

# Why we did not Celebrate

## A Reasoned Case for Reasonable People.

THE "GAZETTE"  
TUESDAY MAY 7, 1935.

### AS WE SEE IT

The attitude that the Nelson Labour Party has taken on the issue of the Jubilee Celebrations as caused considerable stir in the town. Passions have been aroused, tempers frayed, and the remark is often heard: "Why did they do it?"

Let it be made perfectly clear that this is not a personal issue. This is not the result of the domination by one or two individuals. The Labour Party is not - As has been stated in the press and on the street - "A one-man band."

The policy pursued is the policy of the Party, and the decision reached was not determined by one or two individuals or a small coterie of the Party; but by the Party itself. The statement frequently made that Ald Smith is responsible is simply not true despite repeated assertions to the contrary.

For many years the Labour Party has had a majority on the Council. It has had the confidence of the electors of Nelson, and there are many reasons why it has merited that confidence. It can be boldly stated that it used the powers given to it, in the interests of the workers. It has toiled long and late to give workers a square deal. Despite implacable opposition it has carried through measures which have helped the worker in his or her hour of difficulty. On issues of poverty it has led a relentless war. It can be said that the record of the Party compare more that favourably with any town in the country.

It has demanded the complete abolition of the Means Test in no uncertain voice, it has fought hard and long for better treatment for those on Public Assistance; personal attention as been unstintingly given to thousands of cases, and it can be said that no avenue has been avoided that could be used to render assistance to those in need.

**We have demanded that concessions should be given to the children every day in the year and stern fact reveals the truth that our demands have met with very little success.**

Why has all this been necessary? Is not the worker entitled to a decent existence? If he is - why has it not been given? Why should it be necessary to struggle day after day, year after year for a mere pittance? The answer is that those in authority are not prepared to concede to the workers what they demand for themselves. The Lancashire County Council offers a shilling to school children (in kind and with reservations) one day in 25 years; but every other day has relentlessly refused to deal humanely with children who needed assistance.

With a flourish of trumpets the National Government urges the workers to rejoice whilst millions are feeling keenly the lash of misery and poverty. To the Nelson Labour Party this is a poverty issue. We can not rejoice - We are to conscious of the deep poverty and misery that is the common lot of millions.

When we have swept poverty away - When little children have no need to cry for bread - When our women have less worries and more sunshine - When workers everywhere reach the true dignity which is their inheritance - Then we will rejoice gladly.

### ONE SHILLING — AND OTHERS

The Nelson Labour Council has always prided itself on the care of the children of the town. The poorer children particularly, have had the best service that could be given; Labour on the old Burnley Board of Guardians put up an unceasing fight for them; when poor-law was transferred to the County Council.

Clogs for those who were lacking footwear; milk and free meals for those who required food; a scale of relief that would give at any rate, parents a chance to provide children with the necessities of life; not one day in twenty five years, but every day in the year, these things have been fought for with all the vigour that lies in our power.

We use the word "fought" advisedly. For to fight implies that there has been opposition, and to fight vigorously means that the opposition has been determined. Where has that opposition come from?

Entirely from that section of the Guardians and County Council who. At the moment are most enthusiastic in support of the Jubilee celebrations. That is a fact; and we ask the thoughtful reader to ponder it over.

The people who are most vigorously crying "Shame" over the neglect of Nelson to provide a shilling celebration for its children one day in 25 years, are just those people who, for 24 years and 364 days, have done all they could to stop Labour from doing anything at all for the children.

We submit that their claim to be so tender for the children's welfare is not genuine. If it were they would show some regard for them on the days that were not Jubilee days. We suggest that the simple truth is, that they are simply concerned in the glorification of pomp and power, and they want to rope in the children to help in that glorification. In short they are not out to help the children at all; they are out to get the children to help them.

Their attack on the Labour Party through the children has had a momentary success. But it is only momentary; for the facts are against them. And when the passions that have been raised by this mass-produced Jubilee die down, the facts will stand - and they will be recognised. The attack on the Labour Party will rebound on those who have made it.

The care of the children of Nelson by Labour has not been confined to those we have mentioned - The poorest. It has been general.

The Council is spending a rate of one shilling in the £ more on its school-children than its patriotic Anti-Labour predecessors did. What does that mean?

