

the Moscow negotiations! Can there be any doubt that it was Chamberlain who was doing the double-crossing?

Unlike the outbreak of the 1914-18 war, therefore, the origins of the Second World War are not wrapped in darkness. On the contrary—thanks to the existence of a Socialist State, thanks to its diplomacy which realises the jungle laws of the imperialist world and consistently strives to bend them to the service of peace—the causes of the war are only too clear. They were: (i) the frenzied determination of German imperialism to launch a war of revenge for 1914-18, in order to carve up the world anew; (ii) the malignant and besotted determination of the British and French ruling classes (abetted by those of the U.S.A.) to try and turn the Germans against the U.S.S.R.

And the more the Foreign Offices and State Departments suppress Blue Books, garble despatches and “select” documents, the more inexorably and pitilessly the true facts stand out.

THE CASTE SYSTEM IN BRITAIN

By P. H. H. BRYAN

DISRAELI might have said that we were two nations—the rich and the poor—but a more modern and accurate sub-division of the people may be said to lie between those of us who go down to the local Employment Exchange to seek a living and those of us who don't. The boundary fence is being constructed stronger and higher, and is now in the process of being officially recognised and legalised. Those inside the fence—the fellows who line up at the “Labour”—are, of course, by far the more numerous and constitute what some political writers and economists call “the masses”, which is a term used to describe the majority when you are not appealing to them. It is against these that the Control of Engagement Order (born September, 1947) is directed. All managerial, professional, executive and administrative groups are exempt: and in my father's house there are many, many mansions.

When my friend Frank was demobilised from the Navy in 1946 (after getting shot at, burned and blown in and out of the water with tiresome frequency), he carefully and hopefully studied all the Careers pamphlets from Architecture to Zoology which a grateful government lavishly conferred upon him. The creators of this copious literature (referred to off the record as the “Hope” or “Carrot” scheme) carried out their duties with persistence and apparent contentment, under the undisputed illusion that most infantry privates or naval gunners had attained, or had commenced to study for, a scientific or technical degree. Frank's studies for the previous six years had lain in the direction of the sinking of E-boats, and so it was not long before he found himself, as other millions of ex-warriors had found themselves, queueing up down at the “Labour” for any sort of job at all.

His sociological education now commenced on a practical basis. He learned that although the parrot-cry "shortage of labour" was resounding throughout the land from press, pulpit and microphone, it was nevertheless almost impossible to obtain any sort of a decent job with a reputable undertaking. Only the very scourings of employment were on the Employment Exchange lists—jobs which, by reasons of bad pay, arduous conditions, unhealthy conditions or unwholesome management, few men would stick for very long, with the resultant constant interchange of labour. There were half-a-dozen undertakings who comprised the "constants" at the Exchange. Indeed, they were the only firms who regularly used the Exchange, for any vacancy with a "good" employer was snapped up overnight by personal application without the facilities of the Ministry of Labour being used.

These half-dozen "constants" included:

1. Quarry work. 10 miles out of the city. Heavy work, hard on hands. Exposed to all weathers. No canteen.
2. Gas Works. Stoking. Red Sea heat and very unhealthy because of fumes. Fainting common.
3. Provender Mill. Work mainly loading and unloading lorries. Heavy animal work, carrying bags up to 2 cwt. Sweatshop atmosphere. No canteen.
4. Paint Works. Handling bags of paint powder. The fine powder penetrates into the pores and hot baths will not shift it. Destructive to clothes, pillows and sheets. Even months after ceasing this work, a bout of heavy perspiration will bring out red stain.

There are unfortunately no periodical published reports, showing the worker's assessment, on a points system, of any particular employment. We can see at a glance in the press the daily state of stocks and shares, the situation of any football team, or the form of any racehorse. But vital information of our means of livelihood is kept (wisely, no doubt) a dark secret, obtainable only by actual experience or by constant contact with those in possession of local knowledge.

Frank, faced with half-a-dozen alternatives, chose what appeared to him to be the least of the evils—the provender mill. Thereafter he became, for eight hours a day, a human mule, carrying, pushing and tugging sacks of cattle-food weighing as much as himself. He hoped, as so many ex-servicemen have hoped, that this brutish labour would only be a temporary phase, and that sooner or later society would find for him a place in which his qualifications of intelligence, honesty, strength, youth and adaptability would be expressed. With this hope, he launched a campaign of applications and was just getting into his stride with the technique of this difficult art, when along came the Control of Engagement Order to put paid to all such ambitions.

And then, one recent Saturday morning, he was told not to leave at the normal hour of twelve noon, but to work on until nine at night. On his stating that he did not want to, he was instantly dismissed. So back he went to the "Labour". The old "constants" were put

before him, just as they had been in pre-Control Order days, only now there was a difference: the threat of compulsion, and, if necessary, compulsion. Frank was offered Quarries and Paints. "Why not direct me back to the mill?" enquired Frank. "They still cannot get enough men and you are still sending other men there."

