the nature of the Parliament which should be the supreme instrument of their will.

Look at our House of Commons! On the government benches sit 393 Labour members, not counting I.L.P. and Communist allies. 213 Conservative and "National" members, with eleven Liberals, make up the Opposition. If every single Member not receiving the Labour whip were to unite with the Opposition, the government could still command a majority of 146.

Is this the people's will? If all the non-Labour voters at the 1945 election were to combine, they would have, not a minority of 146 seats, but a majority of 988,714 votes. Even if we leave out the Independents and the smaller parties with Labour sympathies, the Conservatives and Liberals together have a quarter of a million more votes than Labour. Conservatives and Liberals together represent 58,726 more people than do Labour plus I.L.P. plus Communist M.P.s. Thus, the majority

of the people are being governed by the minority, and moreover by a minority with so big a majority in seats that (so far as Parliamentary divisions go) it need take no notice whatever of its opponents' wishes.

Nor is this all. The 11,922,292 Labour voters include many who are not interested in Socialism, who are not members of the Labour Party, never were and are never likely to be. They include people who, faced by a choice between two unattractive candidates, chose Labour as the less of two evils. They include Liberals who, fearing their man had no chance and believing it a desperate necessity to remove the Tories, voted for the only other party that could get a clear majority in Parliament. They include people who voted Labour as many a German voted for Hitler—distrustful of the party's more extreme ideas but supporting its immediate programme as the most likely way of getting a house or a job.

How many people these add up to we cannot know, but it is at least clear that a Socialist measure cannot be assumed to command the assent even of the 11,922,292 minority. It cannot have majority support unless there is convincing evidence (convincing, that is, to non-Socialists) that it would be to the benefit of the nation. It is possible, indeed probable, that the government may put forward and may carry proposals which are repugnant to the mass of the people.

This is the negation of democracy. It is just as much the negation of democracy if the proposals are in themselves the most excellent any Minister ever devised. It is government of the people, possibly for the people, but not government by the people.

A generation ago, an angry nation swept aside the

Lords who dared to thwart the people's will. We would not tolerate that an unrepresentative assembly of hereditary peers should presume to usurp the functions of the people's representatives. Have we become so spineless that we will tolerate being bossed by another unrepresentative assembly?

That we have tolerated it till now is due partly to our failure to realise the fact. If a government has a majority of votes, no matter how small, we may overlook the disproportion between this and its majority in seats; if, as now, it has *no* majority in votes, though a huge one in seats, we may show ourselves more observant. If an unrepresentative House of Commons does nothing in particular ("and does it very well"), it will arouse no revolutionary feelings; but if, like the present one, it embarks on a record programme of legislation, those opposed to that legislation will become very much aware of their impotence.

Is there any rallying point for this discontent? There is. The Liberal Party has long been committed to electoral reform, and now that other parties are suffering also under our unfair voting system, people may look on this call for reform as something more than a Liberal stunt designed to get more Liberals into Parliament. It is amusing to watch the face of a Conservative in Hertfordshire or Edinburgh or the North Riding when he first realises that his party has more votes in the county than Labour but fewer seats! Possibly even the Conservatives may exhibit a sudden conversion to the cause of electoral justice; it is less probable that the electors will find this death-bed repentance convincing. The party which at a previous election got 62 per cent. of the seats in Parliament for 48 per cent. of the votes cast,

and saw nothing wrong in this, cannot complain because now a different party with 48 per cent. of the votes has got 61 per cent. of the seats! It can hardly pose so soon as a champion of justice. "When the Devil was sick, the Devil a saint would be"—but it is not recorded that he won many more followers in the new guise than in the old!

The same charge is of course levelled at the Liberals —"You only want to change the rules of the game because you are losing." That is not a just charge, for even when it was the Liberals to whom the electoral gamble gave too many seats, the majority of the party wanted to change the rules. In 1918, when the change was very nearly accomplished, a large majority of Liberal M.P.s voted for reform; unhappily, the minority, together with most of the Conservatives and nearly half the Labour Members, sufficed to secure the retention of the old system.

But even if the charge were true, even if Liberals do demand fair voting because it will give them their fair share of seats in Parliament, since when has it been a sin to stand up for one's own rights? The present voting system is glaringly unjust; what the Liberals propose is demonstrably just. If Liberals are to be blamed for demanding a just system that will benefit their party, how much more must Conservatives and Labour people be blamed for clinging to an unjust system because it benefits their party!

