

MINISTRY OF LABOUR

Tel. No.: WHI. 6200

Press Office,  
8, St. James's Square,  
London, S.W.1.

22nd January, 1960.

Dear Editor,

50th Anniversary of the Employment Exchange Service

The Minister of Labour, Mr. Edward Heath, will take the chair at a meeting which is to be held at the Employment Exchange, 26-46, Lisson Grove, Marylebone, on Monday, 1st February at 3.45 p.m. to mark the 50th anniversary of the setting up of the Employment Exchange Service.

Lord Beveridge, the first Director of the Labour Exchanges, will be the speaker and guests will include former Ministers of Labour, local Mayors and representatives of employers, trade unions, and the many committees and voluntary bodies that work in association with the Ministry of Labour.

Before the meeting, the Minister and a few of the principal guests will carry out a short tour of inspection of the exchange at 3.15 p.m.

I hope to be able to meet you or your representative at the Exchange, but since space in the building is very limited I should be grateful if you would let me know whether you are coming or whether you propose to be represented by a reporter or photographer.

Yours sincerely,

*Jack McIntosh*

J. McIntosh  
Chief Press Officer.

*Can they help  
on school leaving?*

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1910

50th Anniversary  
of the establishment of the  
Employment Exchanges

1960

MINISTRY OF LABOUR

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An  
Anniversary Meeting  
in the Employment Exchange  
26-46 Lisson Grove, Marylebone, N.W.1  
Monday, 1st February, 1960  
at 3.45 p.m.

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### Chairman

The Right Honourable Edward Heath, M.B.E., M.P.  
Minister of Labour

### Speaker

The Lord Beveridge of Tuggal, K.C.B.  
First Director of Board of  
Trade Labour Exchanges

### Vote of Thanks

Proposed by

Sir William Garrett, M.B.E.  
President of the  
British Employers' Confederation

Seconded by

C. Bartlett, Esq., C.B.E.  
Chairman of the  
Trades Union Congress

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Light refreshments will be served at the close of the meeting

EMPLOYMENT EXCHANGE JUBILEE

• Speech by Lord Beveridge

Those of you who are readers of R. L. Stevenson, probably remember a character in The Wrong Box called Joseph Finsbury - an inveterate lecturer in public. He was prepared at any time, says Stevenson, "to travel thirty miles to address an infant school."

Fifty years and more ago, when Labour Exchanges, as we called them, were being conceived, I was Joseph Finsbury to the life - and worse. I never stopped talking about Labour Exchanges in private and was a terrible bore to my friends. And if a chance came of lecturing about them in public, 300 miles travel seemed as easy as 30, and the size or character of the audience didn't matter at all.

My high-water mark in this line of oratory was a mass-meeting of employers and workmen in a large hall in Poplar. The meeting consisted of one person, the Secretary of the Poplar Trades Council who was lame and could not escape. But the local Press was there in force, and several columns of my address were published. I have been a devoted admirer of the Press ever since.

But I - and the Employment Exchanges - owe to the Press far more than such an occasional kindness. I was myself a regular pressman - a nightly leader-writer about social questions on the Morning Post. That gave me the chance to advocate Labour Exchanges repeatedly over three years, and I took it to the full. But, as my press-cuttings show, other papers also - from The Times downwards or upwards - were thoroughly helpful. In joining in this Jubilee Celebration of Employment Exchanges one of the points to make is gratitude to the Press for all that they did for us.

But my Morning Post experience illustrates another point even more important than the value of the Press. The Morning Post was a Conservative paper. I never was and never expect to be anything but Radical in politics; I never wrote a word that I did not believe in the Morning Post, and I practically never had a word crossed out.

One of the qualities which I claim for our British people is that, however they may quarrel at elections, they are so good at Party Collaboration for a Good Cause.

Till this moment I have talked as if I was the only person urging Labour Exchanges fifty odd years ago. Of course it was not so.

X [ The first person to bring a public Labour Exchange into being in Britain was a sound Conservative - Nathaniel Cohen - who founded one by voluntary action in Egham where he lived, in 1885. He and I collaborated like anything on the Exchanges which functioned from 1906 to 1908 under the Central Unemployed Body for London. This year 1960 is the 75th anniversary of the starting of the first public Labour Exchange in Britain - at Egham. I feel that somehow we ought to be celebrating that as well. } There were plenty of other Conservatives on the Central Unemployed Body who supported me on Employment Exchanges, as there were of Labour men. X

There was, for instance, a pillar of the Charity Organisation Society, an older lady who came to call herself my London mother and said that she wrestled for my soul with George Lansbury, who was a leading spirit on the Central Unemployed Body for London. In practice George Lansbury and I made a deal: he was ready to support my Employment Exchanges so long as I supported his Farm Colonies for the Unemployed, like Hollesley Bay.