"You have been dismissed", replied the Employment Exchange clerk, severely, "and it is very improbable that they would accept you again." His tone inferred that a serious and most improper breach of Ministry of Labour policy had been suggested.

"Do you mean to say", asked Frank, "that, although I have to go wherever you send me, the employer is under no obligation to take me on?". The clerk indicated that that was how things were.

Frank is now working in a rather grim-looking quarry. When it rains, he gets wet; when it is cold, he gets cold; and any time it may please a foreman, he may get the sack. He will then, presumably, go to Paints as the only remaining alternative.

He is feeling oppressed and depressed and he certainly has a strong right to feel this way. What has the Control Order done to him? To all practical, everyday effect (and that is the only sort of effect that is worth a damn) he is now legally and officially scheduled as a hewer of wood and a drawer of water; to all practical effect he is debarred from applying for any post of responsibility. Although he may be forcibly sent to labour in a quarry, his employers are not forced to keep him. They can fire him when they like, and need not take him back again. But if he should leave on his own accord, he can be directed back the next day. It is difficult to imagine a more one-sided bargain.

How does the Control Order affect the employers? The better employer, offering reasonable conditions of pay, security, and amenities, has never been short of any sort of labour and has not had need to use the Employment Exchange; and consequently derives no benefit from the Control Order. It is the less desirable employers who profit so much by the Order that they could hardly have drafted it better themselves. These staunch advocates of free enterprise can now sit back and watch the next draft of conscript labour roll in. They need no longer waste money on canteens and superannuation funds and the like, as do their more foolish and more scrupulous competitors. There is no longer any need to attempt to preserve a cordial relationship with labour. They can still use the old weapon of the sack, knowing that a dismissed employee will be sent to a similarly undesirable job by the Employment Exchange. They can well adopt the simple policy of "Drive 'em to the limit. Isaacs will send us more". In short, they are having placed in their hands most of the advantages of slave-labour—and none of the responsibilities.

What about the "exemptees" from the Control Order? Do they benefit or suffer? They have no immediate positive advantages, like the undesirable employer, but they will benefit in a negative fashion. The managerial, professional, executive and administrative classes

enjoy a form of employment which ensures a decent standard of living and a good measure of security. From now on they need fear no outside competition from the outside world. The little insertion at the head of the "Appointments Vacant" column restricts the struggle to fellow-exemptees only. Our friend Frank may have done more organising and more leading of men in his six Navy years than his works manager has done in a lifetime, but that will avail him little now.

And so we had better leave him in his quarry, lifting 80 lb. stones. His status in life was "frozen" at the 1947 level and he is beginning to realise that he will probably always be a labourer; and his children (unless they turn to genius or crime) will be labourers, no doubt in the same quarries and mills and paint works. For discriminatory legislation, although designed to be used with discretion at the outset, always becomes more rigid as time goes on. It is the letter of the law, not the spirit, that is passed down into history.

In our quiet English way, we have brought into being a system that bears many of the hallmarks of the compulsory-occupation-for-dirty-work-only method of the East. Let us hope that, if Frank's children are to be our industrial untouchables, they will have a tribune of their own to speak for them.

100 Years Ago

THE JUNE REVOLUTION

"Thus we began" wrote Engels thirty-six years later "on June 1, 1848, with a very limited share capital, of which only a little had been paid up, and the shareholders themselves were more than uncertain. Half of them deserted us immediately after the first number, and at the end of the month we no longer had any at all . . . It was due in the first place to his (Marx's) clear view and his firm attitude that the paper became the most famous German newspaper of the year of revolution."

The leading article of 6th June, as against the federal programme of the Lefts in Frankfurt, put forward the demand for a single indivisible German republic.

But the great event of the month was the June uprising of the Paris proletariat, and its bloody suppression. Each day of it from 22nd to 25th was dealt with in the New Rhenish Gazette. "From the first shot we stood unconditionally on the side of the insurgents. After their defeat, Marx celebrated the vanquished in one of his most powerful articles." It was from this article that Marx himself inserted the famous "Order reigns in Warsaw" paragraph in Class Struggles in France 1848-1850 in which also there are the sentences about the Paris workers, who "were left no choice: they had to starve or start to fight. They answered on June 22nd with the tremendous insurrection in which the first great battle was fought between the two classes that split modern society." From this article (which cost them the support of the last of their shareholders) we print the introductory paragraph and then the concluding portions.

NEUE RHEINISCHE ZEITUNG, JUNE 29, 1848

The Paris workers have been *suppressed* by superior force but they have not *succumbed* to it. They have been *beaten* but their