Let not anyone be misled by the phrase "electoral reform." None of the trifling changes proposed by the

1944 Speaker's Conference on that subject has more than the slightest bearing on the problem. "One man, one vote" is a good slogan, but to abolish the second vote of every university graduate and every occupier of business premises will not change the fact that every 31,000 Labour voters have their spokesman in Parliament while it took 204,000 votes to elect a Liberal. It is admittedly absurd that two hundred thousand people in one place should return only as many Members as twenty thousand in another, but the splitting of the very big constituencies still leaves the 39,042 Conservatives in Romford, the 25,084 Labour voters in Blackpool and the 35,000 Liberals in both as completely unrepresented as ever. The old St. Albans Division had in 1945 39,444 Conservative and 42,005 Labour voters. Fair play would seem to demand one Member apiece for those parties, but the splitting of the Division gave both seats to Labour.

Many a voter, afraid of wasting his vote on a candidate who had no chance, voted instead for the least objectionable of the other candidates—and very often wasted his vote just the same. The eleven million men and women who voted for unsuccessful candidates might as well have stayed at home for all the effect they had on the composition of the House of Commons. Is it any wonder that so many *do* stay at home?

In local government elections the case is still worse (and the citizens still more inclined to stay at home). The block vote gave the 880 Conservative voters in the Village Ward of Lewisham no representative on the Borough Council, while 899 Labour voters got not one representative but three. Moreover, if only ten people in this ward change their minds by the next election, all

three Labour councillors will go, to be replaced by three Conservatives. The composition of our Parliament and our local councils is determined by those who have thought too little about politics to have any settled opinion.

This is no situation for tinkering. It demands radical reform.

One important party alone has this reform in its programme. A resolution of the Liberal Party Assembly in 1939 "affirms that Parliaments fully and fairly representative of all the electors can be secured only by the adoption of a general measure of proportional representation" and the same demand is constantly repeated. The Liberal Party demands representative government that is really representative. It demands for every citizen a vote that *counts;* it demands that every citizen should be free to support his real choice, without fear of his vote being wasted.

We want a Parliament in which parties are at any rate roughly proportional to their strength in the country. Do we want this at the price France is paying? France, after unhappy experience of the second ballot, has turned for the first time to proportional representation, and she has got in consequence three large parties which so far have found it possible to work together in the Chamber with somewhat less turmoil than we usually associate with French politics. Unfortunately (and rather oddly), the French adopted the old German system of proportional representation, in which the voter can choose only between parties, not between persons. Dissatisfaction with this is already vocal, and is likely to become more so as the party bosses thrive on the power which the list system gives them.

Happily, we need make no such choice. We can be fair to all the parties and at the same time keep the personal element in our elections—indeed we can increase the voter's power to choose between persons.

The Liberal Party stands for the rights of personality. Therefore it stands for a voting system that gives power and responsibility to the individual citizen. And therefore it stands for a voting system in which a choice has to be made between individuals as well as between parties.

Electoral reform in any effective sense means "P.R." And P.R. means voting 1, 2, 3 . . . among a wider choice of candidates than we have now.

Clearly, there can be no proportionality of representation unless we elect more than one Member at a time. One man can represent only one party; all other parties, even if each is almost as big as the winning one, must go unrepresented. With two or more Members, however, the representation can be shared. Therefore, to get fair representation we must put several of the existing constituencies together. How many should be combined depends on the nature of the place—the Western Isles are already difficult enough for a candidate to cover without adding to the area, but there is no reason why Wandsworth should not vote as one borough returning five members rather than as now in five divisions returning one member each.

But it is not sufficient merely to elect several members at a time. This is done in local government elections, and the result is even more one-sided than our Parliament. We have never yet had a House of Commons entirely of one party, but one-party Borough Councils are not a rarity. To get fair representation, our several

members must be chosen by a particular method. The method Liberals demand is that which has given fair results in Eire ever since it was first used there in 1922.

The essence of this method—the single transferable vote—is that it avoids the waste of votes. Instead of saying to the eleven million supporters of unsuccessful candidates "You might as well have stayed at home," we say to each of them: "There are not enough people agreeing with you to elect the man of your first choice; which candidate would you like as the next best?" Exactly as in a shop—if what you most want is not to be had, you need not come out empty-handed; you can buy the best available alternative. Also, if any candidate has far more votes than he needs to win the seat, some of his supporters (who under the present system need not have bothered to vote) can help another candidate of similar opinions. Thus, a popular party will get the full benefit of its large majorities, while on the other hand a party which in any one single-membered constituency would be at the bottom of poll would accumulate in the larger area sufficient votes to return one out of four or five members.

Moreover, that one member will be that one of the small party's candidates whom the electors consider the best; the popular party will get its two or three best men in and the less good will fail. There can no longer be any question of a distinguished man—like Sir William Beveridge and many another in 1945—being excluded from Parliament just because his party is out of favour, nor any question of an inferior candidate being elected just because he belongs to the popular party. No party machine can any longer impose its choice on a constituency, for any number of candidates can stand with-

out fear of splitting the vote, and it is the electors alone who will decide between them.

