

British Socialist Experiment Involves Social Readjustment

By DEWITT MACKENZIE
(AP Foreign Affairs Analyst)
Britain's experiment in Socialist government represents not only an economic leveling off process but it involves a social readjustment aiming at the ultimate elimination of class distinctions.

Socialist Prime Minister Attlee

made a brief and tempered reference to "class society" in a speech preparing for the coming general election. He said Britain's Conservative party still believes in government by "a privileged class" but that under his Labor (Socialist) government "we are moving away from that old conception of class society."

What Mr. Attlee had reference to, I take it, was the fact that prior to the comparatively recent rise of "labor" to power in England, it was the function of the aristocracy to govern.

Partly By Divine Right
This prerogative was based partly on a subconscious theory of "divine right" but more practically on the circumstance that the aristocracy was the only educated class. And by that same token of education the aristocracy was the only class which had the franchise. It was the widening of the franchise, of course, which was responsible for the birth and growth of the Labor, or Socialist, party.

There has been a great change in the social structure of England during the last generation. Cur-

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OUT OUR WAY

By J. R. Williams

ously enough this change has been due largely to the Conservative party which, by the unavoidable imposition of heavy income and death taxes, turned many of the aristocracy into wage earners.

The landed aristocracy, as this column has pointed out before, is rapidly disappearing, and was disappearing before the Socialists came to power almost five years ago.

"Gentleman" Distinctive

However, the term "gentleman" still has a very distinctive meaning to a large percentage of the aristocracy of Britain. A gentleman is born and not made. That is to say, he comes from the upper classes.

A tradesman's son, who may have acquired the same education as the aristocrat, is not and never can be a "gentleman." Obviously this is a matter of terminology but it can be a very sticky one.

To illustrate: When I was living in England I knew an office in which two men had worked in close contact with each other for thirty years, yet they weren't on speaking terms. Why? Well, because one was a graduate of Eng-

land's famous and aristocratic public school of Eton while the other (and by far the more brilliant) was educated in an ordinary council school.

Not Accepted

I could (but won't) name a famous English businessman of a generation ago who had friendships which extended to the highest circle in the land but who wasn't generally accepted by the aristocracy socially. He was a tradesman and therefore wasn't a gentleman. He didn't belong.

However, as previously remarked, the caste system in England has changed greatly in recent years, and various things have played their part in this leveling off. Two world wars, for example, have had a mighty influence by throwing aristocrats and non-aristocrats together on the battle fields. Class doesn't matter a tinker's dam when aristocrat and laborer are fighting side by side for their lives.

Naturally, too, the change has been broadened by the entrance of the heavily taxed aristocracy into business of one sort or another. The Eton graduate and the council school chap are a lot closer than they used to be.

Still, it is the aim of socialism to remove the last barrier between the classes, not only economically but socially. That will take some doing, and it won't be accomplished in our time, even though England has undergone an amazing transformation in very recent times.

Guam, the American naval base in the Pacific, was weaker in 1941 than in 1920 because the United States observed the terms laid down at the Washington Naval Conference.

Hydrogen Bomb Enters Britain's Political Fight

LONDON, Feb. 17. — (AP) — The Hydrogen bomb began today to look like an issue in the British political campaign, which has brought out a record 1,806 candidates for 625 parliament seats. Speakers for both Prime Minister Clement Attlee's labor government and Winston Churchill's Conservative opposition have called for a new attempt at international agreement to head off the use of the fearful atomic weapon.

With the election only nine days off, the bomb still is not in the issue category. But if it should become so, debate probably would boil up over which party could do more to get the United States and Russia to agree—the laborites or the Tories.

Only two candidates are unopposed—Sir Hugh O'Neill and Capt. J.R.E. Harden, both of Northern Ireland and both pro-Tory Ulster unionists.

The breakdown of Candidates this year: Conservatives and their supporters, 620; Laborites and their supporters, 619; Liberals, 472; Communists, 100, and others, 55.

The number of women nominees—125—also is a record. The old record was 87 in 1945.

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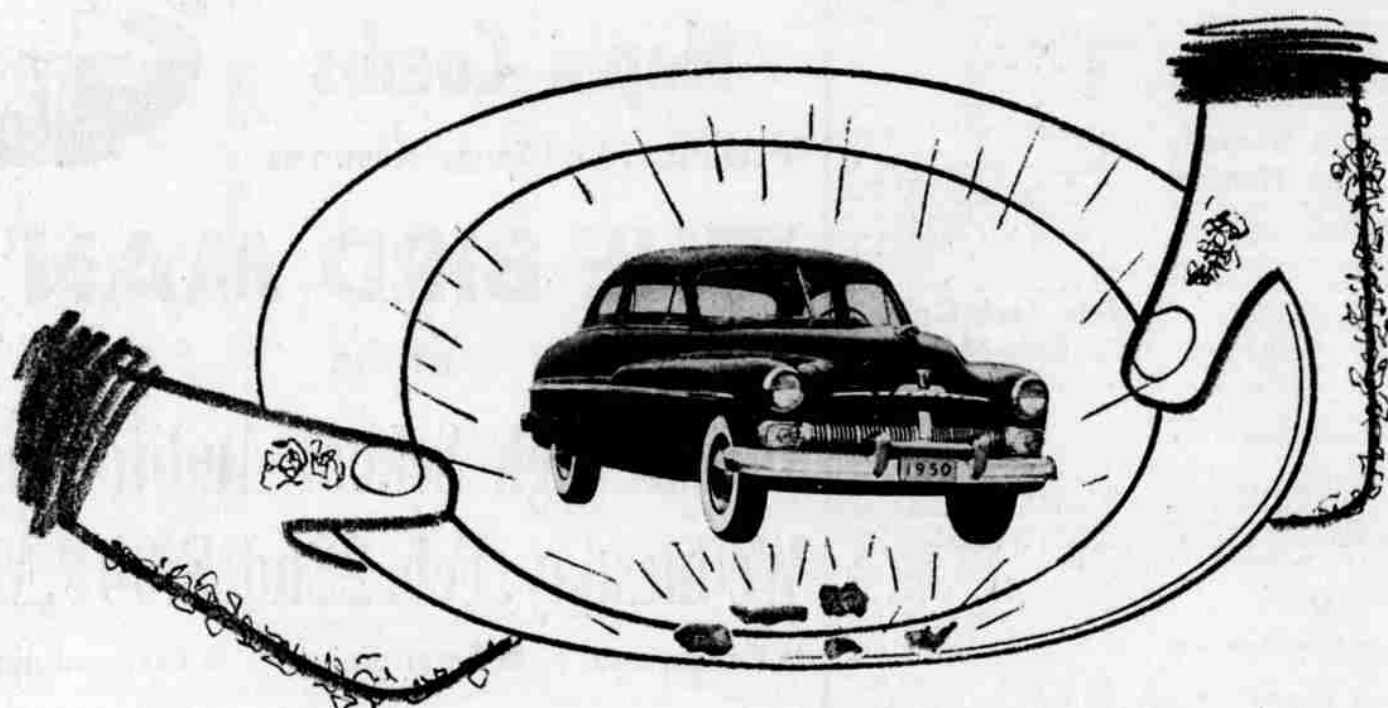
SALEM, Feb. 16 — (AP) — Plans for Marion county's \$1,580,000 five-story court house have been approved by the county court, but construction won't start until next year.

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