X Let me turn to the two people who did more than any one else to bring national Labour Exchanges into being fifty years ago - the Fabian Socialists, Sidney and Beatrice Webb. They were the first really important people who listened to me - from about 1904 onwards till their conversion by me in 1906 or 1907. They pushed the Labour Exchange idea publicly - through the Royal Commission on the Poor Laws and Relief of Distress through Unemployment, and they urged the idea privately but assiduously on Winston Churchill, the moment that he became President of the Board of Trade in the spring of 1908. They urged me also upon him and he listened. He invited me in July 1908 to leave the Morning Post for the Board of Trade. Of course I accepted.

The Webbs had told Winston Churchill that, if he was going to do anything about unemployment, he must have the boy Beveridge to help him. If Beveridge was a boy in the spring of 1908, at 29 years old, Churchill was little more - at 33. He was certainly great fun to work with. He told me then - I think as a reason for getting on quickly with the Labour Exchanges - that he had not himself many years to live: he expected to die young, like his father Randolph. But this was before he married. Just after, he saw and settled with Clementine and gave up any idea of dying young. X

Most happily also, at the beginning of Labour Exchanges, he took, so far as I know on his own, a vital decision as to the form that the Exchanges should take. Germany had established such Exchanges on a large scale long before us, under municipal authorities, and I had visited them and been impressed by them; local control made it easy to adjust the Exchange to the industrial and other conditions of different regions. In my first official memorandum at the Board of Trade I put, as evenly balanced alternatives, a national system directly under the Board, on the analogy of the General Post Office, and a local authority system encouraged and co-ordinated by the Board with grants in aid, on the analogy of Education. But Winston Churchill would have none of this second alternative. He decided for a national scheme directly under the Board. He decided before it was certain that unemployment insurance would become law. His decision was clearly right. Adjustment of Employment Exchanges to varying local conditions was secured amply by organising the service under responsible Divisional Officers.

*J.B. Adams.* I wish I had time to describe individually these Divisional Officers and where they came from and what they did. I wish also that I had time to speak of the three upper division civil servants whom I was allowed to pick for myself from the Board of Trade young men for our head-quarters. I made a thundering good choice - Humbert Wolfe, Stephen Tallents, Thomas Phillips. More than thirty years after, in World War II, I had the pleasure of working under Phillips in the Ministry of Labour of which he had become Permanent Secretary.

All these builders of the Labour Exchanges and of the Unemployment Insurance which followed almost at once are on record in my book Power and Influence, in which I have drawn for a number of the things I have said already. I must be content to speak of two men only, who played central parts in our great adventure.

One of course was Sir Hubert Llewellyn Smith, Permanent Secretary to the Board and one of the ablest and most constructive such officers that can ever have existed. To work under him as I did on Labour Exchanges and Unemployment Insurance was a liberal education.

The other was Charles Rey, now Sir Charles, appointed General Manager of Labour Exchanges at the same time as I was made Director. He and I worked together in everything. He happily is still alive, and has sent this message from the Cape of Good Hope where he now lives:-

"I send my very cordial greetings to my old friend Beveridge and any others of our fellow members of the original troupe still extant, and my heartfelt wishes for success to all those who are carrying on the good work started half a century ago - may they get the same kick out of it that we did and push it along for another 50 years."

There are two other groups of people - the associations of employers and of employees, who illustrate our British capacity for working together from different standpoints for a service like the Employment Exchanges. I need not do more than name them, for most happily they are both here today to speak for themselves immediately, through the British Confederation of Employers and the Trades Union Congress.

We celebrate today an outstanding case of British power for collaboration across party lines for a good cause. May that power never grow less.

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THE MEETING PLACE : CAFE "PARTISAN" IN SOHO .

The Rendez-vous of young intellectuals of the Labour movement .  
by Fritz v. Glogig .

Shortly after nine o'clock, the last seat in the café "Partisan" in Soho is occupied. Young men with rain dust on their hair try to enter through the door of this café during this damp winter night, only to retire again disappointedly after a look into these overcrowded, and with smoke filled premises.