Is this mere theory? No: where P.R. is practised these results do follow. Parties do get seats nearly in proportion to their real strength in the country; distinguished men and women of all parties (and of none) are elected and re-elected on their own merits regardless of changes in party fortunes. To P.R. we owe Eleanor Rathbone's sixteen years of service in Parliament. The records of the two main parties in Eire over the last four general elections are a good example both of just representation and of the stability that results from it.

	De Valera's party.		Cosgrave's party.	
	votes p.c.	seats p.c.	votes p.c.	seats p.c.
1933	56	56	44	44
1938	52	55	33	33
1943	42	48	23	23
1944	49	53	20	21

What will be effect of this reform on the ways of our governments? Opponents of P.R. oppose it usually because they say it will produce stale mate, no party having a clear majority. (Incidentally, the existing system has done this more than once). That by no means necessarily happens, but what if it does? Is justice to be discarded because it clashes with our habits? The Liberal Party says it is our habits that must be changed to accord with justice. If the true expression of the people's will does really give a Parliament in which the traditional government v. oppostion tactics will not work, then it is the traditional tactics that must go.

Of all parties, the Liberals are by far the best fitted to adapt themselves to such a situation. Liberals already

believe in government by consent. Liberals already believe that neither in Parliament nor in industry should the stronger force its will on the weaker. Liberals already practise what they preach. Liberal firms are accustomed to treating their workpeople as partners rather than as opponents. Past Liberal governments have done great things when they have had no majority, when they had to act so as to keep the support of the Irish Members. Fortunately, Britain's capacity for self-government need not be judged by the exhibition of the first Labour government, which, lacking a majority for its whole programme, resigned in a huff rather than get on with those parts of it which had majority support.

Surely we must prefer what happened in Sweden. There, several successive elections gave the Labour Party most seats but not a clear majority. Knowing that it was useless to gamble on the result of another election, because a P.R. election is not a gamble, Labour said to the parties most nearly agreeing with it, "The nation clearly does not want the whole of the Labour programme, but it does want this, that and the other thing, on which we are agreed. Let us then work together and get on with those things."

The resulting coalition governments showed none of the faults associated with coalition governments produced by our electoral system; on the contrary, everyone regards Sweden as a model of good and progressive government. So accustomed have Swedish Cabinet Ministers become to working by agreement with colleagues of other parties that the coalition is still maintained although the last election gave Labour a clear majority.

Sweden shows a spirit in its politics which we could

do with here. Possibly the Swedes find it easy to be reasonable and co-operative? Perhaps, but we should hardly say that of the Irish! Yet fair voting in Eire has had the same kind of influence. Canon Luce, Professor of Moral Philosophy at Trinity College, Dublin, said: "P.R. has been a healing force in our midst. Old political feuds are dying; public spirit is replacing faction. Our elections are well conducted. The voice of reason is heard and the gun is silent. P.R. produces loyal and contented minorities, whereas the other system breeds muzzled, sullen, discontented minorities, predisposed to doctrines of violence. P.R. has been a unifying force, and unity is strength."

When Liberals press for electoral reform it is no mere matter of ballot mechanics. They are really pressing for a new spirit in British politics, for the replacement of party dictatorship by justice, by "the constant and perpetual will to give every man his due."

The Real Opposition

"The real enemy of the Third Reich is Liberalism."
Adolf Hitler.

"Several Labour M.P.s have told me that the little group of Parliamentary Liberals . . . has already provided the main Opposition with a model lesson in expert criticism and House of Commons behaviour."
A. J. Cummings, *News Chronicle*, 4th December, 1945.

"The Tories cast envious eyes at Clem Davies's compact little band of Liberals. They, at the moment, are the only constructive Opposition outside the Labour Party."
"Phineas," *New Statesman*, 22nd December, 1945.

Of course the Liberal Party is the real Opposition, for only the Liberal Party is really opposed to those things which are bad in Labour's government. Only the Liberals resist tyranny whether of "Right" or "Left," whether exercised by a government, a Trade Union, or a party over its own members. The Conservatives attack nationalisation schemes because they don't want us to be slaves to the State; they do nothing to meet the Labour argument that we are now slaves to big business. Only the Liberals are determined that we shall be free from the domination of either; only the Liberals have concrete plans to make us free men. Conservatives have fostered, defended and profited by the monopolies that exist; Labour will foster, defend and profit by any monopoly so long as it is in the hands of the State; Liberals alone regard monopoly as a thing to be destroyed whenever practicable, publicly owned and controlled only when it is inevitable.