**It means Labour's spending a shilling a week more than its opponents did on every child. Not a shilling every 25 years, but a shilling every 52 weeks in every year.**

Better schools; better equipment; milk and meals for children; the extension of health facilities, such as the Open Air School - all these cost money. So do bus facilities. The 2d. Per dozen tickets does not cover the cost of bus fares by any means.

### JUBILEE RESOLUTIONS.

Up to the time of going to Press, we have received the following Resolutions:-

**To the Editor of the Nelson Gazette.**  
**From Labour Workers in Marsden Ward:-**

Sir, - We of the Marsden Ward Committee of Nelson Labour Party wish to congratulate the Labour Group on their attitude with regard to the Jubilee Celebrations, and assure them of our wholehearted support.

Yours fraternally  
A. Rycroft (President),  
J. Barret (Treasurer),  
H. Taylor (Secretary),  
J. E. Lord,  
F. Varley,  
T. Armistead,  
T. Sanderson,  
W. Waring,  
J. Widdup,  
F. Thompson,  
S. Youney,  
F. S. MacDonald,  
J. Counsell,  
J. Wilkinson,  
J. L. Braithwaite,  
Walt. Masterman,  
J. Shepherd,  
J. L. Braithwaite,  
E. Robinson.

**From the Women's Section of the Labour Party:-**  
**To the Editor of the Nelson Gazette.**

Sir the Women's Section of the Nelson Labour Party congratulate the Labour Group, and fully endorse their attitude not to take part in the Jubilee Celebrations.

Yours fraternally  
Mrs. Taylor, Secretary  
**From the Labour Workers in Bradley Ward:-**  
At a meeting of the Bradley Ward Labour

The cry of our opponents that Labour is mean to children will not bear a moment's examination. And as a matter of fact those who make that cry know it is untrue. Everybody in Nelson knows that we have the finest schools, and one of the finest Educational services in the country.

Does that statement need any proof? If so we are prepared to give it. A lot of the people in other towns who are criticising Nelson for its meanness to the children would do well to emulate our standard.

Before us is a list of the Education authorities of England, and an account of what they provide for their children. It is issued by the Board of Education itself; and it proves our assertion up to the hilt. Every single authority - there are hundreds of them - is given - County Councils, County Boroughs and Boroughs and Urban Districts.

**And apart from the London area (where expenses on teacher's salaries and buildings is greater than in the country) there is not one Education Committee in England that spends so much on its school children as Nelson does.**

In 1932-33 (the latest figures available) Nelson spent £15-7-7 Per child, according to the Board of Education. There is no town in England outside the London area that can compare with that figure.

Let us however, confine our attention, for the sake of brevity to towns near Nelson, and of similar character - non-county boroughs. Keighley spends £13-0-6 A year; Accrington £11-18-7; Colne £11-18-5; Darwen £12-5-10; loyal Lancaster, with scarce a Socialist on it, is content with £10-19-9; Bacup with no Socialist at all, £11-10. There is not a single authority in Lancashire which deals anything like so generously with its children as Nelson does.

We hear of Blacko, Barrowford, and Brierfield children who are sorry for Nelson youngsters, because of our niggardly spirit towards them. Children in these areas get £12-5-8 A year spent on them. Every child in Nelson gets over a shilling a week spent on it than Blacko, Barrowford, and Brierfield children do; a week, not once in 25 years. Who is to be pitied? And these figures we have given take no account whatever of money spent by Nelson in cheap bus fares, scholarships, and good milk for school children. These accounts are not in the Board of Education figures, and they tot up to over £1,000 A year.

People are entitled to criticise Nelson Council for its attitude on Jubilee Celebrations if they think fit. But they are not entitled to tell falsehoods. To say that Nelson is mean in its attitude towards its children is not only a falsehood; it is a most outrageous one. And, in a public controversy it is hitting below the belt to bring in the children on your side - unless the facts are with you.

Anti-Labour people are not entitled to do it. They have not been the friends of the children during the past twenty four odd years; and they have no right to pose as such on the last day of the 25 years. The figure we have given prove it.

(The figures quoted above are taken from "Cost per Child Elementary Education" issued by H.M. Stationary Office, price 6d, nett.)