Inside, a large counter is surrounded by a crowd. A shining coffee machine is steaming. Most of the young guests are dressed in shabby Bohemian style of to-day, in large camel-haired coloured overcoats and duffel-coat buttoned jackets, blue linen trousers which are worn by both sexes, black pull-overs with rolled up collars from which beards are growing on surprisingly young faces and girls with slender legs in black stockings and skin-tight trousers.

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The rope like hair of the girls hangs down in Bardot-like fashion and is un-combed. To the standard outfit of these male and female people also belongs a colourful linen sack, supported from the shoulder by a thick cord. This sack contains books, cigarettes and other easily transportable oddments. Some buttonholes and many a blouse carry a rustic badge of the nuclear disarmament campaign.

Lively and loud discussions take place at the table .  
" After all these hundreds of years of dreams and visions, mankind will one day learn to live in realities " a youngster declares with his beard still shaking and looking through thick rimmed spectacles of the intellectual - cultural type, feeling full of confidence and with an air of mystery.

Why did an Indian gentleman order bread which was described on the menu as " French roll " as " French revolutionary roll " ? And why did the grey-haired lady behind the counter say to a young student who selected a very big piece of marvellous gatem : " You are becoming a proper bourgeois, my dear " ? To this remark another guest jokingly remarked that lately even " Plutocrats " are visiting the " Partisan " . These jokes point to the special character of the " Partisan Café " . No ordinary coffee is served here, but one with a political flavour, let us say a national socialistic coffee. During the last few years a lot of ground has been lost by the Labour party and by other organisations like the " Fabians " and the " New Left Club " which is supported by British socialists and by the younger generation. The Espresso-Bar, the modern coffee-house with automatic music-machines and its shining chromium plated equipment has even in England recently become the favourite meeting place of young people. So a few years ago a group of socialistic intellectuals who are closely associated with the " New Left Review ", decided that the way to reach the heart of the younger generations is through the coffee house. This lead



to the foundation in London of the first political coffee shop, called the "Partisan". The idea seemed to catch on. With the support of the Labour party and their unions another "Left-wing-coffee-house" was established in Manchester during December. Plans are also afloat for three more in other provincial towns.

They are not intended as a kind of club room for members only but full blooded Tories and people with no political interests are also allowed admission. But in these coffee houses and in their adjoining rooms regular lectures are given by Labour politicians and newspapers and periodicals of the Left are available. It is expected that young socialists of all grades will use the café as a regular meeting place, as a kind of rendez-vous where not only the stomach but also the mind will find nourishment. Through joining companionship and politics these socialistic cafés are to be a modern counter piece to the political saloons of elegant centuries

The decoration of the Partisan-café in London has a kind of "advance-guard" motif. One wall is decorated like an abstract picture divided into coloured squares of different sizes whilst another wall is covered with a bright red plaster of very coarse grain. The only source of light consist of a multiple of small, sharp searchlights, throwing their beams criss-cross fashion like through the room. They also light up a dramatic picture in dark colour, illustrating a demonstrating crowd with hard-cut faces and with open, shouting mouths. On a black board is written with chalk: "Spaghetti bolonaise 3 shillings" and a notice board announces a lecture on "Marxism and Peace", also a discussion on Brecht's "Mother Courage". It also appeals for a demonstration before the German Embassy "Against atomic weapons for the Nazi generals". It addresses itself to a catholic disarmament group, informing them that the next meeting will take place on Sunday next.

The manageress of this first English political coffee house told me of the many teething troubles they have had. The Partisan café is situated in Soho, a part of London which harbours the underworld, the amusement centre of all sorts and many luxury restaurants serving dishes emitting a sharply spiced aroma. At first the wrong guests arrived, shady customers trying to traffic in opium and Teddyboys with their females. They were a pack of thieves, and the Partisan-café lost a great deal of their crockery, cutlery and other movable fittings. Even after overcoming all these difficulties, the café brought their founders disappointments very illustrating from a sociological point of view. They had hoped that young people of all grades would meet in the Partisan-café and that amongst them young workers would meet students and that discussions would follow. This hope has not yet been realized. "The young workers are still keeping away from the intellectuals" it was explained to me. "They prefer to go to the Pub around the corner. A café has for them an intellectual note, which frightens them." Nearly

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all young workers keep away. Most of the visitors of the café are students, young artists, script-writers and their girls. So the political café has not contributed much to the socialistic idea of bridging the gap in social standing.

A.A.