Liberals alone have a logical test of what ought to be done with an industry: Is this thing a monopoly? If so, is it a monopoly only because artificial conditions stifle competition? Then remove those conditions, give competitors a chance and let the consumer determine the future of the industry. Or is it a monopoly for the same kind of reason that the town's water supply is a monopoly—because we want piped water, but it would be impracticble to have competing firms laying pipes in the same street? Then that monopoly must not be allowed to exploit the public; it must be in public hands.

Of course Liberals are the right people to criticise nationalisation schemes, because they alone have faced nationalisation not as a principle of universal application but as an expedient needing to be specially adapted to

the circumstances of each particular case. Shinwell "hadn't seen the implications of the transfer of property"; Liberals have not only seen the implications but have coped with them successfully, adapting methods to circumstances, inventing new forms of public control such as the Port of London Authority.

The Liberals are a good opposition because they not only complain but suggest; because they say not only "you shouldn't do that" but "wouldn't it be better to do this?"

The Liberal Party did not merely rail at the government for its repeal of the Trade Disputes Act; it suggested how the government could use to the general benefit the victory it was certain to win. "I appeal to the government," said Clement Davies, "that when they have got this Bill, have made a clean slate and have gone back to 1913, let them not rest there. There is a great work which the government can do, and do now. I ask them to do it as early as they can. Bring in a New Charter in which the whole position will be defined as clearly as possible. Let them put in the best machinery they can possibly devise for settling disputes."

The Liberal Party does not merely complain because the government takes the private members' time, rushes through complex legislation or by-passes Parliament by Orders in Council. It suggests means by which these things could be avoided, means by which pressure on overworked Members and Ministers could be relieved without resort to undemocratic expedients; means by which the efficiency of our governmental methods could be raised. Long before the shortage of parliamentary time became as acute as it now is, Liberals urged a number of reforms which would, as Clem Davies puts it,

give Ministers and M.P.s time to think. Devolution, for instance. Scottish and Welsh affairs at least, perhaps other purely regional matters, dealt with in and by those regions without impeding the more general work at Westminster. A small Cabinet of Ministers not already occupied with departmental work, to plan the framework of our policy and co-ordinate the departments within it. Had this been done, we should not have had the Service departments calling up young men from the farms in the midst of a food crisis, the Ministry of Food having to get reversed an order that should never have been given.

The Liberal Party is the real opposition to the pursuit of power by one class, because the Liberal Party is not dedicated to the pursuit of power for another class. The opposite of oppression of the workers is not oppression by the workers; it is freedom for all alike. The remedy for disproportionate power in the hands of one party is not disproportionate power in the hands of another; it is justice all round. When a government elected by a minority abuses its power, the Liberal Party is the real opposition, for only the Liberal Party seeks to prevent a minority ever attaining such power.

When a party in office breaks an election pledge, the Liberal Party is the real opposition, because the Liberal Party alone has a clean record in that matter.

When a party in opposition fails in its duty, it is the Liberal Party that fills the gap, for the Liberals have *used* their years in opposition; they have been vigilant for the government's errors, constructive in criticism of them.

When successive Conservative and Labour governments left us still with idle men and work crying to be

done, it was the Liberals in opposition who produced plans for bringing the two together—plans which formed the basis of the last government's White Paper on employment twenty years too late. When some fresh "Henry VIII clause," some fresh extension of official powers threatened our liberties, it was the Liberal Party who attacked. It was a Liberal who moved that "The power of the Executive has increased, is increasing and ought to be diminished"—while the other parties were so little interested that they did not even provide a quorum of Members to hear him.

When Churchill (having inside information that his party had no intention of making the League of Nations work) tried to rouse the country to its peril, it was the Liberal Party that supported him.

Parliamentary journalists in the old Parliament said that the real opposition was on the Liberal benches; now the Labour Party says the same thing.

The Real Opportunity

"Victory will give us one thing—opportunity."
Sir Archibald Sinclair.

I have quoted Elliott Dodds' version of what our people want. Few will question that this *is* what we want. Few will deny that the same wish can be put in these words:—"The Liberal Party exists to build a Liberal Commonwealth, in which every citizen shall possess liberty, property and security, and none shall be enslaved by poverty, ignorance or unemployment. Its

chief care is for the rights and opportunities of the individual, and in all spheres it sets freedom first.

"Through the League of Nations (to-day this would read United Nations) it aims at a world freed from the fear of war, whose peoples, enjoying free access to the earth's abundance and trading freely to their mutual benefit, co-operate in the tasks of peace.