### My Thoughts on the Jubilee

By S.S. Silverman  
(Prospective Labour Candidate for Nelson & Colne Division).

It is a strange irony of circumstances that the Silver Jubilee should fall to be celebrated at the very season when by an honoured tradition the international working class demonstrates so far as is permitted, at once it wished - for unity and its dreams of a better world. No one can celebrate the royal Jubilee as a national event without endorsing the social order of which the monarch is the final symbol. It is against that very social order that the working class cannot help but strive. The coincidence of the rival demonstrations very aptly epitomises, happily without bloodshed, that inevitable conflict of class interests.

Not that anyone would wish to do or say in any personal sense offensive. The reigning monarch, his consort and their family are pleasant enough people. They have exercised their legal and constitutional rights without exceeding or straining them. The duties and obligations imposed by their position have been performed punctiliously and without greater ostentation than, given the conditions, the various occasions demanded. One member of the royal household at least has on more than one occasion given hints OD a broader knowledge and a deeper understanding of social conditions and their causes than could well be expected in the circumstances. Twenty five years, strenuous tragic years, may even have induced in wide circles of the population an unusual degree and extent of personal affection. When the King was gravely ill everyone regretted it. When happy domestic events occurred in the royal family circle a certain personal sympathy was whispered. Now that a quarter century has been safely overpassed a measure of personal congratulations is perhaps not incompatible with the most implacable faith in the need for social revolution.

But this is by no means the point. Personal sympathy and congratulations are one thing; the celebration of a national triumph is quite another. The realm of the "loyal" and "patriotic" are simply disgusting. They are entirely insincere. No one really believes that George V. is the greatest monarch of modern times or that the term "great" is in the least degree applicable in the circumstances. No one really believes that the enormous achievements of the past twenty five years have anything to do with the identity of the sovereign. Quite clearly the development of aircraft, the motor car, of radio and the manifold scientific miracles that have revolutionised our world and touched with genuine magic the humdrum, workaday, pedestrian world of our parents and grandparents would have maintained themselves as did the Vicar of Bray in the old song "whatever king shall reign." It is no compliment to the by no means small Royal intelligence to pretend to believe to the contrary.

For consider the converse proposition. A host of writers a host of writers have been extolling in panegyric the great achievements of the age and employing them as arguments or illustrations of the greatness of the monarch. But can a man be the author of the victories and triumphs of an age and have no responsibility for its disasters and defeats? No man can yet forget the tragedies, unhappily the uncompleted tragedies, of the last twenty five years. No man as yet in the press, the pulpit or on the platform sought to lay the guilt of them at the door of the King and Queen. Such a charge would be as unjust as it would be absurd. But it would be consistent. Obviously the mental attitude which seeks to make these things the attributes of monarchy is a negation of decency as well as honesty.

Let the truth be told. The past twenty five years have been for working people the world over a period of almost unrelieved gloom. They have nothing to celebrate. For the first few years, the few years before the war, there was unexampled prosperity. But it was a prosperity the workers did not share. The year 1911 was the very middle of it, the year when the men of all the great national industries and services on whose backs the vaunted prosperity was built, had to engage in prolonged and bitter struggles, under a Liberal administration, against the whole political, economic and indeed military forces of society for a reasonable wage hardly more than the victims of today's Means Test is able to extract from stoney-hearted miserliness of the Unemployment Assistance Board. Then for four bloody years the workers in all countries were flung against one another, mown down by internationally owned artillery, blown to bits by internationally financed bombs, poisoned and choked in hundreds of thousands by gas in a quarrel they did not understand, did not desire, and was not theirs. What time at home fattened and grew rich moneylenders, landlords, contractors, armament manufacturers - all those who in peace time lived by anti-social activities. The war ended seventeen years ago beginning in misery and deepening in tragedy from year

to year. The world growing richer and richer. Unemployment increasing. Poverty increasing. Manhood and Womanhood wasted in Millions. Children generation after generation uncared for and unwanted. All this in a world of unexampled wealth and power. And to-day which we celebrate, we hear the boom of distant guns and the shadow of the next war deepens even as I write. We have nothing to celebrate.