"In Imperial relations its objectives are to increase co-operation between the self-governing members of the British Commonwealth, without aiming at Imperial self-sufficiency; to collaborate with the people of India in their political and economic advancement; to develop the Crown Colonies in their own interests; to insist on the principle of trusteeship with respect to the less developed peoples; and to make and keep the Colonial Empire free to the trade of the world.

"At home its goal is a country in which the powers of the State will be steadily used to establish social justice, to wage war against poverty, to ensure that the country's resources are wisely developed for the benefit of the whole community, and to create the positive conditions which will make a full and free life possible for all citizens—a country in which, under the protection of law, all citizens have the right to speak freely, write freely, and vote freely; power through a just electoral system to shape the laws which they are called upon to obey; an effective voice in deciding the conditions in which they live and work; liberty under Free Trade to buy, sell and produce; guarantees against the abuse of monopoly whether private or public; opportunity to work at a fair wage; decent homes and healthy surroundings; good education and facilities for training; access to land and an assurance that publicly created

land values shall not be engrossed by private interests; and, as a safeguard of independence, the personal ownership of property.

"These are the conditions of liberty, which it is the function of the State to protect and enlarge."

But that is the preamble to the Constitution of the Liberal Party. Evidently, what the country wants is what the Liberal Party wants. We have not had these things from the Conservatives, we are not in process of getting them from Labour, but we still want them.

Why not try getting them from the one party that really offers them? Liberty, not from a party that believes "real" freedom to lie in control by the State, but from the party that believes in setting men and women free to run their own lives. Property, not from the party which preserves property for the few, nor from that which condemns property for any, but from the Liberals who believe with Elliott Dodds that "the man who owns nothing cannot be truly free, since he lacks the very basis of 'self-control'." Security, not from the party which had to be pushed reluctantly into accepting responsibility that the old, the sick and the workless should not starve; not from the party that would sell for security the right of enterprise, but from the Liberals who believe in making secure not only a minimum of decent life but the opportunity to rise above the minimum by effort and enterprise. Peace, not from the party that muddled us into the last war, nor from the party that wages industrial war, but from the Liberals who in all spheres seek to replace war by law.

We want the bounty of Nature to be available to all; we want the nations to build peace and prosperity, trading freely to their mutual benefit.

We want poverty abolished, not by the charity of the rich nor by making us all pensioners of the State, but by the Liberal way of removing handicaps on the hard-working, creating conditions in which each reaps the due reward of his work. We want ignorance abolished, not by putting all children through a standard school but by opening to every child the particular kind of education to which nature inclines him. We want to abolish unemployment, not by directing everyone into a task which someone else decides he should perform, but by opening to each the door to the employment of his choice.

I have shown that the Liberal Party does stand for these things; I have shown that the Liberal Party has concrete proposals to achieve them. But the Liberal Party is not in office. It has not been for thirty years. Its strength in the House of Commons has fallen steadily to the eleven we see to-day. How is it possible that this remnant can come to rule?

Quite easily. Only one thing is needed—that we vote for what we want and refuse any longer to be fobbed off with a second best.

Two and a quarter million voted Liberal in 1945 in 307 constituencies; that is, in the 640 constituencies there must be about five million people who are Liberals and who know it. Half the strength of the Conservative Party—not a bad beginning. Potential recruits to their ranks are the millions who are Liberals and who don't know it—the millions who want Liberal things but have not thought of looking for them in the Liberal Party. Potential recruits are the "Liberals—but."

We need a league of the "Liberals—but": of the people who say, "Of course, I'm really a Liberal,

but . . . . ," who say, " I'd really like to see a Liberal government, but . . . ," or, " I remember when the Liberals were in power things were better, but . . . ."

Each of these people yearns vaguely and ineffectually for something better. Each wishes, but does nothing about it. Each knows that he wants to vote Liberal, but turns aside for fear that none will follow him. Go round a typical street and find how many voters in it are " Liberals—but." There will certainly be a large proportion. Now what those people need is to get together and *see their own strength.* Each of them believes it is no use voting for what he wants because not enough others will vote for it—so each contributes to bring about the very thing he fears. Let those people see that —even as they stand now—they are strong enough in numbers to have a chance of winning in most places.

And they need not continue to stand where they are now. If they have backbones instead of merely wishbones, they will induce others to join them. Even one convert apiece would be quite sufficient to raise the despised Liberal Party above the strength of its self-confident Labour rival.

But do the other parties really despise the Liberals as much as they affect to do? No; they realise its potential strength better than do many of its friends.