### The Truth About the Medals

So many untruths have been broadcasted concerning the Education Committee's action regarding the County Councils' offer of a shilling to each child attending our schools, that a statement of the actual facts is necessary. We propose to make the statement - not as an appeal to people momentarily blinded by passion, but simply as a plain, unvarnished account of what actually occurred.

Some time ago the County Council appointed a special committee to consider what contribution that body could make to the Jubilee Celebrations. The Committee decided to allocate £20,000 For that purpose; some of the money was to go to people on poor relief, patients and inmates of institutions, etc.; And some to school children.

The Committee sent out a letter to local Education Authorities (including Nelson) stating that they were going to allocate this money to them for the benefit of children. This was considered by the Labour members of the Town Council and discussed at some length. From the letter it appeared that local Education Committees were to be allowed to use their own discretion as to how they should deal with the grant.

Now, while there was a strong feeling in the Labour Group that it was not part of their business to organise demonstrations in favour of Royalty, they had no desire to thrust this attitude down anyone's throat. Nor had they any desire to deprive the children of any treat that came their way. The feeling in the group was that prior to Jubilee day we might give every child the shilling allowed by the County Council and let them have a good time with it. And a resolution was passed leaving it to the Education Committee.

Those children who wanted to have a day out in the country could do so. Those who wanted to go to the pictures could do so. And although the Party itself was not prepared to take part in official celebrations, there was nothing to deprive any child who wanted to buy a medal, or a flag, or to attend any celebration, from doing so. He would get his shilling like the rest and spend it on celebrations if he wanted.

That was the position at that time. But what happened? Whether the County Council Committee got to know about this, we do not know; but the fact is that another meeting was held, an as a result Nelson got another letter.

This letter laid it down definitely that the Council should not give any child a shilling, or even a penny. A celebration must be held; and the expense of that celebration up to a maximum amount of one shilling per child could be submitted to the County Council. They would not allow any money; Nelson must send the bills to them, certified and in proper order; and provided the bills were in order, and what had been done was in accordance with the definite ruling, they would pay those bills up to the amount we have stated.

Upon the terms of this letter being submitted to the Labour Group, they decided they were not going to be dictated to by the County Council; and this decision was arrived at practically by a unanimous vote. Not a single member opposed or voted against it.

### THOSE MEDALS

Now we want to give an equally plain account of supposed offers of medals made by a certain gentleman, and the absurd story that Ald. Smith alone was responsible for refusing the offer. Here is Ald. Smith's account of what happened:-

"A certain individual stopped me as I was going up the Town Hall steps on Monday April 29th. I was in a hurry to attend a meeting, but he said his business was urgent, so I stopped for a minute or two with him.

He asked me what the attitude of the Education Committee would be if someone was prepared to go round the schools and distribute medals to the children. I gave him the only reply that I or any other Chairman could have given. I said the committee had a letter from the County Council, by which they could distribute medals if they so desired, and that I felt sure they would accept that offer, if they wanted medals, rather than accept the offer from a private individual.

I did not know this gentleman and he was singularly reluctant to tell me his name. He said he represented a number of others, but he absolutely refused to tell me who they were. His reluctance to give me any information, I frankly admit, gave me the impression that there was something queer about the whole business.

He finally told me that his name was Pilkington, and that he was the head of a firm of joiners at the corner of Manchester road and Lomeshay road. I spent very little time with him after that.

Whether there was anything genuine about the alleged offer I do not know. Mr. Pilkington never wrote to the Education Committee making any such offer, nor did any of the gentlemen he said he represented. Coun. Warburton mentioned the matter at the Education Committee the following night, but although he seemed to know a good deal about it, he had to confess that he didn't know who the gentlemen were. As I told Councillor Warburton. I thought Mr. Pilkington was having a game with me.

But whether he was or not, the fact remains that, knowing the opinion of the big majority of the Committee to the question of medals, I could give him no other reply. Nor could Coun. Warburton himself, had he been Chairman. The only difference is that Coun. Warburton might have said that he did not agree with his Committee, I could not say that, because I did. I did not agree with compelling children to take medals; but if I did, I would take them from the County Council rather than from Mr. Pilkington."

Such is Ald. Smith's account of that incident.