A writer to the Wolverhampton *Express and Star* on the Heywood by-election says the probable reason for the disappointing result was " that the opposition was provided by the Conservatives. Large numbers of people will never vote Conservative again except under extreme provocation, but would certainly vote Liberal. In this district there are several seats which could be won by Liberals in a straight fight. . . . I suggest that Liberal

candidates should be adopted in all such divisions as quickly as possible, and that Conservatives should accept the situation and announce that they will not contest these seats." This writer, who calls himself "Realistic," and says he voted Conservative at the last two elections, would appear to be a "Liberal—but." He voted Conservative (and thereby contributed perhaps to the defeat of Sir Geoffrey Mander) and now realises his mistake. He has an idea that after all the way to get what you want may be to vote for it and not for something different. But he is still not prepared to stand on his own feet. He wants Liberals to fight, yes, but with the help of Conservatives; that is, the Conservatives are now to be asked in their turn to vote for something *they* don't want, in order to get rid of something they may (or may not) want still less.

The Conservatives, we may be sure, have their own ideas of such a bargain—and they are not Liberal ones! Presumably "Realistic" has forgotten 1931. At that time, the country's very existence was supposed to be in danger; it was thought to be a matter of the greatest urgency to defeat the Labour Party and prevent it dragging us down into ruin. For that purpose, just such arrangements as "Realistic" proposes were entered into. Conservatives supported Liberal candidates in 41 constituencies, themselves receiving Liberal support in over 400. Not much of a bargain for the Liberals to start with, but what was the sequel? On public platforms the Conservatives were ready to sacrifice themselves for the "National" cause; in private their spirit was that of the local Conservative worker I overheard in a train: "What a shame we have to stand down for so many Liberals—otherwise we should have swept the

country." Are those the people whose support any honest man should seek? It was that spirit which speedily transformed the "National" government into the most extreme Tory government the country had known for many years. We know only too well what the Liberals got for accepting a ride on that tiger.

Is "Realistic" so unrealistic as to imagine that the Conservatives will refrain from opposing Sir Geoffrey Mander in Wolverhampton and not demand in return that the Liberals refrain from opposing Sir Herbert Williams in Croydon? And how many Liberals does he think would follow him into that parlour?

Let the "Liberals—but" have more courage. They are far stronger than they themselves imagine—strong enough to dispense with any entangling alliances that will always have the accent on the tangle.

With whom does one seek an alliance? With the weak? Certainly not. Nobody bothers to woo a potential ally unless that potential ally is strong. Why do the Liberal Nationals cling to their pseudonym long after National Labour recognised realities by merging its identity in the Conservative Party? Simply because to be called "Liberal" is an asset. Both Labour and Conservatives are wooing the Liberals—especially the Conservatives because they are more in need of help. The *Recorder* recently devoted the most prominent part of its front page to an article by an anonymous Conservative describing the happy honeymoon the two parties might have, and discreetly refraining from all mention of a possible divorce to follow—all flatteringly decorated with the portraits of the most attractive Liberal leaders.

Conservative by-election candidates try to tempt

Liberals into joining with them to fight for "those things that were cherished by those brought up in both the Liberal and Unionist tradition." Anthony Eden, Richard Law, Lord Cranborne and their echoes throughout the party try to persuade us that the fight is between the Socialists and the rest and entice Liberals into "the rest" by flattery about "the great part Liberalism has played in the past"—of course they don't mind praising the past if that is a means of preventing the Liberal Party having any future! The real motive for all this is candidly stated by an anonymous writer in the *Bath Chronicle*: "As an outsider, I don't see why the Liberals should not have their say in a joint party." (Very good of him!) "I see no reason why they should be overwhelmed. There are a lot of them. I think their support is just about indispensable if the Conservatives are to regain office some day." Just about indispensable if the Conservatives are to regain office. But why on earth should Liberals be thought to want the Conservatives to regain office? Are Liberals expected to shed any tears over a Conservative corpse that defies resuscitation? On the contrary—let the dead past bury its own dead and let us move on towards a free world.

If the Liberals are strong enough to be worth this expenditure of Conservative ink, they are strong enough to be considered in their own right for the post of alternative government. For it is an alternative government which the nation will be seeking before long. The Labour government cannot in any case last for ever; it will be lucky if it lasts till 1950. What then? The country does not want the Conservatives back again; our Bath writer for one is certain it will never want them back. But in that case the country does not want the

Conservatives as His Majesty's Opposition either, for the essence of an opposition is that it should be able to take the government's place when the people so decide. The Liberal Party is the real opposition, not only because it shows most ability in opposition but because it shows the best promise as a government.

After all, this generation of Liberals (and not their Labour rivals) are the heirs of Asquith and Lloyd George, of the great Liberal government that put the House of Lords in its place and laid the foundations of social security. The Liberal government before the first world war established against great opposition the first Unemployment Insurance. Subsequent Conservative and Labour governments, instead of building on this foundation, used it for a purpose for which it was never intended and never designed—they used it, not to tide over short spells of unemployment, but to keep men alive through years of idleness which the government was too incompetent to utilise. The same Liberal government (the last we had) began Health Insurance; it began old age pensions; subsequent Conservative and Labour governments have left these things much as they were—added to here and there but never until now brought up to date and made part of a more comprehensive whole. When that bringing up to date could no longer be postponed, it was Sir William Beveridge who was brought in to do the job that should have been done long ago—and Beveridge is a Liberal. It might be taken as a compliment to Liberal foresight that the Liberal measures of a generation ago should so long have been thought to suffice; it is certainly not a compliment to the good sense of the other parties.

This generation of Liberals are the heirs of Campbell-

Bannerman, who bound South Africa to us by an act of statesmanship beyond the comprehension of the Conservatives, who violently denounced it, and who so often claim an exclusive interest in the Empire. The party which could then convert a beaten foe into a staunch friend still has the wisdom that can build a peaceful world community.

As I am the great-granddaughter of a Liberal who fought for the first meagre extension of the suffrage in 1832, so are all Liberals the heirs of the party that brought political power to the common man, who gave him his vote and who made it secret. They are still the only party which seeks to make every vote count.

To-day's Liberals are the people who were wise before the event. Devotion to principle brought clarity of vision to Liberal leaders and rank and file alike. It was a typical warning of Sir Archibald Sinclair against the Nazi peril when in 1935 he said, " A situation in which a great country not a member of the League of Nations possesses the most powerful army and air force in Western Europe . . . cannot be allowed to continue," and it was I who, with no more exceptional opportunity than a business trip to Germany, could see and proclaim as early as 1929 that " in the present state of the world, the great danger is not Communism but Fascism."

Liberals spoke out against the betrayal of one country after another to strengthen the hands of those whom we were in the end obliged to fight—the betrayal of China to Japan, of Abyssinia to Italy, of Czechoslovakia to Germany. In the midst of the Abyssinian affair, Lady Violet Bonham Carter wrote to *The Times*: " War is inevitable sooner or later if this cold-blooded experiment in international anarchy is successfully carried

through before a watching world. It is an example which some will not be slow to follow, and Europe may be their playground instead of Africa." How terribly right she was! Liberals spoke out against the tragic farce of non-intervention in Spain. "It is a policy of calculated imposture and organised hypocrisy," said Geoffrey Mander in June, 1938: "It is the imposition of sanctions against a subject of aggression." Liberals saw the connection between all these separate aggressions. While Conservatives were anxious only to buy off Hitler (at another country's expense) and Labour was hesitating between pacifism and resistance, Liberals spoke firmly for justice. "I am sure that peace cannot be bought by sacrifices to aggressive military Powers at the expense of small and weak nations," said Sir Archibald Sinclair to the Council of the Liberal Party on the 21st September, 1938. "Peace must be based upon justice and it must be defended against aggression. Peace must be based upon justice buttressed by force, but force must be the servant, not the master, of justice." The Council thus addressed published this resolution: "The Liberal Party condemns the Government for initiating, without consulting Parliament, yet another surrender to force in reversal of the policy announced by the Government two weeks ago at a time when a firm lead could have preserved peace with honour. It records its view that the Government's proposals, in so far as they correspond to Press reports, cannot prove workable, are unlikely to preserve peace, and will confront Europe in general and this country in particular with ever-increasing demands from Herr Hitler backed in each case by ever-increasing force. No lasting solution of the Czechoslovak problem can be obtained in isola-

tion. It should be part of a general European settlement, an essential element in which would be the withdrawal of all foreign forces from Spain forthwith. The Liberal Party demands the immediate reassembly of Parliament." Are not the people who spoke thus the right people to be entrusted with our foreign policy?

Liberals saw what we should reap from our failure to help the victims of aggression. They knew that every yielding to force or to the threat of force brought nearer the use of force against ourselves, that every acceptance of a transparent excuse invited new extortions. "If we let Hitler have the Sudetenland because Germans live there," said I in 1938, "he will soon be demanding Golders Green because Germans live there."

To-day's Liberals are the people who not only pointed to the perils ahead but pointed the way to avoid them. In 1935 the Liberal Party demanded an international police force; in 1936 an official Liberal statement said: "Britain should organise within the League such a concentration of resources, economic and military, as will make it evident that aggression will not pay. All States Members should be invited to state what military, naval or air force, if any, they are prepared to contribute for the maintenance of the public law in specific areas. . . . The vital thing is that the plans concerted for the restraint of aggression should be thought out beforehand and be certain in their operation." Surely these are the words of people who could make the United Nations work.