Now we want there to be no misapprehension about the actual position. No one man, nor any half dozen men have decided this matter. The question of Jubilee Celebrations was decided by the Nelson Labour Party - first on general lines by the Executive of the Party; afterwards by the Labour Group on the Council. And there have been few questions on which there has been more general agreement than this. The Party does not consider to be in accordance with its principles to come out in public support of the Jubilee, and as a party it has declined to do so. There is no question of opposition to the persons who occupy the throne. It is a matter of principle: those who believe in celebrating have a right to do so: the Nelson Labour Party does not, and as an equal right to its point of view.

We have been called "Hitlers" and all the rest of it; we suggest the boot is on the other leg. We have not tried We have not tried to compel people not to celebrate the Jubilee; we are prepared to let them act in accordance with their own views. It is we who are being bullied into doing something we do not agree with. We refuse to be bullied; we will do what we believe to be right, in spite of all the paint splashes, pavement chalkers, and sycophant newspapers in existence.

### Nelson Council and The Jubilee

(By Coun. RICHARD BLAND)

There are two main arguments in opposition to the local Education Committee's decision not to celebrate the Jubilee. The first is the Committee are depriving the children of Nelson of a treat, provided party out of our money, whilst the children in neighbouring places will get such a treat. The other argument is that we ought to celebrate the Jubilee because other places are doing so.

In a matter bound up by so much sentiment - sentiment cultivated through most channels of publicity for many months, it is extremely difficult to get a hearing for a reasoned case, but it should be said that the Education Committee has not acted in this matter without serious consideration.

Those of us who took an active part in promoting and supporting the decision of the Committee feel compelled to take a stand somewhere to demonstrate that Socialism is not merely a label for the same old ideas and practices. We do not believe in asking the poor to receive thankfully and with great rejoicing the little gifts which we the ruling classes think fit to offer from time to time out of our money, by which to purchase our loyalty to institutions which no longer command our respect, and which enable them to maintain their authority over us.

In our opinion it is healthy to cultivate in men and women and in children a reluctance to accept favours as a substitute for justice. The people Nelson and of Lancashire, want work and wages; they do not want doles either from the labour exchange or the County Council. There are hundreds of families in this town whose bread winner is broken - spirited and utterly disheartened by the cruelty of our present economic system, which denies them the right to earn their daily bread. Whatever may have been the first reaction of the working people of Nelson to the idea of a free treat for the children we believe they will agree when they have considered it in all its significance as a part of the great conspiracy for keeping things as they are, that the refusal of the Labour Party to be enmeshed in the Jubilee net is a maintenance of the dignity of the working class and a challenge to the system which denies them the right to a decent life.

It can hardly be argued by any thoughtful person that other people's acting in a certain way is a sufficient reason why we should do the same. As public representatives we are expected to take something more than a superficial view of things. We are asked not to give the children a shilling, but to celebrate the Jubilee. It does not seem right to us that the Lancashire County Council, which is so niggardly in its financial provisions for the poorest of the poor, should be allowed to pose in Nelson as the generous godfather of our children for an odd day. Neither does it appear right to promote great rejoicing about the reign of King George V., when we remember that the greatest part of that reign has been one of the most tragic and sorrowful periods of human history.

When the workers have succeeded in opening the door of a life worth living; when the bountiful provisions of Nature and twentieth century science become the property of the people, when parents can betget children in the sure knowledge that they will have full opportunity to develop into healthy and vigorous maturity, when the ruling principles of Industry and Commerce ceases to be private gain and becomes the provision of a full life for all, then we will celebrate Jubilee - the Jubilee of the people.

## PALACE NELSON 278

# FREE MATINEES

WEDNESDAY, 8th May, at 2.30 p.m.

ALL PERSONS OVER THE AGE OF 60 WILL BE ADMITTED FREE.

THURSDAY, 9th May, at 2.30 p.m.

All Unemployed Persons on production of Unemployment Card will be ADMITTED FREE.

FRIDAY, 10th May, at 4.30 p.m.

Special Matinee for Children. Note the time: 4.30 p.m. ADMISSION FREE.

All Persons conforming to the above conditions are very, very welcome at the Palace

Special Programme including: "SUNSHINE SUSIE"

WILL BE SHOWN AT ALL THE ABOVE MATINEES.