To-day's Liberals belong to the party which has the unique distinction of never having broken an election promise. They belong to the party which, in 1932,

forsook the sweets of office rather than share in the "National" government's betrayal of the nation's trust. To-day's Liberals are men and women who year after year have laboured in hopeless constituencies when by yielding to the blandishments of another party they could have had seats in Parliament for a fraction of the work. Their political honesty is above question. To-day's Liberals are the people who, in a world cynically distrustful of politicians, have proved in deeds that they are not in politics for what they can get out of it.

The opportunity now before the nation is to bring back to power at the next election the party which was an efficient and progressive government in the past and is an efficient opposition now; the party whose unheeded advice turned out to be right; the party which has proved both its wisdom and its honesty.

But the leaders? Who would be the Liberal Cabinet? The "Liberals—but" are troubled because they do not know twenty famous names to fill Cabinet posts. What then? How many people in 1939 would have been impressed by the name of Eisenhower or Montgomery, MacArthur or Wingate, Alexander or Wavell? Informed Army circles might have predicted the men who would lead us to victory, but the names would have meant little to the man in the street. That the peace-time Englishman has never heard of his potential field-marshals does not prove any lack of talent in the Army. That people who have not known a Liberal government for thirty years cannot name a potential Liberal Foreign Minister or Chancellor of the Exchequer does not prove that those men are not there. When the Army assumed a place of supreme importance in our destinies, its leaders became famous; when the Liberal

Party assumes control of our government the leaders who already exist in it will become famous.

Anyone who before the war took the trouble to delve into "Monty's" military career might well have predicted high command for him; anyone now who takes the trouble to delve into Liberal records may do the same. The Liberal Ministers in the war-time coalition held their posts with dictinction and not one of them needed to be displaced. Sinclair guiding the Air Force to which we owe so much; Harcourt Johnstone at the Board of Trade; Dingle Foot in the Ministry of Economic Warfare; Gwilym Lloyd George as Minister of Fuel and Power. And see how often a government in search of talent for a difficult job selects a Liberal although political prejudice inclines it in the opposite direction. Beveridge in charge of a great social advance; Clem Davies Chairman of the Advisory Council for London Regional Planning; Noel Newsome first as the "Man in the Street" organising underground resistance against Germany, now charged with getting more miners underground; Harry Walston with the formidable job of organising Germany's food production; Comyns Carr prosecuting Japanese war criminals.

The potential Cabinet Ministers are there, just as our potential V.C.s were there before the war. The occasion will certainly produce the men. In the meantime it is the men who must produce the occasion.

> "No patrol will report any jungle impenetrable until it has been penetrated."
>
> Order by General Wingate.

Anyone who is content to have his personality smothered by the jungle of vested interests, arbitrary

regulations and power politics need trouble himself no further. Anyone who is content to be the common man, accepting the same lot with 47,000,000 other common men, may take the easy way and be content (if he can) with what results. There are others, who believe with Madariaga that what matters is "all that which allows the common man to find in himself the man out of the common." These others will fight the strangling jungle; they will not be put off by tales of impenetrability.

We won the war because we knew what we wanted and did not sit waiting for it to drop into our laps. We knew that "impenetrable" jungles lay between us and victory, but what matter? The impenetrable is made to be penetrated. We are beginning to know what we want now; we can get it if we are determined not to be put off by enemy propaganda about impenetrable jungles, impregnable lines and invincible forces. We can get it if we each individually work for it as we did in war, neither despairing nor slacking, neither leaving it to the generals nor putting our hopes in miracles.

Each of us who feels himself to be a person, each one who wants the chance to develop his personality, must put that personality into the fight. He who believes in the rights of men as persons has responsibilities as a person. His will be the blame if we sink into a regimented world of eclipsed personality; his will be the credit if we climb towards a less depressing prospect.

There was a personality that impressed itself on many thousands of listeners, a man regarded as a personal friend and counsellor by thousands who never saw him —John Hilton. John Hilton was not known to the world as a Liberal, but had it not been for his untimely

death he would have been one of our band of candidates in 1945. He left his mark on the world because he worked hard and effectively for what he believed in, and the end for which he worked was the Liberal one: "The world I want to see," wrote Hilton, "is a world of sovereign beings, each standing on his own feet among his own kind, in surroundings constantly shaping and shaped by him; a world in which each has a personal contribution to make to the sum total of human emotion and thought and achievement; a world in which each has the will and the strength and the means to make it."

PRINTED AT SEVENOAKS BY KNOLE PARK PRESS LTD.